

A CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

December 12, 2004

The Third Sunday of Advent

8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

*All who are able may stand.

Bold type spoken by the congregation

THE PEOPLE GATHER.

The Prelude

"Little David, Play on Your Harp"

Valerie Stephenson, arr.

Youth Bells

The Welcome and Announcements

The Introit

The Call To Worship

(from Psalm 146)

Happy are those whose hope is in God who made the earth and sea
and all the creatures in them.

We seek God who keeps faith forever.

We seek that God who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.

**We seek god who sets those imprisoned free,
who opens the eyes of those who fail to see clearly.**

Praise God who brings hope to all generations.

The Prayer of Praise

*The Hymn 13

"Prepare the Way"

*The Prayer of Confession

We are patient with the wrong things, Eternal God, and we endure what should not be tolerated. We bow gladly to vogues and fashions, yet refuse to stand steadfastly for justice. We indulge the wealthy in riches, yet abide the poor in hunger and poverty. While You watch over strangers, we often barely see them at all. Ever alert to changes that threaten our own welfare, we close our eyes to possibilities of a new day. We have waited long enough. It is time to repent of our misplaced patience, and live rejoicing in Your patience with us. Hear our confession in Jesus' name. . .(time for silent confession).

*The Choral Response

*The Assurance of Pardon

God's word of forgiveness always comes to us at the right time.

It's worth the wait.

The heart of all our waiting is knowing this:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Alleluia. Amen.

p. 579 in the Hymnal

*The Gloria Patri

*The Peace and Greeting

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you!**

(Please exchange this ancient greeting with worshippers seated near you.

Please stand to greet one another in the name of Christ.)

TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD. . .

The Prayer for Illumination

The *Old Testament* Lesson: *Isaiah 35:1-10* p. 615 in the pew Bible

The *Psalter* Lesson: *Psalms 146:5-10* p. 546 in the pew Bible

The Anthem “*Song of Mary*” Richard Shephard
(ref. *Luke 1:47-55*)

The *Epistle* Lesson: *James 5:7-10* p. 1056 in the pew Bible

A Moment With the Children

*The Hymn 1 “*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*”

The *Gospel* Lesson: *Matthew 11:2-11* p. 844 in the pew Bible

The Sermon “*Hungering Dark*”
Allen H. Fisher, Jr.

AND TO MAKE PROPER RESPONSE. . .

*The Affirmation of Faith (from “*A Brief Statement of Faith*”)

**In life and in death we belong to God,
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.
We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed and blessing the children,
healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel,
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,**

**Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.**

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Prayers of Thanksgiving
The Lord's Prayer

p. 16 in the Hymnal

The Service of Offering
The Gathering of Our Gifts

The Offertory

*The Doxology and Prayer of Dedication

Majestic God, thank you for inviting us to share the blessings you pour out on us. We want to extend the healing ministry of Jesus who gave sight to those who were blind and new insight to some who only pretended to see. Use our resources to heal attitudes as well as bodies, to bring wholeness, not just cures. Embolden us to address the inequities of the earth that leave so many without food or shelter or hope. Lead us into your realm in the midst of our daily living. Amen.

GO IN GOD'S NAME. . .

*The Hymn 3

“Comfort, Comfort You My People”

*The Charge & Benediction

*Postlude