

## WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

**THE BIBLE** – We believe that EVERY word in the Bible is inspired by God, and therefore the whole Bible is the true, unalterable Word of God, clearly teaching the way of salvation. (2Ti. 3:15-17).

**GOD** – We believe that God is ONE (Dt. 6:4) and that He has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons (Mt. 3:13-17), the Father, our Creator and Preserver; the Son, Jesus, Who is both God and Man, and our only Saviour; the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts and enables us to live a God-pleasing life.

**MAN** – We believe that God created man with body and soul, in His image, but man of his own free will lost this image through sin. (Gn. 1:27; 2:7; 3.)

**SIN** – “Sin is the transgression of the Law.” (1Jn 3:4). There are two kinds of sin: original (inherited) sin (Ps. 51:5) and actual sin (sin in thought, word and deed) (Mt. 15:19). Man is subject to death and eternal damnation by reason of the guilt that attaches to sin.

**REDEMPTION** – We believe that God out of pure love and mercy redeemed mankind from sin through the all-sufficient sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, and His resurrection shows that God was satisfied with the work of Christ. (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Ro. 4:25).

**FAITH** – We believe that the sinner must personally receive the merits of Jesus for salvation and trust that, “Jesus died for me.” (Jn 17:3; Ja 1:21; Ps. 31:14).

**THE CHURCH** – We believe that the church, established by Christ is the whole number of believers in Christ, for only believers are members of the church. Jesus Christ is its one and only foundation (Ep. 2:19-22). The church is found wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution.

**SACRAMENTS** – We believe that Christ instituted two sacraments, and when Baptism is administered to infants and adults, according to the command of Christ, God offers His grace and forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). In the Lord’s Supper, believing communicants, with the bread and wine, also really receive Christ’s body and blood for the forgiveness of sins (1Co. 11:24-25).

**SECOND COMING OF CHRIST** – We believe that Christ will return visibly to earth (Acts 1:11) on the Last Day (Mk. 13:32) to judge the world (Acts 10:42). The believers will go to heaven, to be with God forever (1Th. 4:13-18). The unbelievers will go to hell, eternally separated from God (Mt. 25:32, 46).

**RESURRECTION** – We believe that on the Last Day believers in Christ will rise from the dead, their souls reunited with their earthly bodies and glorified by Christ (Jn 14:19; 17:24).

# Third Sunday in Advent

December 12, 2021

## INTROIT

*Psalm 146:5-8; Antiphon: Philippians 4:4*

*Rejoice in the Lord always;*

again I will say, Rejoice.

*Blessèd is he whose help is the God of Jacob,*

whose hope is in the LORD his God,

*who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,*

who keeps faith forever;

*who executes justice for the oppressed,*

who gives food to the hungry.

*The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.*

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

the LORD loves the righteous.

**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.**

*Rejoice in the Lord always;*

again I will say, Rejoice.

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

**P**

*Lord Jesus Christ,*

*we implore You to hear our prayers*

*and to lighten the darkness of our hearts*

*by Your gracious visitation;*

*for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,*

*one God, now and forever.*

**C**

♪[Amen]♪

## GRADUAL

*Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alt.*

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!*

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

*Behold, your king is coming to you;*

righteous and having salvation

*Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the LORD!*

From the house of the Lord we bless you.

## RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

*After each petition:*

**P**

*Lord, in Your mercy,*

**C**

**hear our prayer.**

### **Zephaniah 3:14-20 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

<sup>18</sup> I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

<sup>19</sup> Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

<sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the LORD.

### **Philippians 4:4-7 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be

made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### **Luke 7:18-35 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, <sup>19</sup> calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” <sup>20</sup> And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’ ”

<sup>21</sup> In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup> And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

<sup>24</sup> When John’s messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup> What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings’ courts. <sup>26</sup> What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup> This is he of whom it is written,

“ ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ ”

<sup>28</sup> I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

<sup>29</sup> (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, <sup>30</sup> but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

<sup>31</sup> “To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? <sup>32</sup> They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

“ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’

<sup>33</sup> For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ <sup>34</sup> The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ <sup>35</sup> Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

## THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Zephaniah 3:14–20

Philippians 4:4–7

Luke 7:18–28 (29–35)

### *The Coming of Jesus Enables Us to Rejoice*

The Third Sunday in Advent has traditionally been called by the Latin word, *Gaudete*, meaning “Rejoice!” For as you are called to repentance, so also are you urged to *rejoice* in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. By His own Cross, He has accomplished salvation for you; “*He has cleared away your enemies,*” “*taken away the judgments against you,*” and has come to reign in your midst. Indeed, He rejoices over you with gladness and song! (Zeph. 3:15–17). Therefore, even from prison St. Paul encourages us to “*rejoice in the Lord always,*” knowing that the peace of God will guard and keep us in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:4, 7). We find an example and encouragement in the case of John the Baptist. As he languishes in prison, he calls upon Jesus and is strengthened by the Word of the Gospel that he receives. The same good news is preached to you, by which all things are made new and even “*the dead are raised up*” (Luke 7:22). Do not be offended by the cross, therefore, but let your life be one of prayer and thanksgiving (Luke 7:23; Phil. 4:6).

### *Next Week’s Readings from God’s Word:*

December 19 Fourth Sunday in Advent (Series C):

Micah 5:2-5a, Hebrews 10:5-10, Luke 1:39-45 (46-56)