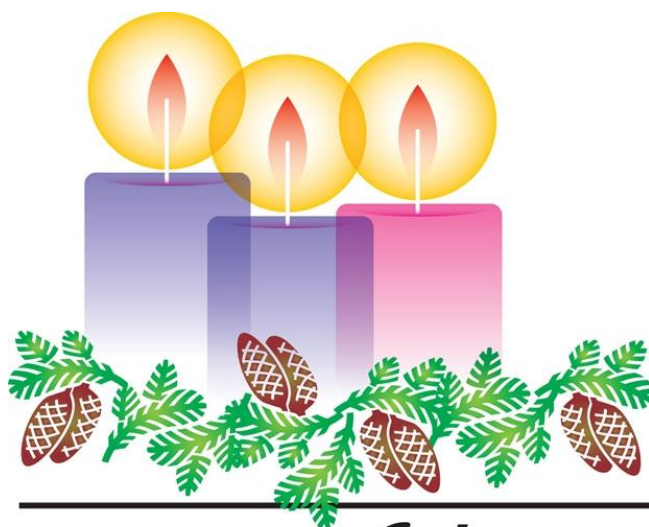




St. Martin's Episcopal Church  
Bridgewater, New Jersey



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THIRD SUNDAY OF *Advent*

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An Abbreviated Service of the Word  
with Spiritual Communion

December 13, 2020

## **Opening Hymn: *Rejoice, Rejoice Believers***

Priest: + Blessed are you, Holy and Living God.

*All: You come to your people and set them free.*

## **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

### **Trisagion (said three times)**

Priest: Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, *All: Have mercy upon us*

### **Collect of the Day**

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 Lesson**

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.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people/ *Thanks be to God*

**Psalm 126 *In convertendo* (prayed together in unison)**

- 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, \*  
then were we like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \*  
and our tongue with shouts of joy.
- 3 Then they said among the nations, \*  
"The Lord has done great things for them."
- 4 The Lord has done great things for us, \*  
and we are glad indeed.
- 5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, \*  
like the watercourses of the Negev.
- 6 Those who sowed with tears \*  
will reap with songs of joy.
- 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \*  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

**The Holy Gospel**

The Holy Gospel of our + Lord Jesus Christ according to John

*All: Glory to you, Lord 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. John 1:6-8, 16-18

The Gospel of the Lord./ *All: Praise to you, O Christ.*

### **The Homily**

**The Rev. Dr. Robert Laws**

### **The Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the + resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **The Prayers of the People**

Intercessor: God of love, you raised up John the baptizer as a herald who calls us to conversion. As we joyfully await the glorious coming of Christ, we pray to you for the needs of the church and the world.

Intercessor: For peace in the world and for the salvation of all, we pray to you O God of love, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Intercessor: For your holy catholic church, that it may persevere in faith and hope, we pray to you O God of love, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Intercessor: For the poor and the unemployed, the homeless, prisoners and refugees, we pray to you O God of love, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Intercessor: For the sick and all who suffer in body, mind or spirit, especially *(insert names here)* we pray to you O God of love, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Intercessor: For all who have died, especially *(insert names here)* we pray to you O God of love, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Intercessor: In the communion of the Ever-Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Martin, and of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God. *To you, O Lord our God.*

Priest: Hasten, O God, the coming of your kingdom; 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 of Sin and Absolution**

Priest: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

All: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

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

## **The Peace**

**Anthem:** *Hills of the North, Rejoice! Shaw*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,  
*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.*

## **An Act of Spiritual Communion (prayed together)**

In union, dear Lord, with the faithful at every altar of your Church where your blessed Body and Blood are being offered, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to you, and embrace you with all the affections of my

soul. Let me never be separated from you. Let me live and die in your love.  
Amen. Lord Jesus, come dwell in my heart.

**Blessing and Dismissal**

**Closing Hymn:** *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

LYRICS

***Rejoice, Rejoice Believers***

Rejoice! rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear!  
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.  
The Bridegroom is arising, and soon he will draw nigh;  
Up, watch with expectation, at midnight comes the cry.

See that your lamps are burning, replenish them with oil;  
Look now for your salvation, the end of sin and toil.  
The marriage-feast is waiting, the gates wide open stand;  
Rise up, ye heirs of glory, the Bridegroom is at hand!

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;  
Arise, thou Sun so longed for, above this darkened sphere!  
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see  
the day of earth's redemption, and ever be with thee!

***Hills of the North, Rejoice!***

Hills of the North, rejoice,  
Echoing songs arise  
Hail with united voice  
Him who made earth and skies,  
He comes in righteousness and love, he brings salvation from above.

Isles of the Southern seas,  
sing to the listening earth, carry on every breeze  
hope of a world's new birth:  
In Christ shall all be made anew,  
his word is sure, his promise true.

Lands of the East, arise,  
he is your brightest morn,  
greet him with joyous eyes,  
praise shall his path adorn:  
The God whom you have longed to know,  
in Christ draws near and calls you now.

Shores of the utmost West,  
lands of the setting sun,  
welcome the heavenly guest in whom the dawn has come:  
he brings a never-ending light  
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

Shout, as you journey home,  
Songs be in every mouth,  
Lo, from the North they come,  
From East and West and South:  
in Jesus all shall find their rest, in him the universe be blest.



***Come Thou Long Expected Jesus***

Come, thou long expected Jesus born to set Thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a King,  
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
by Thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.