



Prepare the way of the Lord -ISAIAH 40:3

DECEMBER 16-17, 2023

3RD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

### **MEDITATION PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP:**

O Creator, promise for the world, hear our prayers during this time of waiting. We hear your call to journey toward the light, and yet we stumble. Our journey toward your promise of Christ's coming is filled with doubt, pain and often despair that there is meaning in the waiting. Our losses, our worries overtake us. Create in us the thread of hope that pulls us forward from promise to the miracle of new life. Be born in us and fill us with hope to share with the world. Amen.

### **PASTORAL WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY:**

- ❖ *Darkness is everywhere, but God doesn't give in to the darkness, not even when we do. God comes to us in the midst of darkness and offers us light and hope.*  
- Charles Tobias (American Songwriter)
- ❖ *The coming of the Lord is the coming of the new, not the renewal of the old. Our Advent is the celebration of this hope.*  
- Thomas Merton (Monk, Teacher)
- ❖ *Into our midst comes Advent, representing not the end but the beginning of the church year; not the tying-up of all our loose ends, but God's opening up of our future. Its focus is not on all we have to do, but on all God has done, is doing and will do in the marvelous gift of Christ.* - Jean Cramer-Heuerman (Methodist Minister)

### **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

One: Holy and healing God,

**All: Send us Jesus once again. We are still bound by sin and fears; our world still knows the grief of children dying from hunger and young men dying in battle. Holy God, we long for an unending stream of hope and a deep reservoir of joy.**

One: Holy and just God,

**All: Send us Jesus once again. Deliver us from petty squabbles, bruising busyness, hardened hearts. Rule in our hearts with peace, and reign in our world with compassion.**

One: Holy and loving God,

**All: Send us Jesus once again. Let him be born in the words we say, revealed in the deeds we do, made alive in the care we extend. In every heart and nation, let songs of praise arise.**

***PRAISE SONG: Build Up (music at end of bulletin)***

***OUR CONFESSION:***

**All: How long, O God, 'til we see your face? How long 'til refugees can go home in peace? How long 'til drive-bys, accidental shootings and gang violence leave our neighborhoods? How long must people be discriminated against because of the color of their skin, their accent, their age, their sexual orientation, their handicap, their gender, their appearance?**

**O God, we long for your coming, yet fear the changes you may require. Remind us, God, that sweet baby Jesus grew up and called us to new lives of compassion and justice. Shout in the midst of packages and parties that you come to free us from sin and make us new. Make us ready for Christmas. Walk with us this Advent. Amen.**

***CONFESSION RESPONSE: Come, Lord Jesus (music at end of bulletin)***

***LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH:***

One: Advent is a time to prepare.

**All: Prepare the way of the Lord.**

One: Advent is a time to prepare our eyes to see the light of Christ.

**All: Prepare the way of the Lord.**

One: Advent is a time to prepare our hearts to receive the Word of Christ.

**All: Prepare the way of the Lord.**

One: Advent is a time to prepare to share the joy of Christ.

**All: Prepare the way of the Lord.**

One: Advent is a time to embrace the promise of Christ.

**All: Prepare for Jesus the Light of the world.**

***CANDLE LIGHTING:***

This weekend we light three candles. The first candle reminds us that Advent is a time to wait. The second candle reminds us that Advent is also a time to watch. The third candle teaches us that Advent is a time to prepare. We prepare ourselves in heart, soul, and mind to welcome Jesus, the Light of the World.

## **CLOSING PRAYER:**

God in heaven, help us to be people who wait on you, watch for you, and with the help of your spirit, prepare for you. Continue to shine your light in our lives as we look at all you have done, all you are doing, and all that you will do. Amen.

## **CANDLE LIGHTING SONG: *Jesus, the Light of the World*** *(music at end of bulletin)*

## **THE GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-20**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”’

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our ancestor”; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.’

And the crowds asked him, ‘What then should we do?’ In reply he said to them, ‘Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.’ Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, ‘Teacher, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.’ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.’

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

**MESSAGE: “Freedom from Crazyiness”**

**- Pastor David Schoob**

**MESSAGE RESPONSE SONG: *Always We Begin Again***  
**(music at end of bulletin)**

## **THE PRAYERS**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, and the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.***

### **THE SENDING OUT:**

Leader: Dismiss us, Lord, with confidence. Ground us in hope. Strengthen our faith.  
Remind us of those things worth dying for, That we might live in hope always.  
**Amen.**

**THE SENDING SONG: *The People Walk* (music at end of bulletin)**

### **THE DISMISSAL:**

Leader: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

# OUR *Welcome* IS WIDE OPEN

Skeptic. Cynic. Certain. Believer. Confident. Fearful. Doubter. Seeker. Questioner.  
Latino. Black. Asian. White. Indigenous. Immigrant. Any combination of ethnic or  
racial identities. Female. Male. Straight. Gay. Bisexual. Transgender. Questioning.  
Rich. Poor. Middle-class. Barely making it. Able bodied. Specially abled. Disabled.  
Young. Old. In-between. Married. Single. Divorced. Awaiting trial. Served time.  
On probation. Tired. Worn. Hopeful. Employed. Unemployed. Workaholic. Slacker.  
Anxious. Depressed. Confused. Centered. Inked. Pierced. Both. Life long follower  
of Jesus. Regular attender. Occasional attender. Curious onlooker. Don't quite fit the box.  
Need a prayer right now. **Trinity is a faith community where we believe  
in God's love, grace and mercy—illustrated most clearly through Jesus  
Christ. We believe we are all children of God, created in God's image  
and equal in God's sight. We believe God loves us just as we are and  
way too much to let us stay this way. We are called to live in God's light  
and be transformed, not through judgment but through unconditional love.  
We believe God's love is all-inclusive and is stronger than the pressure  
to be perfect regardless of whatever labels we carry. Saint. Sinner. Democrat.  
Republican. Independent. Libertarian. Green. Socialist. Apolitical. Addicted. Recovering.**  
We don't care what religion or denomination you are. We are all Human. We are all Flawed.  
We are all Beloved. —**You are welcome here.**

