

# ST. JAMES'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Sixth Sunday of Advent: Oriens Sunday

December 17, 2023 10:30 am

#### Welcome to St. James's!

We're glad that you have joined us today to enjoy the blessings of worship and to participate with us in God's mission in the world of justice and love.

However you come to this place, exhausted or energized by life, comfortable with church or not, gay or straight, trans, nonbinary, cisfemale or cismale; of color or white, neurodivergent or neurotypical, differently-abled or able-bodied, younger or older!

Whoever you are,

know the people of St. James's strive to love and welcome you as God does, unconditionally and completely just as you are!

### 10:30 am The Sixth Sunday of Advent, Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Acolytes Marian King, Jonte Folkes

Cantor Janet Hobbs

Eucharistic Ministers JT Kittredge, Mabel Moore-Pollard

Minister of Music Patrick Michaels

Preacher & Presider The Rev. Matthew Stewart

Readers Tamasin Milner-Wohlers, Alfred Ironside

UshersNancy McArdleVideographerMichael AnthonyWelcomerNancy McArdle

# An Opening Rite for the Season of Advent

#### Words of Welcome

# **Opening Sentences**

Presider As our nights grow longer and our days grow short,

we look on these earthly signs, candles and green branches

*People* And we remember God's promise to our world:

Christ, our Light and our Hope, will come.

# Time of Contemplation

A period of roughly five minutes is now kept either in silence or with gentle music as we seek in our souls the One who is ever coming. During this period, the candles are lit.

"Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return.

Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home unto Itself. Yielding to these persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life.

It is a dynamic center, a creative Life that presses to birth within us.

It is a Light Within which illumines the face of God and casts new shadows and new glories upon the face of men.

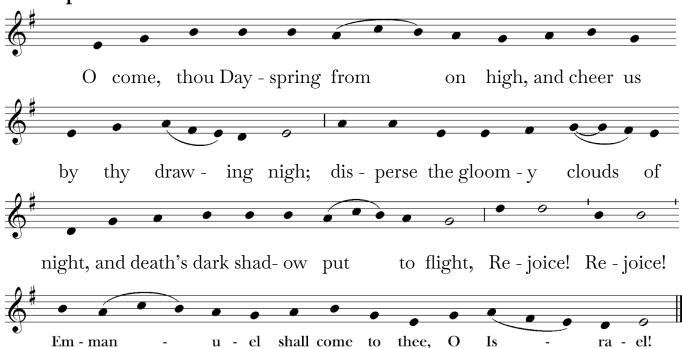
It is a seed stirring to life if we do not choke it.

It is the Shekinah of the soul, the Presence in the midst.

Here is the Slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened, to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And [God] is within us all."

- Quaker Mystic Thomas Kelly

# **O** Antiphon



The stanzas may be used as antiphons with "The Song of Mary" on the dates given.

Words: Latin, ca. 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1940*, alt. Copyright © The Church Pension Fund. Music: *Veni, veni, Emmanuel*, plainsong, Mode 1, Processionale, 15th cent.; adapt. Thomas Helmore (1811-1890); acc. Richard Proulx (b. 1937).

# The Collect of the Day

Presider May God be with you. People And also be with you.

Presider Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, in your resurrection you appeared as the Morning Star that knows no setting: Dawn upon the darkness of the human heart so that the deathly orders of this world may be overcome and your whole creation made new; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.** 

#### The Word of God

The First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Tamasin Milner-Wohlers

A reading from the Book of Isaiah.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me;

he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;

to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

to provide for those who mourn in Zion to give them a garland instead of ashes,

the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations;

they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;

I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples;

all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God;

for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise

to spring up before all the nations.

Reader

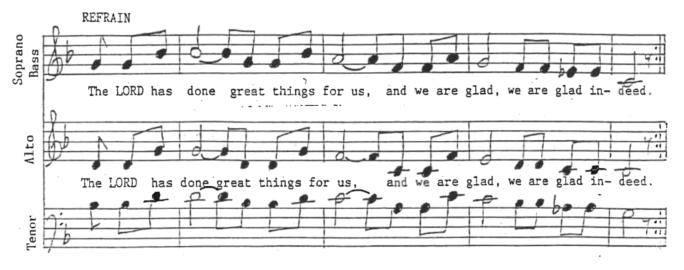
Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People

Thanks be to God.

#### **Psalm 126**

#### Patrick Michaels



When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, \* then were we like those who dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \* and our tongue with shouts of joy.

Refrain

Then they said among the nations, \*

"The LORD has done great things for them."

The LORD has done great things for us, \*
and we are glad indeed.

