

St. Martin's Episcopal Church
Bridgewater, New Jersey



An Abbreviated Service of the Word
with Spiritual Communion

December 6, 2020
Commemoration: St. Nicholas

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

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

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Please light the first and second purple candles in your wreath as a prayer is offered by (insert name(s) here).

Opening Hymn: *Comfort, Comfort, O My People*

Mute your mic and sing along! Lyrics are at the end of the service bulletin.

Trisagion (said three times)

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

Collect of the Day

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

Grant, Almighty God, that your church may be so inspired by the example of your servant Nicholas of Myra, that it may never cease to work for the welfare of children, the safety of sailors, the relief of the poor, and the help of those tossed by tempests of doubt or grief; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Lesson (1 Peter 3:8-15a)

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

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

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 *Benedixisti, Domine* (prayed together in unison)

1 You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.

8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

Alleluia Verse

Priest: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

The Holy Gospel

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

All: Glory to you, Lord Christ

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Mark 1:1-8

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, we pray to you O God of love, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Intercessor: In the communion of the Ever-Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Nicholas, 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: *Prepare the way of the Lord (Taize)*

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.*

Since during this time of sheltering at home you are not able to receive the Sacramental Presence of Christ in the bread and wine of the Altar, you are encouraged to make an act of spiritual communion and invite Jesus to come dwell in your heart. God's grace is abundant. Be assured that Jesus Christ is always present with you.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

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.

Closing Hymn: *There's A Voice in The Wilderness Calling*
Mute your mic and sing along! Lyrics are on the last page.

Blessing and Dismissal

SERVING TODAY

Leader(s) of the Lighting of the Advent Wreath:

Reader:

Intercessor:

Celebrant: The Rev. Dr. Robert Laws

LYRICS

Comfort, Comfort, Now My People

*Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace! so says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness, mourning under sorrow's load.
To God's people now proclaim, that God's pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover; And their warfare now is over!*

*For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance, since the Reign of God is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!*

*Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain!
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God's holy reign!
For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token, that God's word is never broken.*

Prepare the Way of the Lord (Taize)

*Prepare the way of the Lord, prepare the way of the Lord,
And all people shall see the salvation of our God.*

There's A Voice in The Wilderness Crying

*There's a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod:
Prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places, where the Lord our God may go!*

*O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their King.
Like the flowers of the field they perish, like grass our works decay,
the power and pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away;*

*But the word of our God endureth, the arm of the Lord is strong;
he stands in the midst of nations, and he will right the wrong.
He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, the lambs he'll gently hold;
to pastures of peace he'll lead them, and bring them safe to his fold.*