



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

17 DECEMBER 2017

Sentence Bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, the day of vengeance of our God. *Isaiah 61.1-2*

Collect

God of light, who sent John the Baptist
to offer hope and to the face the world's scorn:
open our ears to hear the cries of the margins,
exposing our fears, inciting our vision
and calling us to a step in faith;
through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

A wonderful passage giving the Jews in Exile in Babylon hope for a return to their own land and the establishment of a reign of justice, peace and righteousness. This is the text which Jesus would later read and preach on in the synagogue in Nazareth, his home town. Jesus omitted the verse about the 'day of vengeance of our God' which so enraged the townspeople they tried to kill him. Jesus' brings in God's kingdom without violence.

The servant of the Lord said:

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 broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, 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 re-

sus 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. Beloved, pray for us. Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

1 Thessalonians 5.12-28

Reader May your word live in us
All **And bear much fruit to your glory.**

Gospel Acclamation

All **Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Cantor The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring good news to the poor.

All **Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Reader The Lord be with you

ALL **And also with you**

Reader A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

ALL **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

John the Baptizer was challenged by 'the Jews', the religious authorities who held office in the Jerusalem Temple, because he used a ritual not sanctioned by them. John's baptism was preparation for the 'hidden' messiah, already in their midst but not yet revealed. It was a metaphorical new exodus in which people purified themselves in readiness for God's decisive act of redemption expected to be very soon.

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

pair 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.

Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-11

Reader For the word of the Lord
All **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 126 at 8am APBA, 362

One of the pilgrim psalms to be sung while walking up to Jerusalem (Zion) it is a thanksgiving by returning exiles. The Negeb is an arid region, so abundant rain there is a great sign of blessing and a good harvest a metaphor for the restoration of the peoples to the land of Judah.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

These closing verses of the letter urge the hearers to show mercy and justice in their relationships, be earnest in prayer and live a life characterized by joy and thankfulness.

We appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Je-

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.

John 1.6-8, 19-28

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

ALL Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Prayer for the Week: Almighty God, you have made us and all things to serve you: come quickly to save us, so that wars and violence shall end and your children may live in peace, honouring one another with justice and love; through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord who lives with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Bible Readings next week Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Sam. 7.1-11, 16 Song of Mary 1 Thess. 5.16-24 Luke 1.26-38

Pray for the Faithful Departed

We remember before God: Lorna Hope Wroughton Fulton, Gladys Lewis, Jessica Wakefield, Elizabeth Ruth Duffield, Elgin Dahlenburg, Edward Lesh, Mary Monica Smith, Ron Plant, Judith Daish and Yvonne Elisabeth Lester *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

Commemorations of the week *none this week*

Give to the **Christmas Bowl** through the National Council of Churches Australia and you not only give money to refugees and others in desperate need, you will give hope because they will hear the good news that people have not forgotten them. Donations are tax deductible and envelopes are available on the bench near the church

porch.

To donate use the envelope and either post or put in the church collection plate, Free call 1800 025 101 or <actforpeace.org.au>

