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**3rd Sunday**

**in Advent**

“They asked him, ‘Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophets?’ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even … whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.’” *John 1:25-27*

**AS WE GATHER**

“Advent” literally means “coming.” This sacred season is for the purpose of Jesus coming to us and coming for us. As we count down the days until Christmas, our hearts are getting ready to celebrate Jesus’ initial arrival, His first advent, when He entered into our world as the babe of Bethlehem. At the same time, we prepare our hearts for His second advent, His final coming, when He will return to earth to judge both the living and the dead and to give eternal life to all who trust in Him. Our Readings for today remind us of the special ministry of John the Baptist, who came as a witness to Christ, the light of the world. John himself was not the light, nor was he the centerpiece of God’s plan to save the world; no, John’s life was dedicated to preparing the way before the Lord and to get people ready for Jesus coming to save us. In many ways, we are invited to be like John: to trust in Jesus, our Savior and King, and then let the world know He is coming to the rescue of His people.

**+ CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION +**

(*LSB*, Divine Service, Setting Four, pg. 203)

**+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +**

**HYMN** *“Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Shouting”* (*LSB* 345)

**SALUTATION and COLLECT OF THE DAY** (*LSB*, pg. 205)

**OLD TESTAMENT** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 *(bulletin insert)*

**INTROIT** *(bulletin insert)*

**EPISTLE** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 *(bulletin insert)*

**HOLY GOSPEL** John 1:6-8, 19-28 *(bulletin insert)*

**NICENE CREED** (*LSB*, pg. 206)

**HYMN** *“Hark the Glad Sound”* (*LSB* 349)

**SERMON *“The Glad Sound”***

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**RETURNING OF OUR FIRST FRUITS**

**+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +**

**Divine Service and the Close Fellowship of Holy Communion**

*Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. The gifts include the Holy Supper in which we receive His true body and blood to eat and drink. Those welcome to the table acknowledge the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, confess their own sinfulness, and in true faith wish to receive the forgiveness and strength promised through this Holy Sacrament, as* ***instructed*** *… and* ***in unity of faith*** *… with God’s people here in this congregation. It is our sincerest desire that you join in the intimacy of this fellowship. However, if you are not, yet, an instructed and confirmed member-in-good-standing of a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, please visit with the pastor about such a fellowship before communing. If you wish to come forward for a blessing, you are welcome to join us at the rail to receive such. Please cross your arms in front of you to indicate that desire.*

**COMMUNION LITURGY** (*LSB*, pg. 208-210)

**DISTRIBUTION**

 *“Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness”* (*LSB* 636)

**NUNC DIMITTIS** *“Song of Simeon”*(*LSB*, pg. 211)

**POST-COMMUNION COLLECT** (*LSB*, pg. 212)

### BENEDICAMUS and BENEDICTION (LSB, pg. 212)

**HYMN** *“Joy to the World”* (*LSB* 387)

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 **All are welcome …**

 **… Christ is honored.**