

Zoom Best Practices

To make the service run more smoothly and to cut down on distortion and dissonance caused by the response of multiple voices, please leave your computer mic or phone on mute at all times with the exception of the Peace, the Intercessions, and the Lord's Prayer. We will assign and / or ask for volunteers to represent the congregation as one voice for the remainder of the responsorial portions of the service. However, while muted, please do say the words that are written for your response. Even in the muted state, this remains an interactive service.

Order of Service
Third Sunday of Advent
 Year B, December 13th, 2020

Prelude

Le Tombeau de Couperin I: Prelude

M. Ravel

Advent Wreath Lighting

O Hidden, Eternal, and Self-giving God, who became human for our salvation: Open our minds, liberate our hearts, and strengthen our souls, that we may live in the fullness of your desires for us: in the name of the Source, the Word, and the Spirit. **Amen.**

Hymn 56

Verses 5, 6

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Veni, veni Emmanuel

(Dec. 23) 1 O come, O come, Em - man - - - u - el, and ran - som
(Dec. 17) 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest
(Dec. 18) 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy
(Dec. 19) 4 O come, thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, free them from
(Dec. 20) 5 O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen
(Dec. 21) 6 O come, thou Day - spring from on high, and cheer us
(Dec. 22) 7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the
(Dec. 23) 8 O come, O come, Em - man - - - u - el, and ran - som

1 cap - tive Is - - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - - ile
2 all things might - - i - ly; to us the path of know - - ledge
3 tribes on Si - - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the
4 Sa - tan's ty - - ran - ny that trust thy might - y power to
5 wide our heaven - - ly home; make safe the way that leads on
6 by thy draw - - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of
7 hearts of all man - kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - - sions
8 cap - tive Is - - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - - ile

1 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
2 show, and teach us in her ways to go.
3 law, in cloud, and ma - jes - ty, and awe.
4 save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!
5 high, and close the path to mis - er - y.
6 night, and death's dark shad - ow put to flight.
7 cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace.
8 here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.

Em - man - - - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - - - ra - el!

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living One.
People **You come to your people and set them free.**

Collect

Lord of light, who sent the Baptist to offer hope and face the world's scorn: open our ears to hear the cries from the margins, exposing our fears, inciting our vision and calling us to a step of faith: through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

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;

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

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. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Third Reading

John 1:6-8,19-28

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

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” 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. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They

asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God the Creator,
who breathed life into creation
and filled this blue sphere with creatures great and small;
who called humanity to be stewards of the earth
and to care for it and its inhabitants with righteousness;
who opposed Pharaoh's economy of greed and violence
and liberated God's people from an oppressive political regime;
who led God's people through the wilderness
and provided them with manna to sustain them on their journey;
who gave us the prophets to steer us back to justice when we strayed
and said: "woe unto you who legislate evil;"
who continues to create even to this day
and brings forth new possibilities when we think all is over.

We believe in God the Redeemer,
who was born into this world as a brown, Middle Eastern Jewish boy,
and on the run from a cruel politician;
who is no stranger to wilderness
and walks with us as a friend when temptations abound;
who fed the masses simply because they were hungry
and provided free healthcare to the injured and infirm;
who is the way, the truth, and the life,
when other voices claim to be the same;
who calls us to be neighborly to one another
and to be relentless advocates for the oppressed and vulnerable;
who was unjustly and violently executed by the empire
and resurrected by God, defeating death once and for all.

**We believe in God the Sustainer,
who advocates for us in our times of need
and binds us to one another to cultivate the Beloved Community;
who helps us in our times of weakness
and intercedes on our behalf with sighs too deep for words;
who comes in tongues of flame to bind together God's disciples
and equips us for the work we are called to do;**

**who brings us to the Table to eat the bread and drink the cup
and renews us to defiantly proclaim Jesus' resurrection in word and deed;
who hovers over the waters of baptism
and seals us into the eternal kingdom that supersedes any human administration;
who knits us together with those who are different than us
to heal this world by being neighborly to one another.**

The Rev. Stephen M. Fearing

Prayers

The Lord God has called us to proclaim his saving message through word and deed. Let us begin by the offering of our prayers, responding, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Intercessor:

