

Midweek Advent Service

December 20, 2023

Welcome to St James! *Our worship here is a tiny fragment of something else: it is part of the worship which is offered to God by Christian people every hour of the day and night, in every part of the world.*

When you come to worship here, it is as if you were dropping in on a conversation already in progress – a conversation between God and his people which began long before you were born and which will continue long after your death. So, do not be surprised or disturbed if there are some things which you do not understand right away. For a brief moment, you step into the continual stream of worship which is being offered today and which will be offered to the end of time.

Opening Hymn # 901

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty; Zi - on, let me
2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore Thee; Come Thou al - so
3 Here Thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed; Here Thy seed is
4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick - en; Let me keep Thy
5 Speak, O God, and I will hear Thee; Let Thy will be

en - ter there, Where my soul in joy - ful du - ty
un - to me. Where we find Thee and a - dore Thee,
du - ly sown. Let my soul, where it is plant - ed,
gift di - vine, How - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick - en;
done in - deed. May I un - dis - turbed draw near Thee

Waits for Him who an - swers prayer. Oh, how bless - ed
There a heav'n on earth must be. To my heart, O
Bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone, So that all I
May Thy Word still o'er me shine As my guid - ing
While Thou dost Thy peo - ple feed. Here of life the

is this place, Filled with sol - ace, light, and grace!
en - ter Thou; Let it be Thy tem - ple now!
hear may be Fruit - ful un - to life in me.
star through life, As my com - fort in all strife.
foun - tain flows; Here is balm for all our woes.

Evening Prayer

- P** Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,
C **the light no darkness can overcome.**
P Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,
C **and the day is almost over.**
P Let Your light scatter the darkness
C **and illumine Your Church.**

Phos Hilaron (O Joyful Light)

- P** Joyous light of glory:
C **of the immortal Father; heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ. We have come to the setting of the sun, and we look to the evening light. We sing to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: You are worthy of being praised with pure voices forever. O Son of God, O Giver of life: the universe proclaims Your glory.**

Thanksgiving for Light

- P** Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Psalm

Psalm 126

- P** When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.
C **Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**
P The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.
C **Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negeb!**
P Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!
C **He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.**
C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
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Sermon Hymn # 359

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing From ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, The rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der With sweet - ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, Who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing As proph - ets long have
 mind; With Mar - y we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er
 air, Dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor The dark - ness ev - 'ry -
 woe; O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, Who dost our weak - ness



sung, It came, a flow - 'ret bright, A - mid the
 kind, To show God's love a - right, She bore to
 where. True man, yet ver - y God, From sin and
 know: Bring us at length we pray To the bright



cold of win - ter, When half - spent was the night.
 us a Sav - ior, When half - spent was the night.
 death He saves us And light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 courts of heav - en, And to the end - less day.

Text (sts. 1–2): tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, alt.; (sts. 1–2, 4): German, 16th cent.; (st. 3): Friedrich L. C. Layriz, 1808–59;
 (st. 3): tr. Harriet R. K. Spaeth, 1845–1925; (st. 4): tr. John C. Mattes, 1876–1948; Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche
 Kirchengeseng, 1599, Köln; Text and tune: Public domain

Epistle Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances;
 for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit.

²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good.

²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may
 your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our
 Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. . . .

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²²So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

C But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

Sermon

Offering

Please take a moment to sign and pass the “Record of Friendship” booklet or use the QR code located on the inside cover of the booklet.



Magnificat

Refrain

C My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord, and my spir - it re -
joic - es in God, my Sav - ior. My soul mag-ni-fies the
Lord, and my spir - it re - joic - es in God, my Sav - ior.

- P** For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.
For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.
For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;
and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

C Refrain

- P** He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the
lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent
empty away.
He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He
spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

C Refrain

Litany

- P** In peace let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison and Rev. Timothy J. Scharr, for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For President Biden, for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For **our** deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For ... let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord:
- C** **Alleluia.**
- P** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence for individual prayer

P Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord:

C To You, O Lord.

Collect for Peace

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

P Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

C **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.**

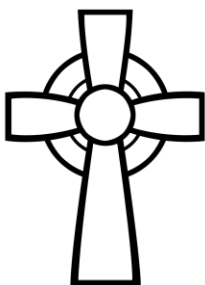
Benediction

P Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you.

C Amen.



Closing Hymn #331

The Advent of Our King



1 The ad - vent of our King Our prayers must now em - ploy,
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son In - car - nate deigns to be,
3 O Zi - on's daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly King,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come a - gain



And we must hymns of wel - come sing In strains of ho - ly joy.
Him - self a ser - vant's form puts on To set His ser - vants free.
Nor let your faith - less heart de - spise The peace He comes to bring.
And His true mem - bers all u - nite With Him in heav'n to reign.

5 Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The sinful self be put away,
The new self now put on.

△ 6 All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. John Chandler, 1806–76, alt.; Tune: Aaron Williams, 1731–76; Text and tune: Public domain

St. James Guiding Statement

Together we have found healing and hope in Jesus Christ and welcome others to experience these same Gospel promises.

St. James Mission Pillars

**Healing
Community
Restoration**



[St. James Attendance](#)



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