**ADVENT MIDWEEK 3**

Resounding Psalms for Advent: Returned

“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. 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.’ The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.” *Psalm 126:1-3*

**AS WE GATHER**

We do not often emphasize the psalms during the Advent season, instead being eager to read about the prophecies, anticipating Jesus’ coming. Yet the psalms are God’s Word during terrible times to people psalms as we use them to prepare to celebrate our Lord’s birth with open eyes and ears.

Today we focus on Psalm 126, which speaks of the exiles that returned to Zion. And our joy shall be greater, for we will return to the new Eden, God’s great garden!

**+ SERVICE OF LIGHT +**

**VERSICLES and HYMN OF LIGHT**

Pastor: The Spirit and the Church cry out:

**People: Come, Lord Jesus.**

Pastor: All those who await His appearance pray:

**People: Come, Lord Jesus.**

Pastor: The whole creation pleads:

**People: Come, Lord Jesus.**

**HYMN** *“O Light Whose Splendor”* (*LSB* 891)

**THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT**

Pastor: Let us pray. 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.

**People: Amen.**

**+ PSALMODY +**

**PSALM 126**

Pastor: Those who sow in tears

**People: shall reap with shouts of joy!**

Pastor: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. 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.” The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.

**People: Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!**

Pastor: Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the | Negeb!
Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

**People: 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. Restore us, O God; let Your face shine, that we may be saved, that we may be saved! Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!**

**+ READINGS +**

**READING**Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Pastor: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**READING** 1 Peter 3:13-22

Pastor: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

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

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

**HYMN** *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”* (*LSB* 357, vs. 1, 6-7)

**MESSAGE**

**HYMN** *“My Soul Rejoices”* (*LSB* 933)

**OFFERING**

**+ PRAYER +**

**PRAYERS**

Pastor: Let us pray. O Lord who in the past returned Your people to the Promised Land, hear us as we pray for ourselves and all the Church: Strengthen our hope in all Your gracious promises, and increase faith and love among us and toward the world. Use us as fits Your gracious plans for them.

**People: Hear our prayer, O Lord. Return us to trust all Your promises, and stir up our hearts to serve You.**

Pastor: Hear us as we pray for all who have been forgotten by the world’s commerce: Surround with faith-filled people all who are hungry and homeless, the many who are migrants and refugees, people dealing with sudden ills and long-term disabilities, and all who are in mourning. Use us as fits Your gracious plans for them.

**People: Hear our prayer, O Lord. Return us to trust all Your promises, and stir up our hearts to serve You.**

Pastor: In the midst of a dark world You send us. Renew in us true faith and peace, faithfulness in worship, a spiritual vitality, and a confidence in Your promise of eternal life. Grant that many join us in fruitful worship. Use us as fits Your gracious plans for them.

**People: Hear our prayer, O Lord. Return us to trust all Your promises, and stir up our hearts to serve You.**

Pastor: By the blessed coming of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gave us His own righteousness, grant these our prayers, for we pray in His name.

**People: Amen.**

**COLLECT FOR TODAY**

Pastor: Return us to Your eternal Eden, Lord our God, and grant us such a sense of joy that the people around us may seek You and Your gracious blessings; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**COLLECT FROM SUNDAY**

Pastor: 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.

**People: Amen.**

**LUTHER’S EVENING PRAYER**

**People: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**BENEDICAMUS**

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the +Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN** *“The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns”* (*LSB* 348)

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 **All are welcome …**

 **… Christ is honored.**