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## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 17, 2017

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### PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

**THEME OF THE DAY**.....Joseph is faced with a huge dilemma. Mary says she's pregnant and that God did it! He has several options, but finally chooses to "open the door" to a future with Mary. Let's follow Joseph with the people in our family!

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### INVOCATION AND CALL TO WORSHIP

P: Let us worship God as children—

**C: With wonder and awe.**

P: Let us worship God as youth—

**C: With questions and eager hearts.**

P: Let us worship God as adults—

**C: With gratitude and praise.**

P: Let us worship God as elders—

**C: With wisdom and hope.**

P: Let the body of Christ sing praises to God—

**C: Father, Son and Holy Spirit,**

P: From whom all blessings flow!

### ADVENT SONG

*"Light One Candle"*

1. Light one candle for hope,  
One bright candle for hope,  
He brings hope to ev'ry heart,  
He comes! He comes!
2. Light one candle for peace,  
One bright candle for peace,  
He brings peace to ev'ry heart,  
He comes! He comes!

3. Light one candle for joy,  
One bright candle for joy,  
Ev'ry nation will find salvation  
In Bethl'em's baby boy.

4. Light one candle for love,  
One bright candle for love,  
He brings love to ev'ry heart,  
He comes! He comes!

He brings love to ev'ry heart,  
He comes! He comes!

### **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

P: Today, we light the candle of Joy. Because of Christ, we can have joy in every situation.

Because Your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise You. So I will bless You as long as I live; in Your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise You with joyful lips, when I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the watches of the night; for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me. *Psalm 63:3-8*

*+The first, second & third candles are lit during the Advent Song+*

### **WE CONFESS OUR SINS...**

P: In today's Gospel reading we hear about conflict between Joseph and Mary. Our families are not immune to painful predicaments, and we must confess to our merciful Father that our responses are often less than loving and kind.

**C: Lord God, heavenly Father--**

P: Too often we exchange clichés and facts, but we don't solve any problems.

**C: We simply close the door.**

P: Other times, feeling overwhelmed with the issue, we drop verbal bombs. We rant and rave. We have tempers and throw tantrums.

**C: We slam the door.**

P: Still, in other settings, we totally withdraw. The issue is too sensitive, too intense, and too explosive.

**C: So we lock the door.**

P: O God, we confess that these responses tear down rather than build up. They hurt rather than heal. They build barriers rather than build bridges.

*+Silence for a time of personal reflection+*

### **...HEARING GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

P: Thank God that in Jesus Christ there is an open door to divine mercy and grace! God's forgiveness for your sins overflows from the cross and empty tomb. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

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## **SERVICE OF THE WORD**

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### **THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS:**

*Today's scripture lessons are about resolving family conflict.*

#### **The First Lesson:**

**[Genesis 33:1-11](#)**

And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants. And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down. And last Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company[a] that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find

favor in the sight of my lord.” But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” Jacob said, “No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.” Thus he urged him, and he took it.

**CHOIR ANTHEM:**     *"The Coming of the Lord"*     by Pepper Choplin

**The Gospel Lesson:**     Matthew 1:1-17

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about : His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

### **CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**SERMON SONG:** *"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"*     **LBW 54**

It came upon the midnight clear,  
That glorious song of old  
From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come  
With peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heav'nly music floats  
O'er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains  
They bend on hov'ring wing,  
And ever o'er its babel sounds  
The blessed angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load,  
Whose forms are bending low,  
Who toil along the climbing way  
With painful steps and slow:  
Look now, for glad and golden hours  
Come swiftly on the wing;  
Oh, rest beside the weary road  
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hast'ning on,  
By prophets seen of old  
When with the ever circling years  
Shall come the time foretold,  
When peace shall over all the earth  
Its ancient splendors fling,  
And all the earth give back the song  
Which now the angels sing.

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### SERMON

### *"Open the Door"*

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### AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

**C: We believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.  
We 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.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The Christian Church  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen

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### OFFERING

*We give our offerings as signs of our lives offered to God in humble thanks and service.*

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### THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

P: Let us pray to God our Father as one family of his sons and daughters. Lord, in your mercy

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: O God, help us to defend and respect life, heed the call to fidelity and love, and honor the sacredness of the marriage bond. Lord, in your mercy

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: O God, we pray for all of our mothers and grandmothers to be marked with warm hearts and spirits of service. Lord, in your mercy

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: O God, we pray for all fathers and grandfathers, to love their wives and children just as Christ loved the church. Lord, in your mercy

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: O God, we pray for all married couples who may feel like strangers to one another, that they may rediscover one another in patience, forgiveness, and mutual trust. Lord, in your mercy

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: O God, we pray for our children and grandchildren that they grow in wisdom and in stature and in favor with you and with others. Lord, in your mercy

**C: Hear our prayer.**

*+Additional Prayers+*

P: O God, give us compassion, gentleness and patience, as we open doors toward those in our families. In Jesus' name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

## **THE INVITATION**

P: Welcome to the celebration! God who supplies our every need has given us this meal to share.

**C: Lord, we thank You for the bread of eternal life.**

P: We come to the table, acknowledging our shortcomings and our need to experience Your presence in bread and wine.

**C: Lord, we thank You for the bread of eternal life.**

## **THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## **DISTRIBUTION**

## **DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

**"What a Friend"**

**TOSB 246**

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged, take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful who with all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee, thou wilt find a solace there.

### **"I've Got Peace Like a River"**

**TOSB 108**

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged, take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful who with all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
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Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee, thou wilt find a solace there.

### **CLOSING BLESSING**

P: May our God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—pour out his grace upon your family, giving you triumph over temptation, joy in your journey, and deliverance over every form of darkness.

C: Amen.

### **CLOSING SONG: "Angels We Have Heard On High"**

**LBW 71**

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;



Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo;

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**SILENT PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father, by the prompting and presence of your Holy Spirit I will open the door to my family members. In Christ's name I pray. Amen.*

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**DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

C: **Thanks be to God!**

**POST-SERVICE MUSIC**