

WELCOME:

ADVENT CALL TO WORSHIP:

"Wilderness"

We have wilderness and dry land
at the heart of Arizona.
We may not venture into it very often
but we know it is there,
it has its place on our maps.

More familiar to us, however,
is the wilderness in our own hearts,
the empty spaces in our own lives,
the desert of longings
that engulf us at Christmas.

Wilderness is a hard place,
but also a place of beauty and grace,
revealed by its sunsets and sunrises,
the glow of ancient rocks,
the moon shining on the sand.

Do not be afraid
of the desert places in your life,
for it is here
that the Good News
may be heard most profoundly.
May it be so.

*~ adapted from Ann Siddall Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith
Community website. <http://stillpointsa.org.au/prayer/prayers-and-liturgies/>*

GATHERING SONG: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Verse 4 (ELW)

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING:

Watch and wait for the coming of Christ! Each week of Advent we will light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, as we welcome these gifts of the Christ child born in our hearts to share with the world.

On this Third Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of joy. May its light remind us of the angel's good news of great joy for all the people and enlighten us to reflect the joy of Christ radiantly upon our neighbors and our world.

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.
Help us to prepare for your Advent within the world,
Prepare our hearts to receive you with joy,
and send us to share your joy with all we meet. Amen.

OFFERING

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Contemplation" - Anderson Conkle (Piano)

Your generous giving sustains our ministry. To give online, go to desertcross.org and click the online giving button, sign up for online Bill Pay, or mail offerings to Desert Cross, 8600 S. McClintock Dr., Tempe AZ 85284. We give thanks to God as you help us reach out beyond the walls!

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 *Reader John Christiansen*

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.



*Desert Cross Lutheran Church
Gilbert, AZ*

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: "Come, Light Our Hearts"

For You, O Lord our souls in stillness wait
For You, O Lord our souls in stillness wait
Truly our hope is in You
Truly our hope is in You

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GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON: Pastor Doris Nolan

SERMON SONG: "Christ, Be Our Light" (ELW 715—Verses 1, 2, and 5)

Verse 1

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Verse 2

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. **Refrain**

Verse 5

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. **Refrain**

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

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*Desert Cross Lutheran Church
Tempe, AZ*

Advent Prayer:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Christ, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray.

God of Advent,

In this season of waiting, of longing,
of looking for joy to come into our world
we are seeking the light of Christ ...

In our own lives
Help us see your light

In our neighbourhoods
Help us share your light

In our families
Help us feel your light

In our work
Help us hear your light

In our nation
Help us shine your light

In our world
Help us reflect your light

In the pandemic and in all suffering
May your light heal us

Seek and you shall find
Knock and the door will be opened
Ask and it will be given to you

Jesus Christ you are the light of the world
May we have eyes to see you
Ears to hear you
Hands and feet to share you
Come into our world today
Amen.

adapted from Grace Church, Ealing, London. <http://www.freshworship.org/>

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.



SENDING SONG: "Joy to the World" (ELW 267)

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods,
rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

BENEDICTION:

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill your heart with joy,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,
✠ now and forever.
Amen.

Musicians: Daniel Decker (vocalist), Michael Lottes (vocalist), and Anderson Conkle (piano)