

The Third Sunday of Advent: December 12, 2021

The Collect: 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 forever. Amen.

The First Lesson: Zephaniah 3:14-20: Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

Canticle 9: The First Song of Isaiah

Surely, it is God who saves me; * I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, * and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing * from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, * Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; * see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, * and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, *

for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen

Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Luke 3:7-18: John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized,

and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Prayers of the People

Rejoice in the Lord, always; again I will say, rejoice. Surely, it is God who saves us; therefore, we will joyfully pray to the Lord, God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

Though we are hindered by our sins and in need of your bountiful grace and mercy, you never leave us. You are ever in our midst. Renew your Church in love. We pray for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Jennifer, our Bishop; Mauricio, Bishop of Brasilia; the Anglican Church of Canada; for Rebecca and people of St. John's Bedford; and Debbie, our priest. We also pray for the Diocese of Haiti, especially St. Andres in Mithon. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

We let our requests be known to you. Be present with the faith community of St. Alban's. Guide our leaders to make good decisions for our future, to create a place of ministry that is broader than we can imagine, with community partners who will impact the neighborhood around us in ways we cannot do alone. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

Make your deeds known among the people, O God. Save the lame, gather the outcast. May the exiles know home and all people know your peace. We pray that the Wall around Bethlehem and all other barriers come down. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

May your springs of salvation renew the earth. Heal our planet and restore in us a sense of responsibility. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

Merciful God, in this month of great excess and consumerism, call the financial and business communities to act justly and generously. Grant that those without coats be clothed and those without food be fed. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

Merciful God, we pray for our leaders, that they may serve all people in ways that improve our world; we remember especially Joseph, our President; Kamala, our Vice President; Representatives; members of Congress; the Courts; Eric, our Governor; Joe and all our mayors; and all those in positions of authority who have been charged to serve all people. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

O God, you have done great things. With thankful hearts we pray to you for those burdened by shame, grief, or weakness. Be for them a stronghold and a sure defense. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**

God, our salvation, gather us, with all those who have died, into your sacred heart. Grant us to sing your praises for all eternity. God of our salvation: **Thank you.**