



Riverside
Congregational Church

December 12, 2021
Third Sunday of Advent

Prayer of Invocation

(paraphrase of Zephaniah 3:17-18)

The LORD, our God, is in our midst,
a champion who gives victory;

God will rejoice with gladness,

God will renew you in Love;

God will exult over us with loud singing as on a day of festival.

“Gather Us In” (W&R #649, vs. 1-3)

Here in this place new light is streaming
Now is the darkness vanished away
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to you in the light of this day
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken
Gather us in, the blind and the lame
Call to us now and we shall awaken
We shall arise at the sound of our name



“Gather Us In” (W&R #649, vs. 1-3)

We are the young, our lives are a mystery
We are the old who yearn for your face
We have been sung throughout all of history
Called to be light to the whole human race
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty
Gather us in, the proud and the strong
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly
Give us the courage to enter the song.



“Gather Us In” (W&R #649, vs. 1-3)

Here we receive new life in the waters;
Here we receive the bread of new birth
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
Call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion;
Give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.



Prayer of Confession

God who called both John and Mary, You put words of revolution into their mouths. Mary rejoiced that You are changing the world; John called us to change our hearts and lives. We have failed to listen. We've paid attention for a season and then forgotten their challenge. We've turned back to the ways of this world, seeking wealth and worldly measures of success. We have forgotten the radical transformation that Mary sang of, and that John called us to pursue. Forgive us for paying lip service to Your covenant. Forgive us for failing to turn to Your ways.

Prayer of Confession

Forgive us for falling, once again, for the comforts and pleasures of this world while others suffer. Call us into forgiveness and true transformation. In the name of Christ, who continues to work in our hearts and lives, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Eternally Rejoicing God, we rejoice with You! You created a beautiful, wondrous expanding universe, swirling galaxies, exploding stars, and You made us out of the dust of the stars. Like a magnificent painting, we emerged in the work, and You delight in us as Your children. In times of deep despair, in the murkiness of our world's struggles, in the muck of daily life, may we remember You are still creating and rejoicing. Help us to laugh when we have forgotten how. Remind us to find pleasure in life when the world presses down. Guide us to seek help when in all seems futile, for You desire for us to rejoice. Help us to seek, find, and keep joy in our lives. Amen.

Passing the Peace

God calls us to create a community which welcomes all:

To care for the infirm, to heal the shame of the outcast,

To create a welcome for all.

Let these gifts we offer begin this process of reconciliation!

One: May the Peace of Christ be with you!

Many And also with you!

Luke 3:7-18

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 ax 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.”

Luke 3:7-18

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.”

Luke 3:7-18

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.



Sermon:
"A joyful home"
Rev. Bob Nolan

“As a Fire is Meant for Burning” (#551, vs. 1&2)

As a fire is meant for burning
with a bright and warming flame,
so the church is meant for mission,
giving glory to God’s name.

Not to preach our creeds or customs,
but to build a bridge of care,
we join hands across the nations,
finding neighbors everywhere.



“As a Fire is Meant for Burning” (#551, vs. 1&2)

We are learners; we are teachers;
we are pilgrims on the way.

We are seekers; we are givers;
we are vessels made of clay.

By our gentle loving actions,
we would show that Christ is light.
in a humble, listening spirit,
we would live to God’s delight.





Pastoral Prayer
Rev. Bob Nolan

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom and the power, and the glory;
Forever and ever. Amen!

Call To Offering

God calls us to create a community which welcomes all:

To care for the infirm, to heal the shame of the outcast,

To create a welcome for all.

Let these gifts we offer begin this process of reconciliation!

“Give Thanks” (#359)

Give thanks, with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ his Son
And now let the weak say, “I am strong,”
let the poor say, “I am rich,”
because of what the Lord had done for us
Give thanks!



“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!



“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!



“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who order all things, far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and cause us in her ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!



“O Come, O Come Emmanuel (#154)

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!





Benediction

God be with you,

God be with you,

God be with you 'till we meet again

O---God be with you,

God be with you,

God be with you 'till we meet again