



A Liturgy of the Word - Third Sunday in Advent

Date: 17 December 2023

The full service or the sermon can be viewed on the website.

Processional Hymn

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
all you children of the day!"

See, the Lamb, so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all, to be forgiv'n;

So, when next he comes in glory
and the world is wrapped in fear,
he will shield us with his mercy
and with words of love draw near.

Honor, glory, might, dominion
to the Father and the Son
with the everlasting Spirit
while eternal ages run!

Call to Worship

The Lord has done great things for us
Holy is his name!

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.
**Those who go out weeping, bearing seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.**

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Introductory Rite

On this third Sunday of Advent, we continue our focus on John the Baptist as herald of the coming Messiah. John's faithful obedience to God's call meant that the way for Christ was prepared. May we too be heralds of Jesus' coming and, this Advent, may we say with John, "He must increase, I must decrease," as the rising light of Jesus the Son dawns in our hearts.

Lighting of the 3rd Advent Candle

Soon we shall celebrate the birth of Jesus.
We worship God with joy in our hearts as we are reminded of the words the angel said on that first Christmas Day:
"Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people!"



John 15:9-11 says:

Jesus said: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept God's commandments and abide in God's love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

Lighting of the 3rd Candle:

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is joy, joy that is ours not only at Christmas but always. The colour of the candle is rose — the colour of the sky when dawn breaks through the night.

Let us pray:

O Holy One, as Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. We feel a joy in our lives and see it in those around us. Still, for some of us this is a sad time because of unhappy things that have happened in our lives. Help us to have that joy that does not depend on earthly happiness, but on you. Help us to be filled with your joy so that we may share it with a joyless world. Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen**



**Almighty God
to whom all hearts are open
all desires known
and from whom no secrets are hid:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit
that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your holy Name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Penitence: (1 John 4:20-21)

Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters.



**Almighty God, our heavenly Father
in penitence we confess
that we have sinned against you
through our own fault
in thought, word, and deed
and in what we have left undone.
For the sake of your Son, Christ our Lord
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life
to the glory of your name.**



The Lord enrich you with his grace,
and nourish you with his blessing;
the Lord defend you in trouble and keep you from all evil;
the Lord accept your prayers,



and absolve you from your offences,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Amen.

The Collect 

God of hope and joy,
you sent John the Baptist
to announce the coming of your Son:
inspire all who serve in your Church
to prepare for his coming again
by turning us from disobedience
to your loving service;
through Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

The Word of God 

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Gospel Reading 

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sermon 

Sermon: The Revd Sharmain James

Affirmation of Faith 

Let us declare our faith in the words of the Baptismal creed:

**I believe and trust in God the Father
who made the world.**

**I believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ
Who redeemed humankind.**

**I believe and trust in his Holy Spirit
who gives life to the people of God.**

**I believe and trust in one God
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen

Prayers of Intercession 

Gracious Father, as we draw ever closer to marking the birth of your Son in our lives, we lift our hearts and hands to you as we make these prayers in concert with the universal Church.

God of all nations, your love is without limit and without end. Enlarge our vision of your redeeming purpose this Advent. By the example of your Son, make us ready to serve the needs of the whole world. May neither pride of place nor hardness of heart make us despise any for whom Christ died or injure any in whom he lives. As we anticipate the birth of your Son in our own lives, help to see Christ's birth in the lives of others, especially those with whom we have differences and with whom we struggle to reconcile.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**



Mighty and merciful God, may your kindness be known to all in this season of Advent. Hear the prayers of those who cry to you; have mercy on those who are in misery; may your grace be poured out on those who sit in darkness; increase the number of those who love and serve you daily. We pray for the work and witness of the Anglican Church, here in our own Diocese, and throughout the Anglican Communion. Grant your grace and wisdom to Steve, our Bishop, and Thabo, our Metropolitan.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Preserve our land from all things hurtful, we pray for the realisation of true justice and equity; may you uphold those who at the margins of our society. Be gracious to those countries around the world that have been desolated by war, famine, disease, or persecution, especially the Holy Land, the land of the birth of your Son; and grant that the course of the world may be so ordered in obedience to your will that people may live in security, freedom from want, that their children may grow up to be makers of peace.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Loving and Holy Spirit we pray that we and all people may increasingly work together to establish on earth the rule of your kingdom; that the resources of the world may be gathered, distributed, and used with unselfish motives and scientific skill for the greatest benefit of all; that beauty may be given to our towns and cities, that we would have respect and regard for the preservation of our environment, that future generations would learn to love their earth, love one another, and love you, their creator.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We pray Lord, this Advent especially, for those who are ill or ailing. May your healing hand be upon them, and may you grant them relief from their pain and discomfort. We pray especially for those on our prayer list. We are mindful too of those who, in the midst of what should be a season of celebration and family-time, may be mourning the loss of a loved one, or remembering a death and feeling the absence of a loved one. Grant your peace and comfort to those who are mourning at this time.

We make these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen**

Prayer for Offerings



Compassionate Father, thank you that you are our strength and our song, you fill our hearts with joy. May we give our offerings to you with gladness and joy. Everything we have belongs to you and we rejoice to give some of your abundant gifts back to you. Bless the tithes and offerings we give today. Let the majesty of the Father be the light that guides us, the compassion of the Son be the love that inspires us and the presence of the Spirit be the power that empowers us. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer



**Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your Name
your kingdom come
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen**

Final Hymn



**Thou, whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight;
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel-day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light.**



Thou, who didst come to bring
on thy redeeming wing
healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind,
sight to the inly blind,
O now to all mankind
let there be light.

Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy Dove,
speed forth thy flight;
move on the water's face,
bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place
let there be light.

Holy and blessèd Three,
glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might;
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in fullest pride,
through the earth far and wide
let there be light.

Author: John Marriott (1780-1825)

Final Blessing

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb.
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.
Like Elizabeth and John, this Advent may we too be filled
with the joy of the Holy Spirit. And the blessing of God Almighty,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer be with you all. **Amen**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Giving

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