

Strengthen your hearts,  
for the coming of the Lord is near.

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany  
3rd Sunday of Advent  
December 15, 10:30 am

James 5:8b

We worship today according to the Holy Eucharist: Rite Two,  
beginning on page 355 of the Book of Common Prayer.

### The Liturgy of the Word

Processional Hymn:

*Prepare the Way, O Zion*.....65

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.  
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.**

### Lighting of the Advent Candle

Hymn: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*.....56

Verses 1, 5, and 6

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. **Amen.**

The Lessons (the people sit)

*The First Lesson – Isaiah 35:1-10*

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Psalm 146:4-9*

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help!\*  
**whose hope is in the LORD their God;**

Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in  
them; \*

**who keeps his promise for ever;**

Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, \*  
**and food to those who hunger.**

The LORD sets the prisoners free;  
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind; \*  
**the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;**

The LORD loves the righteous;  
the LORD cares for the stranger; \*  
**he sustains the orphan and widow,  
but frustrates the way of the wicked.**

The LORD shall reign for ever, \*  
**your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.  
Hallelujah!**

*The Epistle - James 5:7-10*

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord.  
The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being  
patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You  
also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming  
of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one  
another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is  
standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and  
patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name  
of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Sequence – Matthew 11:2-11 (the people stand)

Hymn: *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*.....76  
Verses 1-3

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

**Glory to You, Lord Christ.**

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You, Lord Christ.**

Hymn: *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*.....76  
Verses 4-5

Sermon Father Wells

The Nicene Creed

**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.**

The Prayers of the People (Form I, page 383 of the Book of Common Prayer)

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving-kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For Justin, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Katharine, our Presiding Bishop, Kee and Santosh, our Bishops, Wells, our Priest, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For Barack, our President, Robert, our governor, Bobby, our mayor, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For seasonable weather, and for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who travel on land, on water, or in the air, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For **Lynda Denton, Dot and Thurman Harris, Charlotte and Lannon Poole, Dezel Oliver (Kathy Haynie), Billie Wilkinson, Lindsey Burt (Eddie and Pam Harper), Kathy Brumbleloe (Jere and Pam Van Etten), Oletta Goodwin, Sherry Gritz (Jean Kerr), Clifford Flood (Jean Kerr), Robert Lumpkin (Barbara Trogdon), Emmanuel Rico (Mike and Elizabeth Harber)** and the others we now name: (*Silence, during which the people offer their own petitions*) let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the absolution and remission of our sins and offenses, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

Defend us, deliver us, and in thy compassion protect us, O Lord, by thy grace. **Lord, have mercy.**

In the communion of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God. **To thee, O Lord our God.** (*Silence*)

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect:*

### Confession of Sin (the people stand or kneel)

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

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

### The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

### Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

## The Holy Communion

Offertory Hymn: *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night*.....640

### The Presentation

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

### The Great Thanksgiving

*(Eucharistic Prayer B, BCP p 367)*

*(Musical Response in the Hymnal at S 120)*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him 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.

*(Father Wells says a Proper Preface)*

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus: *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord*.....S 130

*The people stand or kneel*

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death,  
We proclaim his resurrection,  
We await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior

Christ has taught us,

we are bold to say,

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the  
glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**  
The Breaking of the Bread

*The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of  
silence is kept.*

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;  
**Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Fraction Anthem: *Jesus, Lamb of God*.....S 164

The gifts of God for the people of God.

*The ministers receive the Sacrament in both kinds, and then  
immediately deliver it to the people.*

Communion Hymn: *One Bread, One Body*.....SH-94

*After Communion, the people stand or kneel and the  
Celebrant says*

Let us pray.

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously  
accepted us as living members of your Son our  
Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with  
spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and  
Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and  
grant us strength and courage to love and serve  
you with gladness and singleness of heart;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing

Recessional Hymn (*the people stand*):

*Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers*.....68

Alleluia, Alleluia. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.**

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Today is Gaudete Sunday, on which we light the third Advent candle, the pink candle of Joy.  
The coming of the Lord is near!

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Join us here in the nave this afternoon at 2:00 pm for selected choruses  
from Handel's Messiah from scratch!

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Fifth Sunday lunches in 2014. Got your calendar handy?  
Here are the dates set for lunch on the grounds after worship during 2014:

- March 30
- June 29
- August 31
- November 30

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***Serving at Epiphany this week . . .***

Ushers: Eddie and Pam Harper  
Altar Guild: Jean Kerr  
Lay Reader: Betty Weldon  
Piano: Caleb Hart

Eucharistic Minister: Laura Williams  
Refreshments: Sharon Cleary  
Stewards: Eddie and Pam Harper

***and next . . .***

Ushers: Lee and Amanda Borden  
Altar Guild: Cathy Jones  
Lay Reader: Lannon Poole  
Piano: Caleb Hart

Eucharistic Minister: Tom Bray  
Refreshments: Pam Harper  
Stewards: Cathy Jones and Laura Williams