



Grace Episcopal Church

Third Sunday of Advent

December 15, 2019 | 8 am

Ministers | All of Us

Rector | Wren Blessing

Music | Martin Cockroft

Tribe | Maple

May This Be a House of Joy

May this be a House of joy.

May we be open here to dreams,
and to each other.

May all who enter in these magic walls
feel love and feel respect
for learning and each other.

May we be always friends to life.

May we walk in that friendship.

May learning live in this house.

May it never leave.

~ Lucille Clifton

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

A Call to Worship and Advent Wreath Lighting

We stand as the Advent wreath is lit.

Celebrant Do not be afraid. By the tender mercy of our God,
All the dawn from on high will break upon us.
First Speaker Wake up! It is time to make room for the unexpected.
Second Speaker Wake up! It is time for peace! It is time for hope! It is time for joy!
First Speaker We light the candles of peace, hope, and joy.
Second Speaker to shine on all who dwell in darkness
Celebrant and in the shadow of death,
All to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Gathering Song | Don't Be Afraid

by John Bell



Don't be a - fraid. My love is strong - er.
my love is strong - er than your fear.
Don't be a - fraid. My love is strong - er and
I have prom-ised, prom-ised to be al - ways near.

The Collect

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

The whole world waits for you, Holy One. You fill the hungry with good things, pouring out your mercy on every generation. Draw us to notice and to attend to your presence in those around us. Open us to discover and share your joy. **Amen.**

WE TELL THE STORY

We are seated for the reading.

The First Reading | Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

(Reading continues on the following page.)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

After the reading, the reader will say

The Word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

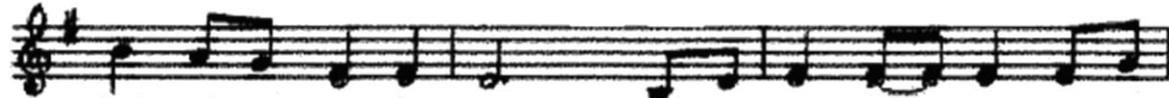
We stand together and sing

Gospel Song | Canticle of the Turning

Words: Rory Cooney | Music: Irish Melody STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN



My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
Though I am small, my God, my all, you
From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
Though the na - tions rage from age to /age, we re -



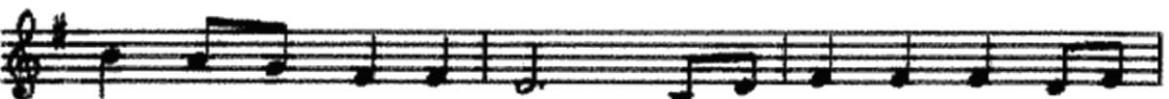
God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant from his throne.
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can nev - er earn, there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

The Celebrant then introduces the Gospel by saying

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you Lord Christ.**

The Gospel | Matthew 11:2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

“Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

After the Gospel the Celebrant will say

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

OUR RESPONSE TO THE STORY

The Homily

Affirmation of Faith

We stand and say

**We believe in God above us,
maker and sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon,
of water and earth,
of all humanity.**

**We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
born of a woman's womb, servant of the poor.
He was tortured and nailed to a tree.
Knowing full passion and deep sorrow, he died forsaken.
He descended into the earth to the place of death.
On the third day he rose from the tomb.
He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present.
And his Kingdom will one day be known.**

**We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
life-giving breath of the Church.
She is the Spirit of healing and forgiveness,
source of resurrection and of life everlasting. Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

Leader “like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing”
Thank you for joy that blooms in our lives, and in the world.

We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly and in our hearts.

Leader God on you we wait,

All in you we hope

Leader “Waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.”
We pray for our leaders, in this church, in this city, and in our world. Draw us
and our leaders to meet the needs of those who thirst.

We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly and in our hearts.

Leader God on you we wait,

All in you we hope

Leader “Say to those who are of a fearful heart, ‘Be strong! Do not fear.’”

We pray for those who are anxious, alone, or afraid. May hope rise in the hearts
of all who wait for you.

We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly and in our hearts.

Leader God on you we wait,

All in you we hope

Leader “Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.”

We pray for children around the world. Provide for all who are hungry or without
a safe home. Open our eyes and ears to the wisdom of children and give them
the joy of being wrapped in your everlasting arms.

We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly and in our hearts.

Leader God on you we wait,

All in you we hope

Leader “Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.”

Renew us all near us who feel weak or tired. We pray for those on our prayer
list.

We pause for prayers to be spoken quietly and in our hearts.

Leader God on you we wait,

All in you we hope

The Peace

We conclude these prayers with the sharing of God’s peace.

Celebrant We turn to one another with outstretched arms, saying: the peace of the Lord
be always with you.

People And also with you.

THE CELEBRATION OF OUR SACRED MEAL

The people are invited to stand. The Celebrant faces them and says

The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

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

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

The Celebrant continues.

Lord of all life, you created the universe, where all living things reflect your glory. You give us this great and beautiful earth, to discover and to cherish. You give us sun and moon and star-lit sky, everything that gives us light, light for our eyes, our hearts, our minds. You made us all, each wonderfully different, to join with the angels and sing your praise:

Scott Lawrence

5 Ho - ly Lord our hope and our de - sir - ing

9 Long - ing hearts we wish to know you al - ways

13 Ho - ly Lord the pro - mise of your love

Find us soon, Find us soon,

We thank you, loving God, because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son. He gave his life for us on the cross and shows us the way to live. Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying: 'This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying: 'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.'

So God, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life. As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit, and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, God, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended, and all creation is gathered in your loving arms. And now with all your saints we give you glory, through Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, today and for ever.

AMEN.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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 Breaking of the Bread

We are now invited to share the gifts of Communion.

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People Therefore let us keep the feast! Alleluia!

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Please know that at Grace Church all are invited to receive the bread and wine. This sacrament is God's free gift. Assist the Chalice Bearers by tipping the cup from the base. Please tell your server if you prefer a wafer that is free from gluten, soy, and dairy.

Music during Communion | May You Find the Light

Words & Music by David Gungor and John Arndt | Offered by Martin Cockroft & Tom Ringo

Lost and weary traveler
Searching for the way to go
Stranger, heavy-hearted
Longing for someone to know

Chorus:

May you find a light
May you find a light
May you find a light to guide you home

There are weary travelers
Searching everywhere you go
Strangers who are searching
Longing deeply to be known

Chorus x 2

*Following Communion we share silence with one another.
The quiet will last a few minutes and will begin and end with a bell.*

GOING OUT INTO GOD'S WORLD

Our Prayer after Communion

We stand and say together

**Eternal God,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing

The Celebrant offers a blessing.

The Sun of Righteousness shine upon you in your walking and your waiting, and scatter the darkness from before your path, and the blessing of God who was and is and is to come, rest upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Magnificat

Under pine trees in the snow,
the chickadees around my head,
I wept for the will of God,
this hungry woman fed.
All the shadows shifted
while my back was turned.
Once and always on my finger
one soft and small gray bird.
Not a twisting
due to prayer,
but all its own,
and mine together.
And so I bear the gift,
carry it through time—
this deepest darkness,
astonishing grace.

~ Mary F.C. Pratt

Excerpted from “Sabbath”

Whatever is foreseen in joy
Must be lived out from day to day.
Vision held open in the dark
By our ten thousand days of work.
Harvest will fill the barn; for that
The hand must ache, the face must sweat.
And yet no leaf or grain is filled
By work of ours; the field is tilled
And left to grace. That we may reap,
Great work is done while we're asleep.
When we work well, a Sabbath mood
Rests on our day, and finds it good.

~ Wendell Berry