

The Advent Wreath: Advent 3 – John the Baptist

People of God: return! You are called to be God's own.
From the mountains announce the good news.
God comes in justice and peace, to all who follow his ways.

Let us pray:

God our Father,
you gave to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age a son called John.
He grew up strong in spirit,
prepared the people for the coming of the Lord,
and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins.
Help us, who have been baptized into Christ,
to be ready to welcome him into our hearts,
and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit.
We ask this through him who is the light coming into the world,
the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Opening Hymn: Hills of the north rejoice

Hills of the North, rejoice,
echoing songs arise,
hail with united voice
him who made earth and skies:
he comes in righteousness and love,
he brings salvation from above.

Isles of the Southern seas,
sing to the listening earth,
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
in Christ shall all be made anew,
his word is sure, his promise true.

Lands of the East, arise,
he is your brightest morn,
greet him with joyous eyes,
praise shall his path adorn:
the God whom you have longed to know
in Christ draws near, and calls you now.

Shores of the utmost West,
lands of the setting sun,
welcome the heavenly guest
in whom the dawn has come:
he brings a never-ending light
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

Shout, as you journey on,
songs be in every mouth,
lo, from the North they come,
from East and West and South:
in Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the sons of earth be blest.

Little Cornard 470 AMNS

The Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The New Testament Reading

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

Philippians 4: 4–7

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation: Rejoice in the Lord

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.

Henry Purcell (1659–95)

The Gospel

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia.

cf Isaiah 40: 3–5

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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 axe 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

St Luke 3: 7–18

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Creed:

Let us declare our faith in the living God.

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Offertory Hymn: On Jordan's bank

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
come then and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings from the King of kings.

Then cleansed be every Christian breast,
and furnished for so great a guest!
yea, let us each our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without thy grace our souls must fade,
and wither like a flower decayed.

Stretch forth thine hand to heal our sore,
and make us rise, to fall no more;
once more upon thy people shine,
and fill the world with love divine.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Spirit blest, for evermore. Amen.

Winchester New 12 NEH

Communion Hymn: The Lord will come

The Lord will come and not be slow,
his footsteps cannot err;
before him righteousness shall go,
his royal harbinger.

Truth from the earth, like to a flower,
shall bud and blossom then;
and justice, from her heavenly bower,
look down on mortal men.

Rise, God, judge thou the earth in might,
this wicked earth redress;
for thou art he who shalt by right
the nations all possess.

The nations all whom thou hast made
shall come, and all shall frame
to bow them low before thee, Lord,
and glorify thy name.

For great thou art, and wonders great
by thy strong hand are done:
thou in thy everlasting seat
remainest God alone.

St Stephen 15 NEH

The Anthem: This is the record of John

This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him,
Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and said plainly, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, What art thou then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not.

Art thou the Prophet? And he answered, No.

Then said they unto him, What art thou? that we may give an answer unto them that sent us.

What sayest thou of thyself? And he said, I am the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,
make straight the way of the Lord.

*Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)
St John 1: 19–23*

Hymn: Hail to the Lord's anointed!

Hail to the Lord's anointed!
Great David's greater Son;
hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free;
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

He comes with succour speedy
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
were precious in his sight.

He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth,
and love, joy, hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth:
before him on the mountains
shall peace the herald go;
and righteousness in fountains
from hill to valley flow.

Kings shall fall down before him,
and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him,
his praise all people sing;
to him shall prayer unceasing
and daily vows ascend;
his kingdom still increasing,
a kingdom without end.

O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest,
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest:
the tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever;
that name to us is Love.