



St. Thomas' Episcopal Church

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The Third Sunday Of Advent

December 13, 2020

Morning Prayer: Rite Two

Prelude

He Shall Feed His Flock

Handel

Opening sentence

p. 75

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. *Isaiah 40:3*

Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People:

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

The Bishop when present, or the Priest, stands and says

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

The Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant Lord, open our lips.

p. 80

People **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Officiant and People

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

Our King and Savior now draws near: **Come let us adore him.**

The Venite (all recite in unison)

p. 82

Come, let us sing to the Lord; *

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *

and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, *

and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *

and the heights of the hills are his also.

The sea is his, for he made it, *

and his hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *

and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *

Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

Canticle 15: The Song of Mary *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46-55

(read responsively by whole verse)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *

for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *

in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *

he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *

and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *

and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *

to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. A-men.

The First Lesson

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Lector The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God**

Canticle 16 (*paraphrase*)

Blessed Be The God Of Israel

Hopson

The Second Lesson

1 Thessalonians 5:26-24

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Lector The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God**

Canticle 11 The Third Song of Isaiah (*all recite in unison*)

p. 87

Isaiah 60:1-3, 11a, 14c, 18-19

Arise, shine, for your light has come, *
and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.
For behold, darkness covers the land; *
deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.
But over you the Lord will rise, *
and his glory will appear upon you.
Nations will stream to your light, *
and kings to the brightness of your dawning.
Your gates will always be open; *
by day or night they will never be shut.

They will call you, The City of the Lord, *
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
Violence will no more be heard in your land, *
ruin or destruction within your borders.
You will call your walls, Salvation, *
and all your portals, Praise.
The sun will no more be your light by day; *
by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.
The Lord will be your everlasting light, *
and your God will be your glory.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. A-men.

The Gospel

John 1:6-8, 19-28

A reading from the Gospel of John.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Lector The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God**

Sermon

The Apostles' Creed

p. 96

Officiant and People together

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He 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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again 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.**

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.

p. 97

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Then follows one of these sets of Suffrages

B

V. Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;

R. **Govern and uphold them, now and always.**

V. Day by day we bless you;

R. **We praise your name for ever.**

V. Lord, keep us from all sin today;

R. **Have mercy upon us, Lord, have mercy.**

V. Lord, show us your love and mercy;

R. **For we put our trust in you.**

V. In you, Lord, is our hope;

R. **And we shall never hope in vain.**

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.**

A Collect for Sundays

p. 98

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Peace

p. 99

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer for Mission

p. 101

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

Anthem

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

Monk

For the Human Family

p. 815

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the Sick

p. 459

Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve your sick servants **Ashley Burnett, Jeanine Wilson, Al Cowand, Randy Tyler, Ben Procter, Joan Leggett, Kay Barnacascel, Becky Godwin, John Tolbert, Coley McCally, Karen Gudiksen, Bobbie and Rendol Cobb, Libby Smith, Marian Watts, Lena Evans, Charles Taylor Spruill, Larry Watson, Julia Credle, Joey Ezelle, Racheal Coward, Peggy Parker, Sylvia Dawson, David Dunn, Elsie Benson, Riley Raines, Andy Walker, The Rev. Jim Horton, Will Copeland, Jim Davis, Mary Gillam, Rita Hoggard, Gina Rascoe, Kimberly Sena, those with COVID-19, and others known to us**, and give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that they may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer from Episcopal Relief and Development (revised)

Compassionate God, source of all comfort, we pray for the people whose lives have been devastated by recent disasters of hurricane, tornado, fire and flood. Bring them comfort, we pray. Protect the vulnerable. Strengthen the weak. Have mercy on all those working to provide relief and to feed the hungry. And may our response to their suffering be generous and bring you praise. For we ask it in Jesus' Name. **Amen.**

For those who have died

God of Grace, we pray to you for Robert Beachboard, who died on Monday, and Bo Worthington, in whose memory the altar flowers are given, whom we love and see no longer. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls and souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Authorized intercessions and thanksgivings may follow.

The General Thanksgiving

p. 101

Officiant and People

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

p. 102

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.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Officiant may then conclude with the following

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** *Romans 15:13*

Postlude

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings

Handel

The altar flowers are given by Janet Worthington to the glory of God and in loving memory of Bo Worthington, who died December 4, 2018.

MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Officiant: The Rev. Bonnie Smith

Organist: Tom Parker

Altar: Cathy Wilson, Della Cherry, Rosanna Rhea

Lector: Jaquelin Perry

Soloist: Mike Spruill

Ushers: John Tyler and Steve Trowell

Hostesses: Cathy Wilson, Nancy Joyner, and Clara Blanchard

Money Counters: Patti Farless and Tra Perry

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you for observing proper precautions for any gatherings during COVID-19: wear a mask, wash your hands, and wait 6 feet apart between households.

Under COVID-19 guidelines, the following changes must be made to our worship:

- Offering plates will not be passed. Please deposit your offering in the designated basket as you arrive or exit. Or you may mail your offering to St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, PO Box 400, Windsor, NC 27983.
- Congregational and choral singing are not permitted. A soloist is allowed, while physical distancing and wearing a face covering.
- Nursery care and children's Sunday School cannot be offered. New coloring and activity sheets are available each Sunday.
- No receptions or meals may be offered before or after worship.
- Please limit use of church restrooms.

Please take your printed bulletin home or drop it in the designated recycling container.

Small water bottles are available for your use.

Weather permitting, we will continue with outdoor worship next Sunday at 11:00 a.m., with video on Facebook. (As long as Bertie County remains in the red or orange zone, we are limited to 10 people inside.)

The modified annual congregational meeting will be held today after worship. All reports were written and emailed in advance. Only the election of new vestry members will be held today. If weather does not permit outdoor worship, a Zoom link will be sent to allow a voice vote via computer or phone.

Join young people from all three NC Dioceses for a special Advent Evening Prayer tonight at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to join in! Registration is required:

<http://bit.ly/StatewideYouthAdventService>

You might also enjoy the Advent Word reflections written by children of the diocese. They are found on the diocesan Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/dioec>

The Christmas Eve pageant and Service of Light will be held outdoors at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 24. Please plan to bring a flashlight with you. Rehearsal will be held next Sunday after worship.

BE THE LIGHT

I am challenging each of you to do this anonymously offering your time, donations, or gift to a church member, a community member/ organization/ child in need.

This can look like pay it forward at a drive thru, or helping your mom wash dishes, or raking someone's yard. It may include adopting a child in DSS custody or adopting a friend in a rest home.

The donation can be big or small.

The goal is 100% participation from all families.

All of us Being the light for each other, helping others because we can, being the church and encouraging our children to also do so.

On Christmas Eve there are big plans for Saint Thomas' light to shine. We need your help to light it up.

In lieu of poinsettias we will be accepting love donations for lights.

In peace, hope and brightness,

Cham

You are invited to join the diocesan-wide "Journey through East Carolina" through February 7, 2021. Details are available at <https://www.ecdio.org/journey.html>

Bishop Skirving's Visitation to St. Thomas' Church is scheduled for Sunday, January 24, 2021. If you are interested in being confirmed as a member of St. Thomas' Church, please let The Rev. Bonnie Smith know as soon as possible so that instruction can be planned.