

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our
God.

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany
Second Sunday of Advent
Holy Eucharist
December 6, 2020, 9:30 am

Isaiah 40:3b

We worship today according to the Holy Eucharist: Rite Two, beginning on
page 355 of the Book of Common Prayer. Congregational responses are in **boldface type**.

The Word of God

*We will observe silence together to prepare for worship, which begins with
the ringing of the bell. We stand.*

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.**

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

The Collect of the Day

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 Lessons (*we sit*)

The First Lesson – Isaiah 40:1-11

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.

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13

You have been gracious to your land, O Lord,
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.

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.

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.

**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.**

The Epistle Lesson – 2 Peter 3:8-15a

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.

Hymn: *Prepare the Way, O Zion (we sit)*

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near! Let every hill and valley a level way appear. Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story. Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.

Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace. His tidings of salvation proclaim in every place. All lands will bow before him, their voices will adore him. Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.

The Gospel – Mark 1:1-8 (*we stand*)

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 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.

We sit

Sermon

The Rev. Lee Lowery

The Nicene Creed (*we stand*)

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, BCP)

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 our Bishops, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For our President, our President-elect, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For Tallassee, 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 **Dennis** Harper, **Larry** Sharpton, **Dezsel** Oliver, **Tom** Haynie, **Beth** Hall, **Mike** Dickey, **Ellen** Solomon, **Joan** Ashurst Miller, **Caleb** Hart, **Bobby** Perkins, **Maurice** McCord, **Jere** Van Etten, **Herbert** Boswell, and the others we now name. *(Silence for us to add our 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.

The Offertory

Through Christ let us continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his Name.

Hymn – There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying (we sit)

There's a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod; prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God! The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low; make straight all the crooked places where the Lord our God may go!

For the word of our God endureth, the arm of the Lord is strong; he stands in the midst of nations, and he will write the wrong. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, the lambs he'll gently hold; to pastures of peace he'll lead them, and bring them safe to his fold.

The Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

(Eucharistic Prayer C, BCP p 369) (we stand)

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.

God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

By your will they were created and have their being.

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

By his blood, he reconciled us.

By his wounds, we are healed.

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, 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, gave thanks, 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."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

**We celebrate his death and resurrection,
as we await the day of his coming.**

Lord God of our Fathers and Mothers; God of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. **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. We keep a period of silence

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

The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Being careful to maintain social distance and keeping our faces covered, we approach the table. Each of us takes a plate and returns to his or her seat. We consume the wafer when we are back in our seats.

After Communion, we stand or kneel.

Let us pray.

**Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Blessing

Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Following the service, please place your plate in the receptacle provided.

Serving at Epiphany this week:

Altar Guild: Pam Van Etten
Lay Reader: Laura Williams

And next:

Altar Guild: Cathy Jones
Lay Reader: Amanda Borden