



# City Church

PHILADELPHIA

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Sunday December 17, 2017

The Third Sunday of Advent  
“Preparing the Way of the Lord”

## PRELUDE

### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil. <sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

This is the Word of the Lord.

*All* Thanks be to God.

*A period of silence is kept.*

Grace, mercy, and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

*All* And also with you.

Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,

*All* and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God!

### OPENING SONG

*O Come, O Come, Messiah* - Isaac Wardell

O come, O come Messiah,  
O come, our Alleluia!  
O sing, O sing Hosanna!  
O come! Messiah, come!

Comfort and joy, Alpha, Omega he.  
Sorrow and toil no longer rulers be.

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### OPENING RESPONSORIAL

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

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

then it was said among the nations,

“The Lord has done great things for them.”

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,

like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping,

bearing the seed for sowing,

shall come home with shouts of joy,

carrying their sheaves.

*from Psalm 126*

### PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

## **DOXOLOGY** — Francis of Assisi, Jonathan Gilley

All ye who are of tender heart,  
forgiving others take your part.  
Sing his praises, Alleluia!  
Ye, who long pain and sorrow bear,  
praise God and on him cast your care!  
O praise him! O praise him!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let all things their creator bless,  
and worship him in humbleness,  
O praise him, Alleluia!  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit three in one,  
O praise him! O praise him!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

*All* God of peace and renewal,  
we are impatient as we await your coming.  
We grumble against one another,  
and our hearts are weak.  
Come among us and save us,  
that we may have joy and gladness.

## **WORDS OF COMFORT AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

May the God of all healing and forgiveness  
draw near to you  
and cleanse you from all your sins  
that you may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh,  
the majesty of our God.

*All* Amen.

## **SONGS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING**

*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* - 18th C. English carol

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,  
remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day;  
to save us all from Satan's pow'r when we had gone astray.

*O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;  
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

From God our heav'nly Father a blessed angel came;  
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same;  
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.

"Fear not, then," said the angel, "Let nothing you afright;  
this day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,  
to free all those who trust in him from Satan's pow'r and might."

The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,  
and left their flocks afeeding in tempest, storm and wind,  
and went to Bethlehem straightway the Son of God to find.

How shall I fitly meet thee  
and give thee welcome due?  
The nations long to greet thee,  
and I would greet thee, too.  
O fount of light, shine brightly  
upon my darkened heart  
that I may serve thee rightly  
and know thee as thou art!

Love caused thy incarnation,  
love brought thee down to me;  
thy thirst for my salvation  
procured my liberty.  
O love beyond all telling,  
that led thee to embrace,  
in love all love excelling,  
our lost and fallen race.

Rejoice, then, ye sad-hearted,  
who sit in deepest gloom,  
who mourn o'er joys departed  
and tremble at your doom.  
Despair not, he is near you,  
yea, standing at the door,  
who best can help and cheer you  
and bids you weep no more.

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

*All* **And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

## **THE WORD OF GOD**

*Old Testament reading:* Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

<sup>1</sup>The 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; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to 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. <sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup>For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. <sup>10</sup>I 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. <sup>11</sup>For 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel reading: John 1:6-8, 19-28*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to John.

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. <sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

*"Preparing the Way of the Lord"* – The Rev. Chris Currie

## **OFFERING AND PRESENTATION OF GIFTS**

*The offertory is an opportunity to participate in the ministry of City Church. Online giving is available at [citychurchphilly.com/give](http://citychurchphilly.com/give). If you're visiting, we are so glad you are worshipping with us, but please do not feel obligated to give.*

## **CREED**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
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,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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. Amen.

## PRAYERS

*Members of the congregation lead us in prayer.*

God for whom we watch and wait,  
you sent John the Baptist  
to prepare the way of your Son:  
give us courage to speak the truth,  
to hunger for justice,  
and to suffer for the cause of right.  
For this, O Lord, we pray:

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

God for whom we watch and wait,  
you promised to set up a safe way among us:  
protect your people from ravenous rulers  
and from unjust powers,  
that your ransomed people may enter your kingdom.  
For this O Lord, we pray:

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

God for whom we watch and wait,  
your Son, the Messiah, came among us  
to heal the sick and raise the lowly:  
make us instruments of your healing and peace,  
and grant us patience as we await your return in glory.

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

And for what else should we pray?

*Members of the congregation may add their own intercessions at this time, ending with,*

For this, O Lord, we pray.

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

Now gathering our prayers into one, let us pray boldly  
as our Savior has taught us:

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power  
and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

## COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

**All And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

## THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

## Sanctus

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

*The minister concludes the Eucharistic Prayer and speaks the Words of Institution.*

## MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All** Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.

**All** Therefore, let us keep the feast.

*We use wine in Communion. Non-alcoholic white grape juice and gluten-free rice cakes are also available if preferred. Please recycle your Communion cup as you leave worship.*

## COMMUNION SONG

*God's Highway*

Sandra McCracken



1. My feet are strong, my eyes are clear, I can not  
2. The sha-dows flee, the valley is deep, but e - vil  
3. I see the shore from trou-bled seas, this ti - ny



see the way from here. But on we go, he knows the  
can-not con-quer me. Your rod and staff, they pro-TECT  
ship that car-ries me. It is not yet but it will



way, and in his arms he keeps me safe.  
me; you give me rest, you give me peace.  
be, so heav-en, come, it's you we need.



Fear not, keep on, watch and pray; walk in the



light of Gods high - way. I'm hol - ding



on - to you, Lord, you're hol - ding on - to me.

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## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**All** We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;  
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit  
that when your Christ comes again  
we may shine as lights before his face;  
who is alive and reigns now and forever.  
Amen.

## BLESSING AND SENDING

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* - Psalm 24, Weissel,  
Winkworth,  
Psalmodia Evangelica

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates,  
behold the king of glory waits;  
the king of kings is drawing near,  
the savior of the world is here.

The Lord is just, a helper tried,  
mercy is ever at his side,  
his kingly crown is holiness,  
his scepter, pity in distress.

Fling wide the portals of your heart,  
make it a temple set apart  
from earthly use for heav'n's employ,  
adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide  
my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide!  
Let me thy inner presence feel,  
thy grace and love in me reveal.

## BENEDICTION

## DISMISSAL

Let us go forth to serve the world as those who love  
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*All* Thanks be to God.

### West Philly

Kory Stamper: liturgist  
Tuck Bartholomew: celebrant

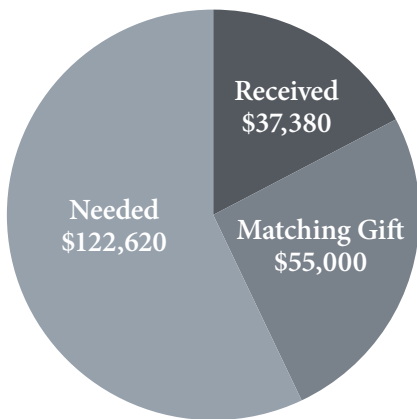
Bethany Brooks: piano, voice  
Ross Bellenoit: guitar  
Anthony Nigro: saxophone

### Fairmount

Mae Trieu: liturgist  
Tuck Bartholomew: celebrant

Bethany Brooks: piano, voice  
Ross Bellenoit: guitar  
Mike Chen: guitar, voice

## DECEMBER GOAL: \$215K



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