



St. Andrew Church's "Why" Statement... *To come together as a worshipping community, nourished by God's love so that we may reflect God's love to others.*
Adopted April 2023

December 17, 2023
Third Sunday of Advent

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

+GATHERING+

The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God.

WELCOME

PRELUDE *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* *arr. T. Stults*
Handbell Choir

Lighting of Advent Wreath

Advent means “coming.” It is a time of longing, watching, and praying for God’s healing, transformative presence to be ever more vibrantly present in the world. In this sense, Advent is a season in which we focus on that key phrase in the Lord’s Prayer, “thy kingdom come.” As Christians, the good news we strive to live by and declare is that love is stronger than hate, peace more enduring than war, hope more powerful than despair — and the light of God’s love will dispel forever the shadows of shame cast by violence, suffering, sorrow, and contempt. Each weekly candle lighting litany begins by telling the truth about a world that is all too barren of hope, peace, joy, and love. And then, after the candle has been lit, we cry out with all people of faith — past, present, and future — that God is, even now, coming into the world! (The Litanies for the Lighting of the Advent Wreath are provided by SALT, and used by permission.)

Week Three, December 17: Joy

Reader One: When I look around, I see shadows of sadness, families who have lost loved ones, people in prison, people who are isolated and feel on their own...

Reader Two: When I look around, I see shadows of grief, people dreading the holidays because of painful memories, or because they don't want to spend another Christmas alone...

Reader One: In the face of sadness, we light a candle of joy...

Reader Two: In the face of grief, in the face of loss, we light a candle of joy... (*Light the third candle in your Advent wreath.*)

Reader One: May the light from this candle overcome the world.

Reader Two: May the light from this candle say to all that God's joy is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader One: Friends, be not afraid, God's joy is at hand!

GATHERING HYMN People, Look East ELW 248

- 1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Guest, is on the way.

- 2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flow'r may flourish.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Rose, is on the way.

- 3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Star, is on the way.

- 4 Angels announce with shouts of mirth
him who brings new life to earth.
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east, and sing today—
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and
the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE

ELW P. 120

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer-cy.**

For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us

pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY.

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

+WORD+

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

CHILDREN'S BIBLE STORY TIME

Children may leave worship with the teachers for Bible Story Time. They will return during the Hymn of the Day.

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

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

A reading from Isaiah

- 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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
 then were we like those who dream.
²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

⁵Those who ¹sowed with tears
will reap with ¹songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

A reading from Thessalonians

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.
Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Come Now, O Prince of Peace ELW 247

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Ososǒ, Ososǒ



O - so - sǒ o - so - sǒ, pyong - hwa - ŭi - im - gŭm
 1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sǒ.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope

Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947

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GOSPEL

John 1:6-8, 19-28

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY Hark the Glad Sound

ELW 239

- 1 Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
and ev'ry voice a song.
- 2 He comes the pris'ners to release,
in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.
- 3 He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,

and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

A Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need especially Bill, Marge, Arthur, Jim, Callum, Paul, Charles, Steven, Johanna, Carole, Anna, Nancy, Susan, Marie, Jean, Tracey, Donna, Michael, Pat, Robert, Karen, Roy, and those we name before you, on our lips or in the silence of our hearts.

(Pause for silence).

Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

Amen.

SHARE THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

+MEAL+

God feeds us in the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

OFFERTORY HYMN

In This Feast of Love

ACS 962

In This Feast of Love



Täs - sä pöy - däs - sä, *täs - sä*
 1 In this feast of love, in this
 2 In this bread and wine, in this
 3 Grant us peace, O Lord, grant us



pöy - däs - sä *syn - ti - sil - le*
 feast of love, Lord, you share your
 bread and wine, you have prom - ised,
 peace, O Lord; fill us with the



it - se - si an - nat, *Ju - ma - lan Ka - rit - sa!*
 blood and your bod - y, Je - sus, Lamb of God.
 Lord, to be with us, Lamb . . of God div - ine.
 joy of your Spir - it, ev - er - liv - ing Word.

Text: Jarkko Maukonen; tr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954

Music: TÄSSÄ PÖYDÄSSÄ, Jarkko Maukonen; arr. Mark Sedio

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OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray:

God our provider,

by your merciful hand

abundance springs up from the earth.

Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.

