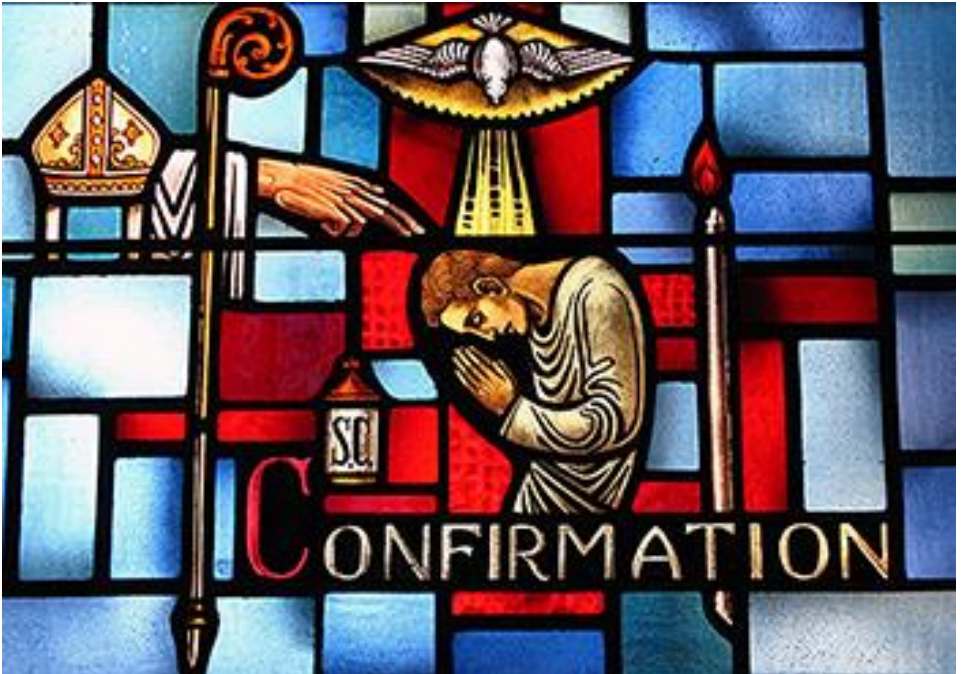


The Third Sunday of

ADVENT

December 13, 2020



REJOICE ALWAYS, PRAY CONTINUALLY, GIVE
THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES; FOR THIS
IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.



St. Stephen's

Episcopal Church + Lakeland, Florida

To Love and Serve God and Neighbor

Opening Hymn
#481, "Rejoice, the Lord is King" verses 1&2

*Rejoice, the Lord is King: Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing, And triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again
I say, rejoice!*

*The Lord and Savior, reigns, The God of truth and love;
When He has purged our stains, He took his seat above;
Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again
I say, rejoice!*

O Come, O Come Emmanuel
verses 5&6

O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!*

O come, thou Dayspring from on high,
and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Opening Acclamation

+ Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

There is one Body and one Spirit;
There is one hope in God's call to us;
One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;
One God and Father of all.

The Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever.

Amen.

The First Reading

A Reading from Isaiah.

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them

a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

(Isaiah 61:1-4)

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Psalm

126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy.

Then they said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses of the Negev.

Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

+ **Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The Second Reading

A Reading from First Thessalonians.

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-24)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel

+ + + The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." They asked, "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"

Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John replied, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

(John 1:6-8, 19-28)

The Gospel of The Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

Presentation and Examination of Candidates

The Candidates will now be presented.
I present these persons for Confirmation.

Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil?

Candidates

I do.

Do you renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

Candidates

I do, and with God's grace I will follow him as my Savior and Lord.

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

Everyone

We will.

Let us join with those who are committing themselves to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

I will, with God's help.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall
into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

I will, with God's help.

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of
God in Christ?

I will, with God's help.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your
neighbor as yourself?

I will, with God's help.

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and
respect the dignity of every human being?

I will, with God's help.

Let us now pray for these persons who have renewed their
commitment to Christ.

Prayers for the Candidates

Deliver them, O Lord, from the way of sin and death.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Open their hearts to your grace and truth.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Fill them with your holy and life-giving Spirit.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Keep them in the faith and communion of your holy Church.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Teach them to love others in the power of the Spirit.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Send them into the world in witness to your love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Bring them to the fullness of your peace and glory.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to your service. Renew in these your servants the covenant you made with them at their Baptism. Send them forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before them; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Strengthen, O Lord, your servant *N.* with your Holy Spirit; empower *him* for your service; and sustain *him* all the days of his life. **Amen.**

Almighty and everliving God, let your fatherly hand ever be over these your servants; let your Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of

your Word, that they may serve you in this life, and dwell with you in the life to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you
And also with you.

The Announcements

Services will resume next Sunday at 9am, 10am, and 11am with a Wednesday morning service at 9am. The 9am Sunday service will continue to be livestreamed on an ongoing basis. Sunday School at 10am and Coffee Hour after each service.

Today is our last collection day for Christmas donations.

Christmas Eve Services at 7pm and 11pm, Christmas Day 10am

VERSE OF THE WEEK

1 Thessalonians 5:23

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Offertory

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.
(Ephesians 5:2)

662, “Abide With Me” verse 1

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;

*the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
when other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

The Presentation

All things come of thee, O Lord,
And of thine own have we given thee.

(1 Chronicles 29:14)

Eucharistic Prayer B

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because in Jesus Christ our Lord you have received us as your sons and daughters, made us citizens of your kingdom, and given us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

+ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son.

For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

+On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

+After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
**We remember his death, We proclaim his resurrection, We
await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

+We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant.

+Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

And as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

The Family Song

*Here we are, gathered together as a family
Bound as one, lifting up our voices to the King of kings
We sing Abba, Father, holy is Your name
Abba, Father, holy is Your name.*

These are the Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Please stay at your seat. The clergy will come to you with the consecrated Bread.

#662, "Abide With Me" verses 2-4

*I need thy presence every passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.*

*Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgiving

Anniversaries This Week

Lou and Enid Alers

Birthdays This Week:

Victoria Naples, Missy Sabine,
Enid Alers, Melissa Getman-Powell

Birthday Prayer

Watch over thy children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may thy peace which passeth understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing

+ May the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and his son Jesus Christ and the blessing of God

Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Closing Hymn

#481, "Rejoice, the Lord is King" verses 3&4

*His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
The keys of death and hell To Christ the Lord are given:
Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again
I say, rejoice!*

*Rejoice in glorious hope! Our Lord the Judge shall come
And take His servants up To their eternal home:
Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice! Rejoice, again
I say, rejoice!*

The Dismissal

Go in Peace, to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