Refrain

Restore our fortunes, O LORD, \*
like the watercourses of the Negev.
Those who sowed with tears \*
will reap with songs of joy.

Refrain

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \* will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

Refrain

**The Second Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Tamasin Milner-Wohlers

A reading from the Book of First Thessalonians.

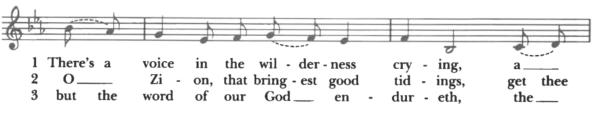
Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

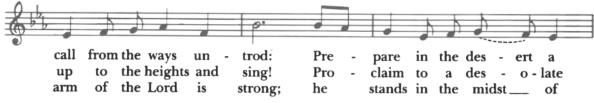
Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

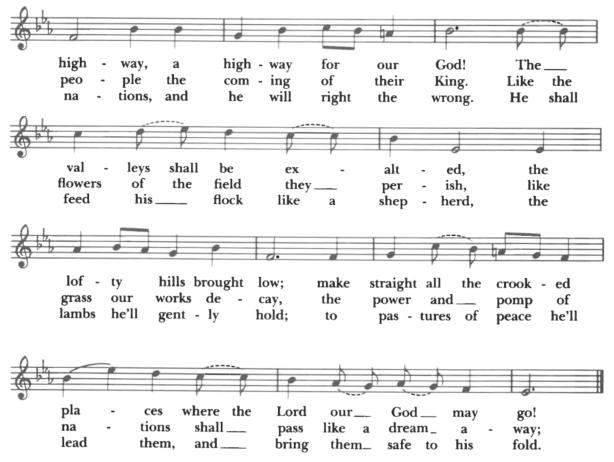
People Thanks be to God.

# Gospel Hymn: There's a voice in the wilderness crying









Words: James Lewis Milligan (18760-1961), alt. Music: Ascension, Henry Hugh Bancroft (b. 1904)

#### **The Holy Gospel**: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to John. *People* Glory to you, O Christ.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie

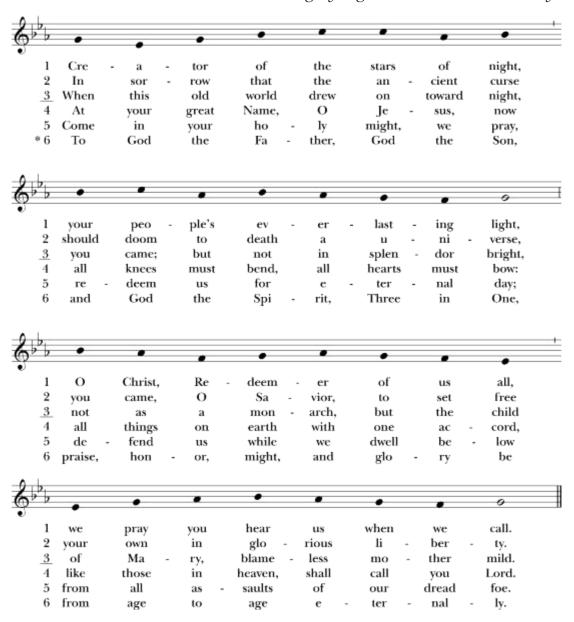
the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord. People Praise to you, O Christ.

#### Sermon

The Rev. Matthew Stewart

**Affirmation of Faith** (Verse 3 is sung by high voices alone. Verse 4 by low voices) H 60



Words: Latin, 9th century Music: Conditor alme siderum, plainsong, Mode 4, acc. Bruce Neswick (b. 1956)

**Prayers of the People** (*The people say the responses in bold*)

Alfred Ironside

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.** 

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. Today we especially pray for Erika and for Sunny, Erika's son, born twelve weeks premature; for Curtis Fisher; for Barbara and John Butler; and for "Lulu" DeFreitas, diagnosed with a lung ailment.

I invite your prayers aloud or in silence at this time.

A time for prayer is kept.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.** 

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Silence

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.** 

Presider

Hasten, O God, the coming of your kingdom of peace; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. **Amen.** 

#### Confession

Presider Let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

All

Almighty God, Source of all that is, Giver of every good gift:

we confess that we have failed to honor you

in the great diversity of the human family.

We have desired to live in freedom,

while building walls between ourselves and others.

Forgive us, Holy God.

Give us eyes to see you as you are revealed in all people.

Strengthen us for the work of reconciliation rooted in love.

Restore us in your image, to be beloved community, united in our diversity, even as you are one with Christ and the Spirit,
Holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever. Amen.

