

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

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INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Malachi 3:1, 6; Luke 3:4; Philippians 1:6, adapt.*

L: The LORD says, "Prepare the way of the Lord."

C: **We thank You, O Lord!**

L: The LORD says, "The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight,
behold, He is coming."

C: **We adore You, O Lord!**

L: The LORD says, "I the LORD do not change; therefore you are not consumed."

C: **We praise You, O Lord!**

L: The LORD who began a good work in you
will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

C: **We worship You, O Lord!**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Two Advent candles are lit.

L: Let us pray.

O Lord, let the lighting of these candles signify that You are the light that shines in all the darkness of our lives. As we wait, watch, hope, and pray, guide us all to reflect Your light and let it shine; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION *Psalm 25:6–7*

L: Having emerged from the waters of Baptism as God’s new creation in Christ, we confess our sins to God and one another.

A time of silence is observed.

L: We confess to You, O Lord, that we are captive to sin in thought, word, and deed. We have not borne fruit worthy of repentance. We have sinned against You and our neighbors.

C: Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

L: Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

C: according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD!

FORGIVENESS

L: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. This is in fulfillment of His promise given to Malachi who spoke God’s eternal word saying: “Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.” Our heavenly Father has commanded His word of forgiveness to be declared to those who have opened their hearts in true repentance. Having received His forgiveness, let us therefore be filled with the fruit of righteousness; in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

SONG OF PRAISE

“Everlasting God” W&M by Brenton Brown and Ken Riley
c. 2005 Thank You Music CCLI # 691913

**Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
We will wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord (repeat)**

**Our God You reign forever
Our Hope, our strong Deliverer**

**You are the everlasting God
The everlasting God
You do not faint, You won’t grow weary**

**You're the defender of the weak
You comfort those in need
You lift us up on wings like eagles**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord,

C: to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son,

L: that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds;

C: through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Malachi 3:1–7b* (Malachi declares the coming of a messenger, which would be fulfilled in John the Baptist.)

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

“Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Philippians 1:2–11* (Paul encourages that the Church be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Luke 3:4b, 6*

L: Alleluia! Alleluia!

C: **Alleluia! Alleluia!**

L: Prepare the way of the Lord,

C: **make His paths straight;**

L: all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

C: **Alleluia! Alleluia!**

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 3:1–14 (15–20)*

(John the Baptist urges everyone to repent, and he points to Jesus.)

L: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the third chapter.

C: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

(The Gospel is read.)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and

Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
 make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
 and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall become straight,
 and the rough places shall become level ways,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

L: The Gospel of the Lord.
C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN No. 790 “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear Now to His temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o’er all things is wondrously reigning
And, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen All that is needful has been
Sent by His gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who has fearfully, wondrously, made you,
Health has bestowed and, when heedlessly falling, has stayed you.
What need or grief Ever has failed of relief?
Wings of His mercy did shade you.

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew What the Almighty can do
As with His love He befriends you.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
All that has life and breath, Come now with praise before Him!
Let the Amen Sound from His people again;
Gladly forever adore Him!

SERMON “Begin With the End in Mind” Philippians 1:2-11 Pastor Vern

CONFESSION OF FAITH **THE NICENE CREED** *Please stand*

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And he will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose
kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.**

**And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P: Thank You, Lord of all creation, for this gift of our Lord's Supper, by which You prepare us to journey through those wilderness times of our life assured of Your presence and promise.

C: We thank You. We praise You. We adore You. Amen.

THE LORD'S TABLE IS CELEBRATED TODAY

"This Is My Body...This Is My Blood" – Those who take part in the Lord's Supper consume bread and wine. (1Corinthian 10:17; 11:27ff). But more than that, they also receive a miracle in the bread and wine, for therein Christ places His true Body and true Blood (1Corinthians 10:16). He gives them to us as His personal assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. It is the request of our congregation that anyone who wishes to commune with us share this faith. As His Body and Blood can be taken to one's own judgment (1Corinthians 11:29), St. Paul urges each communicant "examine yourself" before participating in the Meal.

By His admonition, therefore, we in turn urge you to ask yourself these questions:

SELF-REFLECTION

1. Are you baptized in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
2. Do you know you are a sinner in need of God's grace?
3. Do you believe Jesus died to atone for your sins?
4. Do you believe that God offers His forgiveness through the "real" presence of Jesus, in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine?
5. Do you seek to amend your sinful life?

If you have answered "Yes" to all of these questions you are *encouraged* to come. Jesus said, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

AS WE APPROACH THE TABLE OF THE LORD

P: Merciful Lord,

C: we do not presume to come to this Your table, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Your manifold and great mercies.

We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Your table.

But You are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy.

Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed, through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

(Matthew 6:9-13)

P: Remember us in Your kingdom Lord, and teach us to pray:

**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 and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

WORDS OF OUR LORD

P: With the very words of Christ we consecrate and partake of this sacred meal.

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My + body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

(Let us eat together the body of Christ.)

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My + blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

(Let us drink together from the cup of salvation, the blood of Christ shed for our sins.)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

P: Let us pray.

Thank You, Lord, for this gift of Christ's body and blood. Prepare our hearts by this great gift to love You and to serve our neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

BLESSING OF THE LORD

Numbers 6:24–26

P: **The LORD bless you and keep you.**

The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The LORD look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

HYMN No. 359 “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

**Lo, how a rose e’er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming
As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow’ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.**

**Isaiah ‘twas foretold it,
The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright,
She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.**

**This flow’r whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
The darkness ev’ry where.
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev’ry load.**

**O Savior, child of Mary,
Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory,
Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray
To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.**

SENDING

**L; Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
C: Thanks be to God!**