



ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

Liturgy of the Word

December 13, 2020 10 A.M.

INTROIT

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,
get thee up into the high mountain;
lift up thy voice with strength;
lift it up, be not afraid,

say unto the cities of Judah:
Behold your God.
Arise, shine, for thy light is come,
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Words: Isaiah 40:9 Music: George Frideric Handel (1685–1759), *Messiah*, 1742

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Presider says the following prayer as the Advent candle is lit

Come, O Holy One, breaker of chains and renewer of life! Open our eyes to your presence in all the earth. Stir us to proclaim gladly the signs of your love: the liberation of those oppressed, the healing of those frail and broken, springs of water in all the parched places, and Jesus Christ risen and alive, through whom we pray. **Amen.**

HYMN

Watchman, tell us of the night (640, *The Hymnal* 1982)

1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom - ise
2 Watch-man, tell us of the night; high - er yet that star a -
3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, for the morn - ing seems to

are. Trav - eler, o'er yon moun-tain's height, see that glo - ry -
scends. Trav - eler, bless - ed - ness and light, peace and truth its
dawn. Trav - eler, dark - ness takes its flight, doubt and ter - ror

beam - ing star. Watch-man, does its beau - teous ray
course por - tends. Watch-man, will its beams a - lone
are with - drawn. Watch-man, let thy wan - derings cease;

aught of joy or hope fore - tell? Trav-eler, yes; it
 gild the spot that gave them birth? Trav-eler, a - ges
 hie thee to thy qui - et home. Trav-eler, lo! the

brings the day, prom - ised day of Is - ra - el.
 are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.
 Prince of Peace, lo! the Son of God is come!

Two groups may sing antiphonally, alternating by sentences.

Words: John Bowring (1792-1872) Music: *Aberystwyth*, Joseph Parry (1841-1903)

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Presider: Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People: You come to your people and set them free.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Presider

Let us confess our sins to God. [*Silence is kept.*]

Presider and 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.**

Presider

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

KYRIE ELEISON

112, *Enriching Our Music 2*

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Presider: Let us pray.

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.**

THE FIRST LESSON

ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11

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: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 126

Ivor Algernon Atkins

- 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.

THE SECOND LESSON

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: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ALLELUIA

(120, *Enriching Our Music 2*)

The image shows a musical score for the Gospel Alleluia. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is written in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu -".

- ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

- le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Setting: South African, arr. Gobingca Mxadana © Gobingca Mxadana.
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Cantor: Show thyself, O Lord, thou that sittest upon the Cherubim;
stir up thy strength and come.
Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel; thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep.

The People sing the Gospel Alleluia again.

THE GOSPEL

LUKE 1:5-25

Presider: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Luke.

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

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be

fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, “This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.”

Presider: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

THE SERMON

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR ADVENT

[The Rev. Kay Sylvester, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Tustin, CA]

Presider and People

Because of You, O God,

we are people of hope,
even though the night of winter is upon us.

Because of You, Divine Presence,

we are people of peace,
even though violent speech
and bared teeth surround us.

Because of You, Christ who is coming,

we are people of joy,
even though the leaves have fallen
and the music has stopped.

Because of You, Spirit of Life,

we are people of love,
even though we see
the diminishment of human dignity all around us.

We call upon You, ever-blessed One,

for strength and purpose,
for gratitude and generosity,
for the grace to bring light,
and the nourishment of your grace,
and the thirst-quenching stream of your justice
into the world that You love
with an everlasting love.

Come among us and set us free. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Intercessor and People

O Wisdom from on high, holy Word of God, you sustain the universe with infinite love and tender care. In this Advent season of longing and anticipation, we pray to you, saying, “O come, O come, Emmanuel.”

