

# **ST. JAMES PARISH CHURCH**

**READINGS FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024**

**THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

## **THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

### **THE COLLECT: THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

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. **Amen.**

## **THE FIRST LESSON - ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20**

***Earlier in the chapter, the author has spoken of the failure of Jerusalem and her inhabitants to behave properly towards God. He has destroyed other nations as a warning to them. In spite of this, God will cause Gentiles to turn to his ways: they will serve him by permitting the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem.***

***A Reading from the Word of God, found in the book of the prophet Zephaniah, Chapter 3, beginning at the fourteenth verse.***

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.

### **The Word of the Lord**

The people: Thanks be to God.

## **CANTICLE 9: ISAIAH 12:2-6**

### ***The First Song of Isaiah***

***A song of confidence and hope in God the Saviour, for the Holy One is in the midst of the people who joyfully proclaim the Lord's deeds.***

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 shall be forever. Amen.

## **THE SECOND LESSON: PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7**

*Paul tried to finish his letter earlier, but certain concerns about the community and its members intruded. In the Greek world, rejoice was used much as we say goodbye today, but here Paul means rejoice literally.*

*A reading from the Word of God, written in the Epistle to the Philippians, Chapter 4, beginning at the fourth verse.*

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.

### **The Word of the Lord**

The people: Thanks be to God.

## **THE GOSPEL - LUKE 3:7-18**

*John the Baptist travels throughout the Jordan Valley, preaching return to God's ways and adoption of an*

***ethical way of life under God. Now he warns against being baptised without the intention to carry out its obligations. Those who behave in this way will be condemned at the end of the age.***

***Gospeler: The Lord be with you***

***All: And also with you***

***Gospeler: A Reading from the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.***

***All: Glory to Christ Our Saviour.***

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.

This is the Gospel of Christ

**The people:** Praise to Christ our Lord.

*(NRSV)*

*From The Lectionary Page: <http://lectionarypage.net>*