



Celebrate

Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

Prayer of the Day

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.**

First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

The wilderness and the dry land shall
be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and
blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom
abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
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.

³Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful
heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be
opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be
opened;

⁶then 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;

⁷the 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.

⁸A 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;

continued