



Advent Midweek Service

Opening Response

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, **give thanks in all circumstances.**

Opening Prayer

Stir up our hearts in wonder, O God. May we wear a mantle of praise as we delight in your gift of salvation, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Reading

Isaiah 61:1-3; 10-11

1The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. 10I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Reflection Questions

What word, image, or phrase stands out for you in this reading?

Where will you look for God's glory this Advent season?

Where do you engage in wonder at God's creation; in wonder at the love, grace, and forgiveness of Christ; and in wonder at the transforming work of the Holy Spirit?

Reflection for the Day

Springtime shoots and sprouting gardens are a long way off for the North American households approaching winter. Yet our text from Isaiah envisions righteousness growing among the faithful like earth's plants springing forth. Even now, under the cover of snow or frozen soil for some of us, seeds await the return of longer days and warm sun. Christians have long looked to the rhythms of the seasons to reflect on what God is doing among the community of believers. As winter darkness intensifies, let us quiet our minds and rest our souls as the earth itself rests. A great ordeal, a new and amazing birth, is about to occur. For now, creation waits. Take a walk in the dark, quiet days to center on the miracle to come. Sit in a dark room filled with the light of candles or Christmas tree. Given time, the tiny shoot will grow into a righteous oak.

Hymn of the Day

Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

Responsive Prayer

Show us your mercy, O Lord, **and grant us your salvation.** (silence)

Clothe your ministers with righteousness. **Let your people sing with joy.** (silence)

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world; **for only in you can we live in safety.** (silence)

Lord, keep this nation under your care, **and guide us in the way of justice and truth.** (silence)

Let your way be known upon earth; **your saving health among all nations.** (silence)

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten, **nor the hope of the poor be taken away.** (silence)

Create in us clean hearts, O God, **and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.** (silence)

Closing Prayer

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

Even as we wait, watch, and wonder, **God is with us.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**