A moment in silence is now kept, not to dwell in unnecessary self-criticism or self-hatred, but rather to face our brokenness with courage and honesty that we might know more deeply God's healing and forgiving love.

The Presider then says

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

#### The Peace

Presider The peace of God be always with you.

People And also with you.

#### **Announcements & Celebrations**

The people are now invited to come forward to share announcements, birthday and anniversary blessing requests, or prayer requests. The community's prayer is then gathered as they sing together:

May God bless you; May God keep you; May God's love be with you; May God grant you peace and wisdom; May God ever be with you.

# The Holy Communion

# **Offertory Sentence**

Presider Let us gather our gifts together and present them as an offering to God.

At this time our gifts and offerings will be collected.

**Offertory Anthem:** God So Loved the World *The Adult Choir* 

John Stainer

# **Presentation Hymn:** Longing for Light (vs. 1 only)

MHSO 59



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#### The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer

Presider The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Presider Lift up your hearts.

*People* We lift them to the Lord.

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.People It is right to give God thanks and praise.

# The Presider says

It is truly right always and everywhere to praise you, Lord God our Creator, Giver of light. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name:

Sanctus MHSO 37





Words: from The Book of Common Prayer (1979) of the Episcopal Church USA.

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#### The Presider says

Life-giving God, you made all people and all things in a world of glory, and taught us to live together in love forever.

And though we turned from your light and made war on one another, wasting the gifts of your creation, until we could find no way out of the darkness, even then you did not destroy or forsake us.

#### The People then say

You called Sarah and Abraham on a journey of promise, and brought Israel out of captivity; you made Moses your friend, and taught him to grow in the truth. And in due time the new star of glory appeared, scattering the shadows of death and leading us on the road to peace.

#### The Presider says

Our eyes at first were dim: we could not make him out. We wondered as he taught us the way of your kingdom; we fled in fear when he died for us, showing the fullness of love.

#### The People then say

But you raised him again, and in his new dawn the truth shone plainly for all to see.

Now we have cast down our fears; we have turned our faces full to the light. And so, we join in love once more, to follow his example and share his glorious life in the breaking of bread.

# The Presider says

For on the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given to 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 in 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 of 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."

# The People then say

Therefore, God, we offer you the bread and the wine. We offer them gladly, as Jesus told us, giving thanks for his life, his death, and his resurrection.

The Presider says

Now send us your Holy Spirit, to show that this bread and cup are the life-giving body and blood of your Son, and reveal your image in us, transforming our life to be like his and bring us at the last to his commonwealth of peace.

All then say together

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. AMEN.

The Presider then says
And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

# Lord's Prayer

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** (Silence is kept)

#### Fraction Anthem: Father, we thank thee



Words: Greek, ca. 110 tr. F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984) rev. Music: Albright, William Albright (b. 1944)

#### The Invitation

*Presider* The Gifts of God for the People of God.

#### **Administration of Communion**

The people are invited to come forward to receive communion when directed by an usher.

Those that wish a contactless blessing or a gluten-free, allergen-free wafer are welcome to ask for that.

All are welcome and encouraged to receive Communion from God's table.

#### Communion Anthem: One Crimson Bird

The Greenleaf Choir

Text: One crimson bird upon a branch is singing while it snows, And cold and winter dusk advance, on wind that howls and blows. Why does the creature not take flight? Why brave the storm to sing? What prompts its heart to greet the night with ceaseless caroling?

The two-note tune of this bird's hymn insists, insists, insists
That though the world grows cold and dim, hope's counterpart persists.
It rises through the creature's voice as song that blesses earth
And heralds why the skies rejoice to greet an infant's birth. (Thomas Troeger)

Music: Patrick Michaels

WLP 724



Words: Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965) @ 1957 E. Farjeon Music: Besancon Carol, harm and @ John L. Hooker One license #A-700155

# **Post Communion Prayer** (*Please stand as you are able*)

Presider Let us pray.

People 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.

# **Blessing**

Presider

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the shadows from before your path; and the blessing of God, Almighty, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.** 

# Closing Hymn: Canticle of the Turning





Author: Rory Cooney One license.net License #A-700155

# **Dismissal**

*Presider* Let us bless the Lord.

*People* Thanks be to God.

# Postlude

Saint James's Episcopal Church 1991 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge, MA 02140 Website: www.stjamescambridge.org Office Email: office@stjamescambridge.org Emergency Pastoral Line: 857-600-1329

Interested in speaking to a priest or asking for prayers? Email Rev. Matt at matt@stjamescambridge.org

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