**Sunday, December 13, 2020**

**The Third Sunday of Advent**



**Episcopal Church of St. Thomas**

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**Processional Hymn: “Comfort, Comfort, O My People” Hymnal #67**

**Comfort, comfort, O my people,
speak of peace, now says our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak unto Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell of all the sins I cover,
and that warfare now is over.**

**Hark, the voice of one who’s crying
in the desert far and near,
bidding all to full repentance,
since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise to meet him,
and the hills bow down to greet him.**

**O make straight what long was crooked,
make the rougher places plain;
let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now o'er earth is shed abroad;
and all flesh shall see the token
that his word is never broken.**

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**People** **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The following is sung, all standing*

**Holy God,**

**Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy Immortal One,**

***Have mercy upon us.***

### Collect of the Day

### Celebrant The Lord be with you.

### People And also with you.

###

Celebrant Let us pray.

*The Celebrant says*

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 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

*All sit.*

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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm 126

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, \*
**then were we like those who dream.**

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \*
**and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

3 Then they said among the nations, \*
**"The Lord has done great things for them."**

4 The Lord has done great things for us, \*
**and we are glad indeed.**

5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, \*
**like the watercourses of the Negev.**

6 Those who sowed with tears \*
**will reap with songs of joy.**

7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \*
**will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

**Second Reading**  **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

**Advent Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Holy Gospel**  **John 1:6-8,19-28**

All stand and turn to face the Gospel

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

**People Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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.

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

**People Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Celebrant: The Rev. Joseph Mumita**

**Nicene Creed**

All stand.

**We believe in one God,**

 **the Father, the Almighty,**

 **maker of heaven and earth,**

 **of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

 **the only Son of God,**

 **eternally begotten of the Father,**

 **God from God, Light from Light,**

 **true God from true God,**

 **begotten, not made,**

 **of one Being with the Father.**

 **Through him all things were made.**

 **For us and for our salvation**

 **he came down from heaven:**

 **by the power of the Holy Spirit**

 **he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,**

 **and was made man.**

 **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;**

 **he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again**

 **in accordance with the Scriptures;**

 **he ascended into heaven**

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

 **He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,**

 **and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,**

 **who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

 **With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.**

 **He has spoken through the Prophets.**

 **We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

 **We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

 **We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

 **and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;

**For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.**

For this community, the nation, and the world;

**For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the just and proper use of your creation;

**For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.**

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

**For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.**

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

**For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.**

For Catherine, our Presiding Bishop and Alan & Gayle our bishops and for all bishops and other

ministers; and bless Fr. Rich during his sabbatical travel. May he be strong and healthy, safe from harm, may his heart be filled with joy.
**For all who serve God in his Church.**

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

Silence

The People may add their own petitions

Hear us, Lord;

**For your mercy is great.**

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

Silence

The People may add their own thanksgivings

We will exalt you, O God our King;

**And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

Silence

We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Leader and People*

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;**

**in your compassion forgive us our sins,**

**known and unknown,**

**things done and left undone;**

**and so uphold us by your Spirit**

**that we may live and serve you in newness of life,**

**to the honor and glory of your Name;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.**

*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.**

### Peace

*All stand.*

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People And also with you.**

*Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

## **Holy Communion**

##

*The Celebrant says*

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.    Ephesians 5:2

**Offertory Meditation Song: “On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry”**

 **Hymnal 76**

**On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh.
Awake and harken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!**

**Then cleansed be every soul from sin:
make straight the way of God within,
Prepare we in our hearts a home,**

**where such a mighty guest may come.**

**All praise, eternal Son, to Thee
whose advent set Thy people free,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.**

### *The people remain standing.*

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

**People And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

**People We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

The Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Celebrant and People*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

 **Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

 **Hosanna in the highest.**

The people kneel.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.” After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.” Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

**We remember his death,**

**We proclaim his resurrection,**

**We await his coming in glory;**

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Celebrant then continues

As our Savior Christ

has taught us,

we are bold to say,

People and Celebrant

**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**

### Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*All baptized persons regardless of denomination are welcome to receive Holy Communion.*

**Communion Hymn: “He Has Annointed Me”**

1. To bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the broken heart, He has anointed me. To proclaim liberty to captives, release to prisoners, He has anointed me.

