

## PARISH OF THE ASCENSION

### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT JOY

#### **Collect**

God of power and mercy,  
you call us once again  
to celebrate the coming of your Son.  
Remove those things which hinder love of you,  
that when he comes,  
he may find us waiting in awe and wonder  
for him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

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#### **A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. **ISAIAH 35: 1–10**

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.  
People: **Thanks be to God.**

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### **THE SONG OF MARY**

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
**for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.**

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.  
**He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.**

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.  
**He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." LUKE 1: 46b – 55**

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### **A READING FROM THE LETTER OF JAMES**

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. **JAMES 5:7–10**

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.  
People: **Thanks be to God.**

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Reader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

## **THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MATTHEW**

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

**MATTHEW 11: 2 – 11**

Reader: The Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

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## **PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS**

God of hope,  
renew in us the joy of your salvation  
and make us a living sacrifice to you,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Merciful God,  
may this eucharist free us from our sins,  
fill us with unending joy,  
and prepare us for the birthday of our Saviour.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,  
who is Lord now and for ever. **AMEN.**