O Emmanuel, give us the courage to admit our sins and shortcomings, the desire to turn to you in faith and repentance, and the grace to accept your gifts of forgiveness and new life; for this we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Root of Jesse, remove all prejudice from our hearts, and help us to accept our unity with all humankind; for this we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Key of David, unlock the imagination of your Church that we may bring good news to those who live in despair, liberty to persecuted Christians, and relief to children who are victims of abuse and abandonment; for this we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Prince of Peace, awaken us to the fruits of concord, that humanity may turn from its destructive vengeance and choose the path that leads to justice and security for all people everywhere; for this we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Desire of Nations, lift the vision of our leaders, not to politicize the present challenges, but to resourcefully lead your people to the blessings of your kingdom; for this we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus.

For those who are sick, and all who minister to them.

Silence

Please add the names of those for whom you wish prayers, either silently or aloud.

For this we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus.

O Dayspring from on High, put to flight death's dark shadow, and receive into the body of your resurrection those who have departed this life in your faith and fear;

Silence

At this time please add the names of those you wish remembered this day.

For this we pray.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Officiant:

Almighty God, to whom our needs are known before we ask, help us to ask only what accords with your will; and those good things which we dare not, or in our blindness cannot ask, grant us for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Confession

Officiant:

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

A brief moment of silence is kept

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by 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.

Officiant:

Almighty God have mercy on 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.**

Lord's Prayer

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 Peace

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Welcome; Birthdays and Anniversaries

Anthem *Benedixisti Domine (Offertorium. Dominica tertia Adventus)* G. Palestrina

Benedixisti, Domine, terram tuam, avertisti
captivitatem Jacob.
Remisisti iniquitatem plebis tuae;
operuisti omnia peccata eorum.

Lord, thou art become gracious unto thy
land: thou hast turned away the captivity of
Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the offence of
thy people: and covered all their sins.

A Prayer For The Time In Which We Are Living

Gracious and merciful God: We are weary. We are overtaken by COVID fatigue. We miss the visits of our family members who do not live with us, the ability to share a meal together, the ability to give one another hugs. In the interest of safety, this virus has caused us to be physically isolated from our neighbors and our friends. Our young children do not understand why this new way of living continues, and our older children bristle against the limitations placed on them. Our teachers, doctors, nurses, and essential workers are overworked and placed in difficult situations with little relief. We as a people are challenged by the lack of a uniform policy that calls us all to observe safety protocols, so we continue to live with so much unknown and uncertain that only heightens our anxiety.

Sometimes, loving God, it is so hard for us not to be fearful. Fill our hearts and minds with you so we may do what is required to meet each day with strength and wisdom. Keep us grounded in your peace. Help us to be your hands and heart in all situations, at all times. Surround those who fear with your calming presence. Embrace those who are ill with your healing power. Envelop those who are dying in your loving arms and lead them to eternal life. For you are our guide and our grounding, this day and always. **Amen.**

The Blessing

May the Spirit of God draw you out onto the wilderness road. May she send you chasing chariots and smashing alabaster, beyond all propriety. May she bring you to dark-skinned eunuchs and Samaritan women and young ones who dream wild dreams and rich rulers who long to fit through the eye of the needle. And may they receive you into their homes and their worlds, so you might teach and convert one another. And may you enter the waters of baptism together and die and rise in Christ together, in the name of the Creator and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Stephanie Spellers

Hymn 444*Blessed be the God of Israel**Thornbury*

Verses 1, 2, 3

1 Blessed be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free;
 2 He from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has given;
 3 On pri - son - ers of dark-ness the sun be - gins to rise,

he vis - its and re - deems us, he grants us lib - er - ty.
 a Sa - vior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heaven.
 the dawn - ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes.

The pro - phets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease;
 Be - fore him goes his her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,
 He guides the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.

God shall ful - fill his prom - ise and bring his peo-ple peace._____
 the pro - phet of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of Day._____
 O bless our God and Sa - vior, with songs that nev - er cease._____

Officiant: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.****Postlude***Goldberg Variation #10: Fughetta*

J. S. Bach