Unite and uphold your universal church. Help your ministers, lay and ordained, carry the Good News of salvation to all who await the sign of your coming. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Lend your wisdom and compassion to those in authority around the world. Help them lead those held captive by oppression and strife, into the freedom of justice and peace. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Inspire all people to be grateful occupants and devoted caretakers of your wondrous creation. Help us preserve Earth’s lands, waters, and atmosphere, and protect the creatures who inhabit them. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Shepherd the people and ministries of St. Thomas’s Church. Help us listen closely to you, and follow where you lead. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Comfort those who are grieving, lonely, discouraged, or depressed this holiday season. Help them find peace, joy, hope, and love. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Restore those suffering from sickness, poverty, violence, or addiction. Help them overcome adversity and find fullness of life. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Strengthen healthcare workers, first responders, and all whose labors are essential during this coronavirus pandemic. Help them find courage to face the difficult days that yet lie ahead. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Bring into your glorious presence those who have died. Help all people to find risen life in you. **O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Hear our additional prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, which we now offer either silently or aloud. [*You may unmute yourself to offer a prayer intention.*]

Presider

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, come and shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death; O Emmanuel, God with us, come and save us, O Lord our God. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

Presider: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Your ongoing financial support of St. Thomas's Church is especially appreciated at this time. To give online with a debit or credit card, go to the Home page of the Church website (www.stthomasnewhaven.org), and click GIVE NOW. If you are viewing this document electronically, you can simply [CLICK HERE](#). Know also that the Church office is able to process checks that have been mailed. Thank you!

OFFERTORY HYMN

Hark! the glad sound! (72, *The Hymnal* 1982)

Descant

4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, thy wel - come

1 Hark! the glad sound! the Sa - vior comes, the Sa - vior
2 He comes, the pri - soners to re - lease in Sa - tan's
3 He comes, the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, thy wel - come

shall pro - claim; and heaven's e - ter - nal

prom - ised long; let ev - ery heart pre -
bond - age held; the gates of brass be -
soul to cure; and with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim; and heaven's e - ter - nal

arch - es ring with thy be - lov - ed Name.

pare a throne, and ev - ery voice a song.
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring with thy be - lov - ed Name.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

You are invited to say the Lord's Prayer in the language of your choice.

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 COMMUNION [*The Rev. Keri Aubert*]

Presider and People

God of abundant love, we thank you for nurturing us with this holy gathering of holy people. When we are alone, remind us of the communion we share with one another and with you. When we are hungry, show us the banquet that you are preparing for the redemption of the world. Keep peace in our hearts, so that we can sow peace in the world, walking in gladness the way of your beloved child, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ADVENT BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Presider

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Presider: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it,
the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

O Flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispel in glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere;
true man, yet very God,
from sin and death now save us,
and share our every load.

Words: 15th-century German; Friedrich Layriz (1808–1859) Music: arr. Sherezade Panthaki

After the Anthem, you are invited to stay online for virtual Coffee Hour. Please see the Parish Enews for the latest announcements and information.

Announcements

Stay in touch! Subscribe to the Weekly Parish Enews and "like" St. Thomas's on Facebook.

Longest Night Observance: Sunday, December 20, 6 p.m. There is a relatively new tradition in the church of holding "Blue Christmas" or "Longest Night" services on or near the winter solstice. This will be a short and peaceful service of music, readings, and prayers.

Christmas Eve Worship: Thursday, December 24, 6 p.m. We're having one service on Christmas Eve, which will include elements of both our usual early and late services.

Creche Slideshow for Christmas. We're collecting photos of parishioners' Christmas nativity sets for compilation into a slideshow for Christmas. Please snap a photo of yours and [email it to Keri](#).

Please consider **Alternative Giving** for those on your Christmas list this year. Suggested non-profits are highlighted in the Enews – and St. Thomas's can even help you make those donations. Our Sunday School children are particularly advocating for donations to the **Clean Water** program of ERD's Gifts for Life program.

Serving Today

Presider & Preacher: The Rev. Keri Aubert

Musician: Dr. Noah Horn

Lectors: Jocelyn Tidwell, Bob Herdt

Intercessor: Claire Scully

This Week's Prayer Intentions

Pray for those on our Parish prayer list:
Sally, Bonnie, Franklin, Ken

Pray for those in any need or trouble, especially:
all who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who work in healthcare and those who have lost their livelihood

In the Episcopal Church in Connecticut Cycle of Prayer, pray for:

St. Stephen's, Bloomfield; St. George's, Bolton; Trinity, Branford; Those who advocate at the local, state, national, or global level for the poor, the lonely, and the oppressed

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, pray for:
the Falkland Islands

In the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, pray for:

China, Hong Kong, Macau

Leadership at St. Thomas's

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Kyle Holton (Senior Warden)

Denise Terry (Junior Warden)

Ricardo Chavira (Treasurer)

Linda Meyer (Clerk)

Greg D'Andrea

Bill English

Chris Martinez

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