

ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 10 DECEMBER 2023 - THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

READINGS: ISAIAH 40:1-11; PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 PETER 3:8-15A; MARK 1:1-8

WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOU ARE WITH US THIS MORNING! THIS BULLETIN WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH OUR WORSHIP. YOU CAN FIND THE NUMBERED HYMNS IN THE BLUE HYMNAL. AT COMMUNION TIME ALL ARE INVITED TO COME FORWARD AND SHARE IN THE EUCHARIST. THE BREAD IS TAKEN IN THE PALM OF THE RIGHT HAND; IF RECEIVING THE WINE, EITHER DIP (INTINCT) THE BREAD OR SIP FROM THE CUP. YOUR FOLDED HANDS WILL SIGNAL THE PRIEST THAT YOU WOULD PREFER A BLESSING.

Hymn 67, Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

THE WORD OF GOD

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

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.**

Unison 3 Cantor All
Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

3 Cantor All
Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

3 Cantor All
Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The people are seated.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah

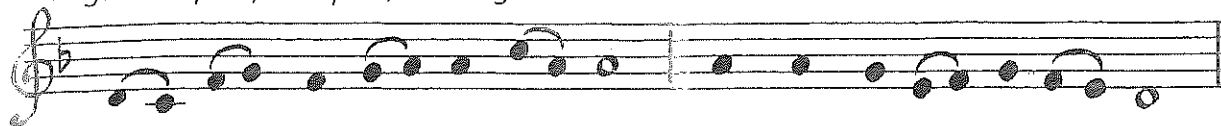
The first reading is a message of comfort and new hope to God's people. The time of exile in Babylon is coming to an end. Like a shepherd, God will care for the people.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" see, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Psalm 85 both celebrates and prays for the Lord's gracious favor, for God's forgiveness, deliverance, and justice. The cantor sings the refrain; all repeat; and sing as indicated.



I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him. Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. R. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. R. The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and peace shall be a pathway for his feet. R.

A Reading from the Second Letter of Peter

This lesson is a reminder that the divine perspective on time can be very different from that of human beings. Christians must live both in patience and with a zeal for righteousness and peace in readiness for that judgment.

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

All stand. The cantor sings "alleluia" and all repeat:



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

All: Alleluia

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, according to Mark. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather

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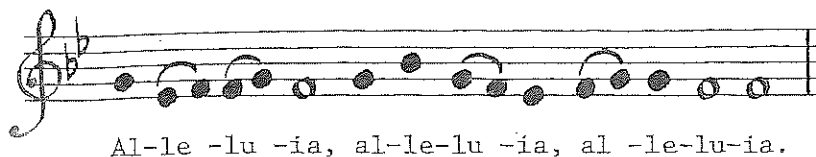
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belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Christ.

O come, O come thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law, in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Branch of Jesse's tree, free them from Satan's tyranny
that trust thy might power to save, and give them victory o'er the grace. Rejoice, etc.

Sermon -- The Rev. Michael L. Bradley, rector

Our Affirmation of Faith - What do we believe?

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

Let us offer our prayers to God, who clothes us in the armor of light and offers us the gift of immortal life,
responding after each petition, "Lord, come to us."

For peace throughout the world, that violence and hatred may cease,

and that all may know the true power of the Prince of Peace; let us pray. **R.**

For people of faith throughout the world, especially for those who endure religious persecution,

that our prayers may empower them in their time of need; let us pray. **R.**

For the grace to choose the path that leads to eternal life, generously giving toward the relief of poverty and despair;

that through our actions the saving love of Christ may be revealed; let us pray. **R.**

That we may hunger for the teachings of the Lord, seeking opportunities for learning, prayer and fellowship

with those who follow the way of Jesus; let us pray. **R.**

In thanksgiving for the life-giving gifts of those who have died, leaving us their legacy of faith and hope;

let us pray. **R.**

Prayers are offered for those on the parish prayer list: Lori, Nina, Vicki, Jim Veit, Karen Schulze, Ed Haug, Susan Rich, Lynn Kerber, Donald Burton. In our Diocese, for the clergy and people of St. Thomas, Trenton; Christ Church, Detroit.

The people are invited to add their own petitions, silently or aloud.

We pray also for the forgiveness of our sins. *Silence is kept, then all pray together:*

Have mercy upon us; **Most merciful God**, 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.

Forgive us all our sins and hear all our prayers, that we may serve you in holiness and faith and give voice to your presence among us until the day of the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Holy Communion

Offertory Hymn 76, On Jordan's Bank The Baptist's Cry

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth . . . who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
2 Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Text: English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988, alt. © 1988 ELLC.

Music: Kenneth George Finlay, adapt. Gordon Appleton. © Broomhill Hyndland Parish Church. GLENPINLAS

The celebrant continues with the Prayer of Consecration, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen.

Behold, the Lamb of God. Behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.

Happy are they who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you.

Feed on him in your hearts by faith, and be filled with thanks.

After all have received, please stand and pray together:

Faithful God, we thank you for feeding us with this heavenly banquet. Help us always to hear the prophet's call to turn our hearts to you, that we may share your light among all our neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Let us go forth to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn 65, Prepare The Way, O Zion, Your Christ Is Drawing Near!

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Our Mission: We share the light of Christ
by loving and serving our neighbors in the world.

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