

St. Christopher's Church, Hinchley Wood

Service Appendix – 17th December 2023 – 3rd Sunday of Advent

Hymns

Gathering:	243	Go Tell It on the Mountain
Gradual:	408	Long Ago Prophets Knew (tune: 216)
Offertory:	185	For the Fruits of His Creation
Communion:	949	Wait for the Lord
Post communion:	282	Hills of the North Rejoice

Words of Introduction

“Rejoice always,” says St Paul. “Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances.” In faith let us bring to God our prayers and praises.

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 61:1-11)

The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his Spirit. He has chosen me and sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to announce release to captives and freedom to those in prison. He has sent me to proclaim that the time has come when the Lord will save his people and defeat their enemies. He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,

To give to those who mourn in Zion Joy and gladness instead of grief, a song of praise instead of sorrow. They will be like trees that the Lord himself has planted. They will all do what is right, and God will be praised for what he has done. They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins. My people, foreigners will serve you. They will take care of your flocks and farm your land and tend your vineyards. And you will be known as the priests of the Lord, the servants of our God. You will enjoy the wealth of the nations and be proud that it is yours. Your shame and disgrace are ended. You will live in your own land, and your wealth will be doubled; your joy will last forever.

The Lord says, “I love justice and I hate oppression and crime. I will faithfully reward my people and make an eternal covenant with them. They will be famous among the nations; everyone who sees them will know that they are a people whom I have blessed.” Jerusalem rejoices because of what the Lord has done. She is like a bride dressed for her wedding. God has clothed her with salvation and victory. As surely as seeds sprout and grow, the Sovereign Lord will save his people, and all the nations will praise him.

Psalm: 126

When the Lord brought us back to Jerusalem, it was like a dream!

**How we laughed, how we sang for joy! Then the other nations said about us,
“The Lord did great things for them.”
Indeed he did great things for us; how happy we were!**

Lord, make us prosperous again, just as the rain brings water back to dry riverbeds.
Let those who wept as they planted their crops, gather the harvest with joy!

**Those who wept as they went out carrying the seed
will come back singing for joy, as they bring in the harvest.**

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: (John 1:6-8. 19-28)

God sent his messenger, a man named John, who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. He himself was not the light; he came to tell about the light.

The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites to John to ask him, “Who are you?” John did not refuse to answer, but spoke out openly and clearly, saying: “I am not the Messiah.” “Who are you, then?” they asked. “Are you Elijah?” “No, I am not,” John answered. “Are you the Prophet?” they asked. “No,” he replied. “Then tell us who you are,” they said. “We have to take an answer back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

John answered by quoting the prophet Isaiah: “I am ‘the voice of someone shouting in the desert: Make a straight path for the Lord to travel!’” The messengers, who had been sent by the Pharisees, then asked John, “If you are not the Messiah nor Elijah nor the Prophet, why do you baptise?” John answered, “I baptise with water, but among you stands the one you do not know. He is coming after me, but I am not good enough even to untie his sandals.”

All this happened in Bethany on the east side of the Jordan River, where John was baptising.

The Peace

May the God of peace sanctify us, and may we know peace in our lives and in our world.

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 your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.