

ARCH Group's aim: "To show our love for God and You"



Weekly Notices
15th December 2024
Third Sunday of Advent



Today's Collect

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice, and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today's Post Communion Prayer

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

Next Week's Services: Sunday 22nd December 2024

9.30 am	Harvington	Holy Communion+
6.00 pm	Harvington	Carols in the Churchyard
6.00 pm	Church Lench	Carol Service

Opportunities for Generosity

We have a Reverse Advent Calendar running at St James', collecting items to support Caring Hands food bank. Our regular boxes are also available to help those in need in all our churches.

We will ensure they get there before Christmas!

Treats and toiletries gratefully received.

For Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray today for your Church here and everywhere as we seek to do outreach. We pray for a hospitable spirit to welcome people coming through our doors during this sparkling season of Advent, and to encourage them to stay when the trappings of Christmas have been tidied away. We pray for those involved in outreach in local communities, going where the need is, living the Gospel message in generous and practical ways; remembering always that Christ gave of himself every day, and that with the joy given by God comes the responsibility to share it.

In the midst of our rejoicing, we remember that your Good News comes with responsibility.

Lord, we have witnessed the restoration of that great cathedral in Paris, Notre Dame, and it reminds us of our need to be renewed and restored. As you restored your people in the days of Zephaniah and brought them home, so remind us of our spiritual home in you; and as John the Baptist foretold the coming of Christ, the Messiah for all peoples, so may we be renewed and restored in order to share in the unfolding of his Good News to the world.

In the midst of our rejoicing, we remember that your Good News comes with responsibility.

Lord, as we gaze at romantic depictions of Bethlehem on our Christmas cards, we remember the truth : that the Holy Family were homeless that night, and soon became refugees; that Jesus was born in an occupied country which was a tinder box. So, Father, as we have seen the overturn of the ruling regime in Syria this week, we pray for the Middle East and its complex conflicts – let there be stability, Lord, and peace among Christians, Jews and Muslims. We pray for peaceful solutions to be found in other conflicts around the world, too, and for all leaders who profess faith to remember their responsibilities to the teachings of their religions.

In the midst of our rejoicing, we remember that your Good News comes with responsibility. May we all, using the various gifts given us, discharge our responsibility to share the gospel tidings; in Jesus' name, and for his sake, Amen.

This Week's First Reading: *Zephaniah 3:14-20*

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! ¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. ¹⁷The 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 ¹⁸as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. ¹⁹I 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. ²⁰At 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.

This Week's Canticle: *Isaiah 12:2-6*

- 1 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.
- 2 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.
- 3 And you will say on that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.
- 4 Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.

Isaiah 12:2-6 continued

5 Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

This Week's Second Reading: *Philippians 4:4-7*

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This Week's Gospel Reading: *Luke 3:7-18*

⁷John 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? ⁸Bear 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. ⁹Even now the axe 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.'

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' ¹¹In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' ¹²Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' ¹³He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.'

Luke 3:7-18 continued

¹⁴Soldiers 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.' ¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John 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. ¹⁷His 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.'

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Next Week's First Reading: *Micah 5:2-5a*

The LORD says to his people: ²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

Next Week's Canticale: *Magnificat*

- 1 My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
- 2 From this day all generations will call me blessed; the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.
- 3 He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation to generation.
- 4 He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
- 5 Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.
- 6 He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

- 7 He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to remember his promise of mercy,
- 8 The promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children for ever.

Next Week's Second Reading: *Hebrews 10:5-10*

⁵When Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; ⁶in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).' ⁸When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Next Week's Gospel Reading: *Luke 1:39-45*

³⁹Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,
⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.
⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb.
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud
cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your
womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord
comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the
child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that
there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