## COME *as you are.*

TRINITY CONGREGATION WELCOME STATEMENT | MARCH 2017



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*Build Up*

*Chorus*

Build up, pre - pare the way. Re - move the ob -  
struc - tions from my peo - ple's way. Build up,  
pre - pare the way. God is near.  
God is here to - day. *3rd time to Coda*  
Break the chains of in - jus - tice.  
God sees all our de - struc - tion;  
Let the op - pressed go free.  
how we get in love's way.  
Share our homes with the home - less and our  
Still God comes and meets us with a  
bread stead - y, with the hun - gry.  
heal - ing em - brace.

*Coda*

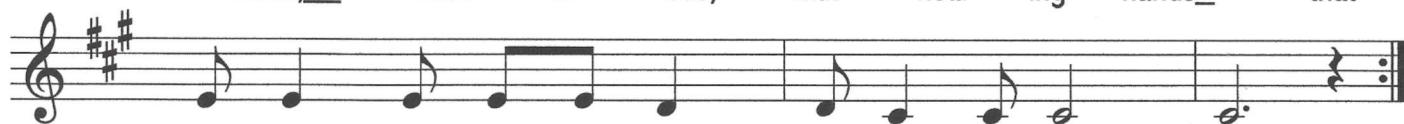
Then your light will break forth like the dawn  
and your heal - ing will break in - to song.

*Repeat Chorus.*

*Come, Lord Jesus*



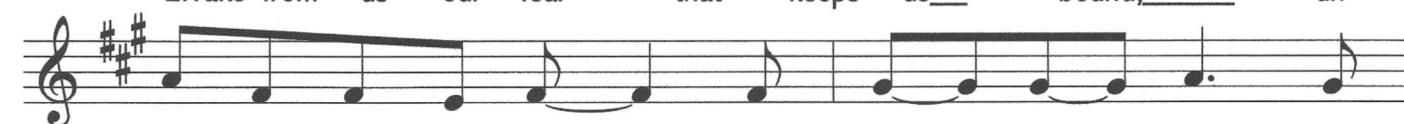
Come, \_\_\_ Lord Je - sus, with heal - ing hands\_ that



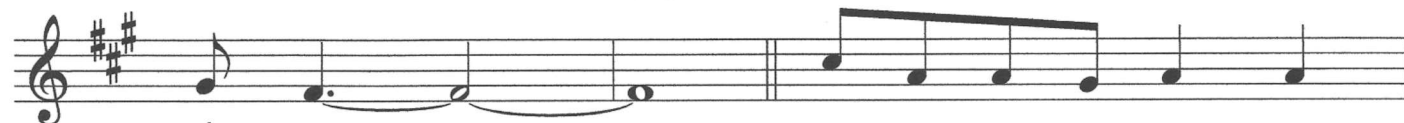
bind us to - geth - er in u - ni - ty. \_\_\_\_\_



1. Take from us our words that sound full of peace, but are  
2. Take from us our fear that keeps us \_\_\_ bound, \_\_\_ un -



on - ly sub - tile wea - pons that sep - a - rate us from each  
a - ble to reach out \_\_\_ and com - fort \_\_\_ one an -



oth - er. \_\_\_ *(Repeat chorus.)*  
oth - er. \_\_\_ *(Repeat chorus.)*

3. Fill us with your Ho - ly



Spi - rit. Cre - ate in us a new heart that



reach - es out to hold each oth - er. \_\_\_\_\_ *(Repeat chorus.)*

### Jesus, the Light of the World

We'll walk in the light, beau - ti - ful light, come, where the  
dew-drops of mer - cy shine bright. O, shine all a - round us by  
day and by night, Je - sus, the light of the world.

### Always We Begin Again

1. Al - ways we be - gin a - gain, where we are and been be - fore.  
2. Al - ways we be - gin a - gain, reach - ing out to those in pain,  
3. Al - ways we be - gin a - gain, grow - ing ev - 'ry day more strong,  
If we stum - ble and if we fall, we rise each day to soar.  
show - ing grace and for - giv - ing those, who've hurt us time a - gain.  
grate - ful for this com - mu - ni - ty, who with us walk a - long.  
Al - ways we be - gin a - gain, liv - ing ful - ly in our time.  
Al - ways we be - gin a - gain, with the Spir - it as our guide,  
Al - ways we be - gin a - gain grate - ful for the seeds we sow,  
Lis - ten - ing with our heart's own ear, hear - ing God's own rhyme.  
bal - anc - ing in our work and prayer, hum - bly with - out pride.  
wit - ness - ing God's own work at hand, blos - som - ing and grow.



*The People Walk*

The peo - ple walk through - out the world to - geth - er and  
cry out, "Come, O Lord;" the peo - ple who long to claim the  
prom - ise, God's lib - er - at - ing Word.

1. The poor ones of the world a - wait the  
2. You broke the bonds of the sin, un - tied the  
3. The life - blood of the world is shed in  
dawn of hope, when jus - tice will shine and make op -  
cap - tive's hands, re - leased us from fear and slav - 'ry  
mind - less war; and fam - 'lies de - sire a home where  
pres - sion flee. The emp - ty hands of all are raised to  
to the law. We lift our hands in hope, we put our  
con - flicts cease. With all the world we lift our hands in  
you, Lord God; oh, set us free!  
trust in to you, you, O God of love.  
hope to you, you, O God of peace.