

## Order of Service for 12-13-20 Recording

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**Opening Hymn:** *“On Jordan’s Bank, the Baptist’s Cry”* -  
**Hymn #344**



**Confession and Absolution:** page 203

### **Entrance Psalm**

L: Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD;

**C: and grant us Your salvation.**

L: Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,

**C: for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints.**

L: Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,

**C: that glory may dwell in our land.**

L: Yes, the LORD will give what is good,

**C: and our land will yield its increase.**

L: Righteousness will go before Him

**C: and make His footsteps a way.**

**ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever, Amen.**

L: Show us Your steadfast love, O Lord;

**C: and grant us Your salvation.**

**Lord, Have Mercy:** page 204

**Hymn:** *“Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”* - **Hymn #873**

### **Salutation:**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### **Prayer of the Day:**

P: Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

**Old Testament Lesson:** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

R: The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning,

the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul 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 like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the LORD God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Epistle Lesson:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

R: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.

R: This is the Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Alleluia and Verse:** page 205

### **Holy Gospel:** John 1:6-8, 19-28

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through Him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light... And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked Him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**



**Apostle's Creed:**

**All: I believe in believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

**Sermon Hymn: “Break Forth O Beauteous, Heavenly Light” - Hymn 378**

**Sermon: “From Darkness into Light” - John 8:12**

The “Golden One” ruled over all. He blazed with such dazzling light that there was no chance of darkness in His presence. All was light. His was not a flashing light or a glow that went high and low. It shone constantly with a brilliance that overcame even the sun.

Yet the “Golden One” didn’t just shine. He loved. In His love He made people—people who could love Him by loving each other. He could share His brightness with them so they could reflect it to each other. There was no stumbling around, no hiding, no need to cover anything up, no feelings of shame. All lived in the light of the “Golden One.”

But people found that if they turned away from the “Golden One,” there was a shadow. In that shadow they could make things on their own. They could make figures and shapes and move them along at the control of their fingers and bodies. They could make their own world apart from the “Golden One.”

More and more the people turned from the “Golden One” for their own world of shadow. They imagined that they could make all kinds of things—towers that went up to heaven, inventions that made everything so easy, images to satisfy all their desires, virtual reality to fulfill all their lusts. But it was all just images and shadows. It all just led to darkness.

The people got more and more used to darkness. They became like the bugs that scurry into corners in our basements to hide when we turn on a light. In fact if they ever got near the “Golden One,” they covered their faces in fear. They shouted, “You are too much for us!” Even brief glimpses of Him were too much. They preferred the darkness and the “Dark One” who dwelt there.

The “Golden One” does not look the other way with darkness. Darkness doesn’t just mean the absence of light; it is the destruction of love. In darkness it is all about “me.” In darkness the world is not a blessing to make people thankful, but a place to exploit for selfish desires. In darkness people live to fight against each other. In darkness there is deceit and a twisting of truth. In darkness there is

death. And the “Golden One” will not let darkness curb His light. In His presence darkness is consumed and destroyed.

Yet the “Golden One” loved the people. He would not abandon them in darkness. He sent glimpses of His light to the people—special events and special people who told others about Him. But still there was darkness.

So the “Golden One” decided to invade the peoples’ world of darkness. He could have done it with all His power and might. The darkness would have been gone, but it would have been too much for the people in darkness. It would be like an aggressive chemotherapy that would kill the cancer, but also the body with it. Instead the “Golden One” became a human to shine a light into the world of darkness.

He established a “beachhead” of light in a small part of the world. He gained some followers. “Pockets” of light began to appear as people came to Him to find out what He was all about. Three times light shone from above on Him so that people could know who He was. He spoke about light and walking in the light. He called Himself ‘the light of the world.’

But darkness counterattacked. It sent followers after the “Golden One” to try to snuff out His light. But He turned tables on them by driving darkness out of people, showing light through His acts of mercy and His words of hope. His light exposed the evil of darkness and made clear the truth of light.

Then the “Golden One” seemed to give up. The pockets of light seemed to disappear as people one by one fell back into darkness. One of His followers even became so filled with darkness that he betrayed the “Golden One” to the dark. The dark ones did everything in the darkness to hide from the light. They seized Him in the darkness, led Him in darkness to a dark place, and in the darkness they put Him through a monkey trial. The “Golden One” did not resist them. He continued to shine His light, but let darkness lead Him away.

The forces of dark used the darkness in people to execute the “Golden One.” As He was dying, though His light shone. It did not shine with bright, overpowering magnificence, but in love, love that even forgave the ones killing Him. But as He was dying, light seemed to abandon Him, He entered into the very pit of darkness, darker than any deep cave. In that darkness His light seemed to be extinguished.

But as the “Golden One” died He took darkness with Him. He took its power and buried it into the deep pit with Him.

Then the “Golden One” came out of the pit. He shone with a light He only gave a glimpse of when He came to the earth. It was not His full brilliance, but a light that awoke His followers. He shone His light off and on to them; then with a special brilliance went back to where He first came from.

But that did not end His light here. No, He had firmly established His light among people here. And that light grew, not with big flashes, but as candles passed from one person to another. His

followers did not overpower people by their power or intelligence or charisma or wealth. No, their light was the warmth of love made real by serving others. Their light was telling others about the light of the “Golden One.”

That light continues to shine in our world today. Even though things can appear dark as the effects of Covid-19 still darken our world. In fact the darker things get, the more the light shines. Listen to what we can read about the “Golden One:

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1)

This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1)

When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8)

The time will come when light will return, not as a candle, but in full brilliance. The “Golden One” will show forth in full glory, but that will not be too much for His people to handle. It will not overwhelm them because they no longer live in darkness. They now live in His light.

### **Prayer of the Church**

(P: Lord, in Your mercy; C: **Hear our prayer.**)

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**The Blessing:** (Pastor)

**C: Amen**

**Closing Hymn:** *“Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding”* - **Hymn 345**

The Lord's  
Prayer

