

**HYMN #715 — *Christ, Be Our Light***

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

God of grace, hear our prayer.

*Petitions conclude...* name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**THE OFFERING**

**OFFERING VOLUNTARY — Jill Sousek**

## COMMUNION

**THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**LORD'S PRAYER** [TRADITIONAL]

**COMMUNION VOLUNTARY — Jill Sousek**

**BLESSING**

**POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.

Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

## SENDING

**BENEDICTION**

**HYMN #266 — *All Earth is Hopeful***

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE — Jill Sousek**



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# Third Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER 14, 2025

WELCOME TO ZION

**PRELUDE — Jill Sousek**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

We come with wonder in our hearts at the mystery that God's grace is for us.  
**We wonder if God can really do all the work.**

We come with wonder in our hearts at the mystery that God is for us.  
**We are focused on getting everything accomplished by a deadline.**

During this season of Wonder, let us remember that God, in love, brought salvation to us. **God's grace is for us.**

**HYMN #242 — *Aware! Awake, and Greet the New Morn***

## ADVENT WREATH

The Lord, your God, is in your Midst.  
**God's grace pulls us together.**

At that time God will bring you home, at the time when God gathers you.  
**God's grace pulls us together.**

God proclaims the good news of grace.  
**God's grace pulls us together. Prepare us even now.**

We light the third candle to declare to everyone that grace pulls us together.

**HYMN #248 — *People Look East*** [VERSE 3]

**CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Holy God, you gather us together as your people. Help us! Remind us of your grace and mercy. Help us each day to see your grace-filled beginnings. Hear us as we confess you:

***A time for silent reflection and self-examination.***

For times when we fail to recognize that your grace is for us. **Forgive us.**

For days when we forget that you not only love us, but also that you love all people. **Forgive us.**

For the days when we fail to share your love and grace. **Forgive us.**

For the times we are afraid to tell our own story or listen to someone tell theirs. **Forgive us.**

For the times we exclude people from the community into which you draw us. **Forgive us.**

For the times we are afraid to follow you. **Forgive us.**

Dear friends, God is at work in our lives though it might be difficult to see some days. God's grace will continually claim, restore, and remind us once again that we are loved. In the name of Jesus ☩ your sins are forgiven, and you are set free to love. **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. **Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## WORD

### FIRST READING — *Isaiah 35:1-10*

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. God will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the

burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

### SECOND READING — *James 5:7-10*

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the door! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord**

### GOSPEL — *Matthew 11:2-11*

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: those who are blind receive their sight, those who are lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, those who are deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the dominion of heaven is greater than he."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## CHILDRENS' SERMON

### THE SERMON — Pastor Scott Ludford