

St. Christopher's Church, Hinchley Wood

Service Appendix – 11th December 2022 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Hymns

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|-----------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Gathering: | 386 | Let There Be Love |
| Gradual: | 185 | For the Fruits of His Creation |
| Offertory: | 243 | Go Tell it on the Mountain |
| Communion: | 932 | Kindle a Flame |
| Post communion: | 589 | See Him Lying on a Bed of Straw |

Words of Introduction

Jesus came to bring good news to the poor and all who suffer. So let us praise and worship the Lord our God, who never falters on promises.

Lighting the Candles of the Advent Wreath

God our Father, you gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age a son called John. He grew up strong in spirit, prepared the people for the coming of the Lord, and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins. Help us, who have been baptized into Christ, to be ready to welcome him into our hearts, and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. Amen.

Lord Jesus, light of the world, John told the people to prepare, for you were very near. As Christmas grows closer day by day, help us to be ready to welcome you now. Amen

Collect

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Reading: (Isaiah 35:1-10)

The desert will rejoice, and flowers will bloom in the wastelands. The desert will sing and shout for joy; it will be as beautiful as the Lebanon Mountains and as fertile as the fields of Carmel and Sharon. Everyone will see the Lord's splendour, see his greatness and power.

Give strength to hands that are tired and to knees that tremble with weakness. Tell everyone who is discouraged, "Be strong and don't be afraid! God is coming to your rescue, coming to punish your enemies."

The blind will be able to see, and the deaf will hear. The lame will leap and dance, and those who cannot speak will shout for joy. Streams of water will flow through the desert; the burning sand will become a lake, and dry land will be filled with springs. Where jackals used to live, marsh grass and reeds will grow.

There will be a highway there, called "The Road of Holiness." No sinner will ever travel that road; no fools will mislead those who follow it. No lions will be there; no fierce animals will pass that way. Those whom the Lord has rescued will travel home by that road. They will reach Jerusalem with gladness, singing and shouting for joy. They will be happy forever, forever free from sorrow and grief.

Psalm: 146

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, my soul!

I will praise him as long as I live; I will sing to my God all my life.

**Don't put your trust in human leaders; no human being can save you.
When they die, they return to the dust; on that day all their plans come to an end.**

Happy are those who have the God of Jacob to help them
and who depend on the Lord their God,
the Creator of heaven, earth, and sea, and all that is in them.

**He always keeps his promises; he judges in favour of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.**

The Lord sets prisoners free and gives sight to the blind.
He lifts those who have fallen; he loves his righteous people.

**He protects the strangers who live in our land;
he helps widows and orphans, but takes the wicked to their ruin.**

The Lord is king forever. Your God, O Zion, will reign for all time.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, Alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.
Alleluia!

Gospel: (Matthew 11:2-11)

When John the Baptist heard in prison about the things that Christ was doing, he sent some of his disciples to him. "Tell us," they asked Jesus, "are you the one John said was going to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John what you are hearing and seeing: the blind can see, the lame can walk, those who suffer from dreaded skin diseases are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are brought back to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor. How happy are those who have no doubts about me!"

While John's disciples were leaving, Jesus spoke about him to the crowds: "When you went out to John in the desert, what did you expect to see? A blade of grass bending in the wind? What did you go out to see? A man dressed up in fancy clothes? People who dress like that live in palaces! Tell me, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes indeed, but you saw much more than a prophet. For John is the one of whom the scripture says: 'God said, I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.' I assure you that John the Baptist is greater than anyone who has ever lived. But the one who is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than John.

The Peace

The ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion. Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Closing Prayer

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts;
kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again
we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever.
All Amen

The Blessing

May the Father reveal God's glory, compassion and mercy.
May the Son, walking alongside you, guide you in the ways of peace and love.
May the Holy Spirit fill you with joy and gladness and keep you firm in faith.