**Refrain:** The Spirit of God is upon me, He has anointed me.

2. To announce a year of favor, to comfort those who mourn, He has anointed me. To give to them the oil of gladness and share a mantle of joy, He has anointed me.

**Refrain:** The Spirit of God is upon me, He has anointed me.

### *After Communion, the Celebrant says*

Let us pray.

*Celebrant and People*

**Almighty and everliving God,**

**we thank you for feeding us**

**with the spiritual food**

**of the most precious Body and Blood**

**of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;**

**and for assuring us in these holy mysteries**

**that we are living members of the Body of your Son,**

**and heirs of your eternal kingdom.**

**And now, Father, send us out**

**to do the work you have given us to do,**

**to love and serve you**

**as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.**

**To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,**

**be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

**Blessing**

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen**

**Hymn: “Rise Up, Jerusalem”**

*Chorus*

Rise up, rise up, rise up, rise up, Jerusalem!

Sing out, ring out, sing out, sing out, Jerusalem!

Rejoice, the day is near!

*Verse 1*

A voice in the desert cries "Prepare the way."

A voice in the desert cries "Today's the day."

Ev'ryone get ready for the Lord is on his way.

Emanuel shall come, the long awaited One.

Emanuel, come to us. *Chorus*

*Verse 2*

Sing, all you people, for the day is near.

Sing, all you people, wash away your fear.

Ev'ryone get ready for salvation is near.

Emanuel shall come, the long awaited One.

Emanuel, come to us. *Chorus*

***Verse 3***

**Rejoice, oh Jerusalem, and start anew.**

**Rejoice, oh Jerusalem, he comes to you.**

**Ev'ryone get ready for the Lord will light the way.**

**Emanuel shall come, the long awaited One.**

**Emanuel, come to us. *Chorus***

**Dismissal**

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia.

People Thanks be to God. Alleluia.

**Prayer is a very important part of our life at St. Thomas**

Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs) deliver communion and prayers to the ill and homebound each month. To sign up for this important ministry, please call 508-824-9595.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer, we pray for five households each week. This is a way for us to reach out in prayer to all our members on a systematic and regular basis. This week we pray for the Michaels Family, the Michelot Family, the Mongiovi Family, the Moniz Family and the Moore Family.  Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you.

Scriptural Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38.

Prayers for the Homebound and Ill members of our parish include…… Joe Andrade, Wayne Perkins, Julie Moore, Joann Frazier, Virginia Ames, Judy Lincoln & Janice Crepeau.

Prayers for those who serve in the Armed Forces and Overseas… Daniel Snowdall, Megan Drewniak, Adam Dyke, William Marsh IV, Donald Souza, Noel Souza, Ryan Vohnoutka, Christopher French, Alex Bolton, and Scott Larson.

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer this week we pray for Parishes of the Alewife Deanery: Christ Church, Cambridge; St. Bartholomew’s Church, Cambridge; St. James’ Church, Cambridge; St. Peter’s Church, Cambridge; Diocesan Disciplinary Board.

Flowers on the Altar in loving memory of Henry & Bertha Youngberg; the Ward Family; Ruth Latham by Family; Thomas & Margaret Kelsey & William Sagar by Family; Russell M. Borden by Dave & Judy Cleathero; Ruth Farley by Family; Robert Scully, Sr. by Mrs. Robert Scully. Memorial Tribute in loving memory of Norman J. Lemaire, Sr. & W.O. Douglas J. Lemaire by Christine, David, Lauren, & Allison Bisio. Serviceman’s Altar in loving memory of Capt. William Denning by Mrs. Dermot

Dalton.

Candles on the Advent Wreath are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Jeanne S. Baker whose life exemplified the giving spirit of the season.

Helpful Suggestions: Holy Communion is part of our services.  All baptized Christians, regardless of age or denomination, are invited to the altar to receive communion.  You may kneel or stand at the Altar Rail. The bread is received in the open palm, right hand over left.  The wine, if desired, may be taken from the common cup by drinking (placing your hand gently at the base of the chalice to guide it) or by dipping the bread.  If you do not wish to receive Communion, but would like a blessing, come forward to the Altar Rail and cross your arms over your che