

ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 17 DECEMBER 2023 - THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

READINGS: ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11; PSALM 126; 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24; JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28

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.

*Flowers are given to the Glory of God by Beverly Veit in celebration of Jim Veit's birthday; and by Cheryl Johns & family in loving memory of James Johns.*

**Hymn 59, Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding! Christ Is Nigh It Seems To Say**

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.

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. *The people are seated.*

## A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah

In the first reading, the principle of justice is to guide the nation of Israel, and they are to understand that it is none other than God who is an advocate for the poor, the oppressed, the downtrodden, and the brokenhearted.

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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Psalm 126 is a psalm of joy and hope sung to the Lord, who restores the fortunes of the people. The cantor sings the refrain; all repeat; and sing as indicated.*



The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad in - deed.

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. **R.** Then they said among the nations, The Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed. **R.** Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negev. Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy. **R.** Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves. **R.**

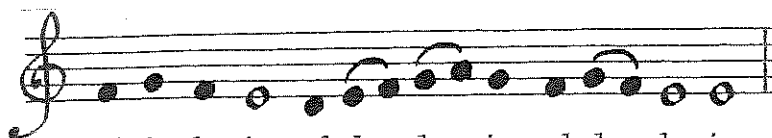
## A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

As he concludes his letter to the church in Thessalonica, Paul exhorts the new converts to live joyfully and prayerfully in readiness for the Lord's coming.

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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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



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

Cantor: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. **All: Alleluia**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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

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

O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.

Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.

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

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing night;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. 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: Donald Burton, Ed Haug, Lynn Kerber, Susan Rich, Karen Schulze, Lori, Nina, Vicki, Jim Veit, In our Diocese, for the clergy and people of St. Matthew's & St. Joseph's 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 304, I Come With Joy To Meet My Lord

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.

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Music: Kenneth George Pinlay, adapt. Gordon Appleton. © Broomhill Hyndland Parish Church. GLENFINLAS

*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.

*After all have received, please stand and pray together:*

Merciful God; May this eucharist free us from our sins, fill us with unending joy, and prepare us for the birthday of our Savior. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord now and for ever. 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 66, Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus, Born To Set Thy People Free

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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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