

Christ Episcopal Church

Kensington, Maryland

Readings for Sunday, December 16, 2018

Third Sunday of Advent

The Collect of the Day

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading

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

The Psalm

Canticle 9, The First Song of Isaiah

Surely, it is God who saves me; *
I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, *
and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing *
from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, *
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; *
see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, *
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, *
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Second Reading

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

Gospeller: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People: **Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Readings for the 10am Service and Christmas Pageant

The Collect of the Day

God of all hope and joy, open our hearts in welcome, that your Son Jesus Christ at his coming may find in us a dwelling prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing as loud as you can, O daughter Zion; go ahead and shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! God has taken away everything and everybody that could hurt you. God is right beside you and you don't have anything to be afraid of or worry about anymore. God has won the day.

He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will join you in singing loud and long. God says: I will take care of the disasters, and I will deal with the people who want to put you down. I will save those who can't keep up with you and gather the people on the fringes of your community, and I will change their shame into praise and make their name famous all over the earth. I will bring you home, and make you special among all the peoples of the earth.

The Psalm

Canticle 9, The First Song of Isaiah

Surely, God, you are the one who saves me. *
I'm not afraid, God, when I trust in you.

I can count on you. *
I hold on tight and you defend me.

There is always water in the well of salvation to drink. *
And I'm happy to call out your name and give you thanks out loud.

Tell everyone what God has done. *

Don't let them forget God's name.

Sing whenever you can about God. *

Ring all the bells in Zion and keep them ringing,
because the Holy One is right there with you.