

# Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

*Whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey of faith, welcome to Advent Episcopal Church. Our worship service follows the Book of Common Prayer and includes Holy Communion in which all may receive the bread and wine of Christ's Body and Blood. Hymn numbers preceded by the letter "H" are found in the blue Hymnal 1982. The hymn numbers preceded by the letter "L" are found in the red and black hymnal Lift Every Voice and Sing II. Thank you for joining us for worship today!*

*Acknowledging the people of the land, the Hohokam and other indigenous people as the original stewards of this land, we give thanks for our ancestors, our elders, and for all indigenous people who pray for unity and peace together.*

Prelude

**Processional Hymn H 72**

## **The Lighting of the Advent Candles**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for all your many gifts so freely bestowed upon us; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when our Savior Christ shall come again, we may shine as lights before his face; who lives and reigns, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**All** **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

*Celebrant* Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**All** **Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy upon us.**

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.  
**People** **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* 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 forever. **Amen.**

## **THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD**

### **The First Lesson Isaiah 35:1-10**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!"  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reader        The Word of the Lord.  
All            **Thanks be to God**

### **Psalm 146:4-9**

- 4 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! \*  
whose hope is in the LORD their God;  
5 Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; \*  
who keeps his promise for ever;

- 6 Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, \*  
and food to those who hunger.
- 7 The LORD sets the prisoners free;  
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind; \*  
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
- 8 The LORD loves the righteous;  
the LORD cares for the stranger; \*  
he sustains the orphan and widow,  
but frustrates the way of the wicked.
- 9 The LORD shall reign for ever, \*  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.  
Hallelujah!

## **The Second Lesson James 5:7-10**

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Reader The Word of the Lord.  
All **Thanks be to God**

## **Gospel Hymn H 437**

Deacon The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew  
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ**

## **Gospel Matthew 11:2-11**

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’

“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.  
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ**

Sermon The Rev. Dr. Gary Nicolosi

## The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried, On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

**Leader** Watchful at all times, let us pray for strength to stand with confidence before our Maker and Redeemer. That God may bring in his kingdom with justice and mercy, let us pray to the Lord:

**People** **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**Leader** That God may bring peace to the nations of the world and guide our leaders in the way of wisdom and righteousness, especially the President of the United States and the Governor of Arizona, let us pray to the Lord:

**People** **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**Leader** That all church leaders may be faithful in their calling to proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments and minister to all people, especially Sean our Presiding Bishop, Jennifer our Bishop, the clergy of this parish, and all church leaders, let us pray to the Lord:

**People** **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**Leader** That all First Nations in our diocese and country may live in justice, peace and prosperity, and that the rights of tribal nations will be respected and protected, let us pray to the Lord.

**People** **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**Leader** That God may comfort the brokenhearted, heal the sick and raise up all who have fallen, let us pray to the Lord:

**People** **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**Leader** That the light of God's coming may dawn on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death, let us pray to the Lord:

**People** **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**Leader** Let us commend the world, which Christ will judge, to the mercy and protection of God.

**People** **To you, O Lord, our God.**

**Celebrant** O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**People** **Amen.**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Deacon Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.  
**All** **Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, in what we have done, and in what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*Celebrant* Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.  
**Amen.**

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

## THE SERVICE OF THE TABLE

*Please sit, stand or kneel for the Eucharistic prayer*

Offertory Sentence

Offertory Music

**All** **Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**  
**Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.**  
**With God as our Father, brothers and sisters are we,**  
**Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.**  
**With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow;**  
**To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally,**  
**Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**

*Eucharistic Prayer B*

*BCP 367*

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.  
**People** **And also with you.**  
*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.  
**People** **We lift them to the Lord.**  
*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**People** **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

*The Celebrant proceeds:*

It is a right and a good and a joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name.

**All     Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might,  
           Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might,  
           heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.  
           Hosanna in the highest.  
           Hosanna in the highest.  
           Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
           Hosanna in the highest.  
           Hosanna in the highest.**

*The Celebrant continues:*

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in your 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.**

*The Celebrant continues:*

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 the saints, we may enter into 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 are yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Celebrant*     And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,  
**All     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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Priest Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**People Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

*Celebrant* 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.

## COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

*All are welcome to the Lord's Table to receive the bread and wine of Christ's Body and Blood. The wine will be offered by intinction, which means that you may dip the wafer into the small cup offered by the Lay Assistant. Please do not put your fingers into the wine. If you do not wish to receive the wine, just receive the wafer and return to your seat. The Church teaches that you receive the full Christ in either the bread or wine. There is no requirement to receive both. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.*

Fraction Anthem Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.

*Celebrant* The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven.  
**Communicant Amen.**

*Deacon* The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.  
**Communicant Amen.**

**Communion Hymn** H 615

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Celebrant* Let us pray.  
**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 the 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.**

## THE BLESSING

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Closing Hymn** H 640

Deacon: Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia.

Dismissal Response: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia**

Postlude