

Welcome to Saint Mary's Episcopal Church!
Third Sunday of Advent—December 12, 2021
Morning Prayer

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

The Word of God

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Officiant Blessed are you, Holy and Living One.
People You come to your people and set them free.

OPENING COLLECT

The Book of Common Prayer

Officiant God be with you.
People And also with you.

Officiant 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 MESSAGE

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Officiant Let us prepare ourselves to hear the Word of God.
People Our hearts and minds are open.

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.

Officiant Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Luke 3:7-18

Officiant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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.

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

GOSPEL BASED DISCIPLESHIP

- *What is the Holy Spirit doing in these readings?*
- *Where do you see yourself?*
- *What do these readings say about the journey you're on?*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH AND BAPTISMAL PROMISES

A New Zealand Prayer Book

Officiant Please stand as you are able and join together in affirming our faith.
People **You, O God, are supreme and holy.**
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed your love for us in Jesus Christ, who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.
You are God. We worship you.

Officiant And now, we join together with members of the worldwide Anglican/Episcopal Communion in translating the beliefs in our hearts into action in our lives, in these baptismal questions.

Please respond to each promise by saying, "I will with God's help."

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Jim Friedrich, *Episcopal Cafe*

Officiant: God of many names, God beyond all names; the beginning and the end of every story, the meaning of every life; infinite Mystery both hidden and revealed:

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant Blessed are You who join us together in the communion of Christ's Body. Renew and energize your holy Church, in this parish and throughout the world, that we may be a resurrection people, manifesting your steadfast love in our common life of praise and service.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant O perfect Wisdom, direct and rule the hearts of the leaders and shapers of society, raise up prophets of justice and peace, and empower your people for the holy vocation of repairing the world. May we entrust all our labors to the work of Providence.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant O Deliverer, You unlock every door and make a way where there is no way. Set free all who are afflicted or distressed in body, mind or spirit. Resurrect their hope, grant them peace and refreshment, and restore their joy.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant O compassionate One, hold us in your mercy: heal the sick, mend the broken, protect the vulnerable, shelter the refugee, strengthen the weary, rescue the lost, and give courage to all who struggle.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant O Morning Star, bright splendor of the light eternal, illumining all things with your radiance: come, enlighten all who sit in darkness, and those who dwell in the shadow of violence and death. Grant us your peace, and teach us to live in the dawn of your unfailing promise.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant O Lover of souls, when we wander far away, lead us back to You; when we refuse your embrace, do not give up on us; when we forget You, do not forget us.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant O Desire of every heart, the answer to every longing: You are the strong force that draws us into the mystery of love divine. Forgive us those things which distract and delay us, and lead us ever deeper into the Way, the Truth and the Life.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

Officiant God who has come, God who does come, God who is yet to come: make us an Advent people, ready and alert to welcome and receive You in the stranger's face, the loving act, the moment of grace, the presence of healing, the birth of possibility, the gift of wonder. Let every heart prepare You room.

People **Spirit's Breath of Light be ever near.**

SAINT MARY'S COMMUNITY PRAYERS: CONCERNS AND THANKSGIVINGS

Everyone is invited to offer concerns and thanksgivings.

Officiant O Emmanuel, God-with-us, You show us the face of divinity, and reveal the fullness of our humanity. Come: renew your creation, restore us all in Christ, and enable us to become who we are, your faithful and loving people. We pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSON

Enriching Our Worship

People God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.

ABSOLUTION

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

PEACE

Steven Shakespeare

Officiant May the peace of Christ rule our world and heal our hearts.
People And may His peace be always with us.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Officiant and People God be in my head and in my thinking.
God be in my mouth and in my speaking.
God be in my heart and in my loving.
God be in my hands and in my giving. Amen.

We are not passing the offering plates at this time. You are welcome to make an online offering by pressing the "contribute" button on our website, saintmarysepiscopal.org.

LORD'S PRAYER

People Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as 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 for ever. Amen.

A PRAYER OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM

Officiant Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Steven Shakespeare

Officiant May the God who brings heaven close to earth give truth to our judgment and flame to our longing that our hearts might be ready to be born again in love; and the blessing of God, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit be with you this day and always.

DISMISSAL

Deacon <Deacon says the words of dismissal.>
People Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

SOCIAL TIME