Let them be a sign of your steadfast love

and faithfulness for all people,

through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,

through whom you will also make all things new

in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**ELW pg. 130**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
 heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
 high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
 Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
 Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
 Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
 Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
 Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
 Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
 the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,

Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate,

Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

You are invited to come forward down the center aisle to the altar railing receive the Meal today. Please fill in along the railing from the pulpit to lectern sides. You may either stand or kneel to receive the Meal. The Meal will be served continuously. After you have received the Meal and after a quiet prayer of thanksgiving you may return to your seats via the side aisles. Gluten free wafers are available as an alternative. Please ask. White grape juice, in the center ring of each serving tray, is available as an alternative to the wine. Praise God for the life giving presence of the crucified-risen Christ in the bread and wine of this holy meal!

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN “Lamb of God” ELW p. 135



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray:

Generous God,

in bread and cup you have revealed your glory
for all people to see together.

Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior

Amen.

+SENDING+

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

The God of peace bless you,
 the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
 and the anointing of the Spirit ✝ remain upon you
 now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN **Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers**

ELW 244

- 1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers,
 and let your lights appear;
 the evening is advancing,
 and darker night is near.
 The bridegroom is arising
 and soon is drawing nigh.
 Up, pray and watch and wrestle;
 at midnight comes the cry.

- 2 The watchers on the mountain
 proclaim the bridegroom near;
 go forth as he approaches
 with alleluias clear.
 The marriage feast is waiting;
 the gates wide open stand.
 Arise, O heirs of glory;
 the bridegroom is at hand.

- 3 The saints, who here in patience
 their cross and suff'rings bore,
 shall live and reign forever
 when sorrow is no more.
 Around the throne of glory

the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him
their diadems of gold.

- 4 Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for,
o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted,
we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption
that sets your people free!

DISMISSAL

Beloved of God,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

WORSHIP LEADERS for Sunday, December 17, 2023

Rev. Geoff Sinibaldo, Deacon Gwynne Hopko

Assistant Minister: Terry Gustafson

Lector: Bob Herold

Tech Team: Abigail Griffin, Ken Griffin, Noah Galvin, Connor Pratt

Ushers: Keith Hintz, Amanda Hintz, Michael Beaudoin

Altar Guild: Denise Martin

Today we welcome back as our worship leader, the Rev. Geoff Sinibaldo. Pastor Sinibaldo currently serves as a teacher in the Religious Studies Department and as Campus Pastor at Notre Dame High School in West Haven. He previously served Lutheran congregations in Avon, New Canaan and Old Saybrook.

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THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Monday, December 18, 2023

6:00 p.m. Bristol Chorale

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

6:45 Handbell Choir

7:30 Voice Choir

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. 4 – Church Bible Study via Zoom

Thursday, December 21, 2023

7:00 p.m. AA (Fellowship Hall)

7:00 p.m. Al Anon (Youth Room)

Sunday, December 24, 2023; Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. Service of Holy Communion (Sanctuary, You Tube, Facebook)

10:30 a.m. Coffee Hour

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service of Holy Communion

ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH, BRISTOL, CT

1125 Stafford Ave., Bristol, CT

Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Church Phone: 860.583.5809

Email: churchoffice@standrewct.org

The Rev. Les Swenson, Transition Pastor Gwynne Hopko, Deacon, Minister of Music

Nicole Gergler, Church Administrator

POINSETTIAS AND WREATHS

Those wishing to adorn our sanctuary this Christmas season may do so by completing this form and placing it in the offering plate or leaving it for Nicole in the church office.

Donations of \$20.00 are requested. All donations will be used for the purchase of poinsettias and wreaths.

Please make checks payable to

“St. Andrew Lutheran Church”.

All gifts are given to the Glory of God. Is there someone you'd like to recognize additionally with this gift?

In loving memory of: _____

In thanksgiving for: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please return by Sunday, December 17, 2023



SPECIAL GIFTS

I would like to make a special Christmas offering to the following St. Andrew fund:

Capital Improvement Fund \$_____

General Fund: \$_____

Mission Endowment Fund: \$_____

TOTAL Offering \$_____

All gifts are given to the Glory of God. Is there someone you'd like to recognize additionally with this gift?

In loving memory of: _____

In thanksgiving for: _____

GIVEN BY: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to

"St. Andrew Lutheran Church"

