

Sunday 11th December 2022
3rd Sunday of Advent

Reading 1: James 5: 7-10
Psalm: 146: 4-10
Gospel: Matthew 11: 2-11

Let us pause for a moment to bring ourselves and all that we offer to God and give Him thanks.

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Song: On Jordon's Bank
(Click link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ls4ESyb9uE8>

Opening Prayer:

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.

Psalm: 146: 4-10

When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.
⁵ Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
⁶ who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith for ever;
⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets the prisoners free;
⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
⁹ The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
¹⁰ The LORD will reign for ever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

Invitation to Confession:

When the Lord comes, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore, in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

Confession:

O King enthroned on high,
filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name,
Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you
to take our guilt away,
and to cleanse our lips to speak your word,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Absolution:

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessed be the Lord
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;
Therefore, shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Song: Just as I am
(Click link) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enJ8JzW_A48

Reading 1: James 5.7-10*Patience in Suffering*

Be patient, therefore, beloved,^[a] until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.^[b] ⁹ Beloved,^[c] do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, beloved,^[d] take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 11.2-11*Messengers from John the Baptist*

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah^[a] was doing, he sent word by his^[b] disciples ³ and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' ⁴ Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers^[c] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? Someone^[d] dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet?^[e] Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." ¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ.

Talk: (click link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Jy9eEV713g>

Song: Make me a channel of your peace
(Click link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkgDdlpB4EA>

Let us declare our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

This morning Lord, we give you thanks for the example of your servant John the Baptist, for his disciples who cared for him and for Jesus' message of reassurance to him in prison, help us to read and understand your word and to find there the messages you have for us, and then give us the strength to act on your calling on our lives.

Lord in your mercy;
Hear our prayer.

Loving God, help us as we prepare to celebrate the birth of your son,
to remember that he will come again in power and glory.
Help us to find time in our busy lives for quiet prayer and reflection
on the wonder of our Saviour's birth.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly God, we pray for strength in your Church,
In both our Parishes and for Christians throughout the world,
that we may be your messengers, and be the best images of your Son that we can.
We pray especially for persecuted Christians around the world,
strengthen them as they find safe ways to declare your love for the world.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Father God, we pray for all parents, carers and their children
in what can be a very stressful time of year.
We ask that they will find time to express their love for each other and
to think about the true meaning of Christmas.
We pray for families where there is pain and sadness in their relationships,
that they may be healed and restored.
Help us to remember that we are all God's children,
are loved by him and to be thankful.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Merciful God, help us to rest in you, to be patient, to listen,
to be forgiving and tolerant of others and to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.
We pray for your healing and your peace for all the people we know who are ill,
in body, mind or spirit.
We pray that they will be aware of your healing presence with them today.
And in a few moments of quiet we bring before our Lord those who need our prayers today.

Lord in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of Steeple and Southminster Benefice and all your saints,
we commend ourselves and all Christian people to your unfailing love.

Merciful Father

accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

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.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

**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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.**

Let us pause for a moment to bring ourselves and all that we offer to God and give Him thanks.

Song: Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord
(Click link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jcFsxk1EbY4>

Blessing:

Christ the sun of righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory.
And the blessing of God almighty;
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you.
and all those you love, always.
Amen.

*As we come to the end of this service we can fellowship with each other in Spirit,
with tea, coffee and biscuits, and continuing to pray for each other.*