



ADVENT 3 16 December 2018

Call to Worship Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!
The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.
And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN 608 Spirit of truth and grace

Welcome and Notices



They even manage to get religion into Christmas!

Lighting of the third Advent Candle

We light this candle to recall Simeon and Anna and all those who are the Quiet in the Land who have awaited every generation for the glory of the Lord to be revealed and have patiently accepted your will and timing. May the light overcome the darkness.

Rejoice in the Lord always, show gentleness to all, do not be anxious, make your needs known to God by prayer, with thanksgiving; and the peace of God guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

HYMN 472 Come, though long-expected Jesus

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

REFLECTION I will change their shame into praise

This is Christmas

Bright lights blazing, garish colours,
'MERRY CHRISTMAS' on neon signs.

Illumined streets, shops, trees, churches who notice boards,
with Christ child's shrine, proclaim in letters three feet high,
'CHRIST COMES – THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.'

*He doesn't come here,
beyond the edge,
into this darkness.*

Bright greetings cards, cosy firesides.

Cotton wool sheep, rustic stables, skaters, robins, Old Man Christmas,
camels, crackers, laden tables, eighteenth-century Arcadia.

'CHRIST COMES – THE GOOD SHEPHERD.'

*He doesn't come here,
beyond the margin,
into the hopelessness.*

Bright homes prepared for parties. Families round their Christmas trees.
Office 'do's' and get togethers. Gifts exchanged – warmth, comfort, ease.
Carollers singing round a crib.

'CHRIST IS BORN – AND LIVES AMONG US.'

'HE IS LOVE. HE IS LOVE!'



The
United
Reformed
Church



*So where is love out here, in the cold,
ISOLATED?*

THIS IS CHRISTMAS
THIS IS CHRISTMAS
AND EVERY DAY
FOR THOUSANDS LIKE ME
THIS IS CHRISTMAS

HYMN 283 The voice of God... (tune Woodlands at #286)

Luke 3:7-18 “What then should we do?”

REFLECTION

ROVING REPORTER



OFFERTORY HYMN 772 Sung 3 times

Prayers of intercession and Lord’s Prayer

HYMN 512 To God be the glory!

The Blessing said together:

Follow where the Spirit of Hope leads us
Listen, as the Child of Peace cries for us
Rejoice, as the love of God embraces us
And let us go with Hope, Peace and Love in our hearts
And the blessing of Creator, Child and Spirit for ever within us. Amen

We sing 786:

**May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place
May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.**



KEEP

CALM

IT'S

STILL

~~**ONLY**~~

ADVENT