

**Stainton, Hilton and Brookfield**  
**3rd Sunday of Advent – year B**  
**13<sup>th</sup> December 20**

**WELCOME. to Worship at home.**

**Thought for the day**

Today is Refreshment Sunday, or Rose Sunday or in the Latin Gaudete (which means rejoice) . It is a day of relaxation in the solemn season of Advent. It is also the day we remember St John the Baptist

**COLLECT**

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

**A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah. 61.1-4, 8-11**

The servant of the LORD said:

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 broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, 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.

**Psalm 126**

**R The Lord has done great things for us and we are glad indeed.**

- 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 Lord has done great things for us and we are glad indeed**

**A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. 5.16-24**

My brothers and sisters, 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.

**Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. 1.6-8, 19-28**

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.

**This is the Gospel of the Lord.**

**INTERCESSIONS** *Please add your own prayers for people and situations known to you*

Holy God, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of Christ our Saviour we ask that you will answer our prayers and make us a holy people, fit to greet him with eager hearts. May our Church leaders be blessed with wisdom and holiness to guide us through this season of Advent despite the pandemic, to a holy, peaceful and joyful Christmas.

Creator God, help the leaders of nations to seek justice and peace. Especially we pray for all who are meeting today in an attempt to broker a Brexit trade deal. Locally we pray for all who working at this time to give disadvantaged families a

happier Christmas, in Middlesbrough and surrounding areas. Across the world we ask that there may be good news for the poor and the broken hearted and an end to conflicts which lead to so much grief and mourning.

Healing God, We pray for all who are striving to adjust to a new way of being "normal" in these difficult times as Covid 19 continues to spread. Bless those who offer care and companionship.

We give thanks for the rolling out of a vaccine and for the expertise of those who have made it possible..

Merciful God, may your blessing be upon all those who are in pain or sickness, those who are anxious or troubled. We know that you are always present with us, even when sometimes you seem far away. Help us to feel your presence when we pass through dark places. Bless all doctors, nurses and carers and all frontline workers.

Gracious God, may those who have died be granted the peace of your heavenly kingdom. Give rest to the souls of those who have gone from our lives to meet with you. May they now, released from pain or sorrow, find life eternal at rest in your presence.

Faithful God, as we continue this Advent journey, let us not forget you in our times of joy and pleasure. Help all your people to unite together rejoicing in your promise of salvation.

Merciful Father, accept our prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour , Jesus Christ.

***Loving Father, as we approach a Christmas season that looks very different from normal, we thank you, that while we may not be able to be with our families and loved ones in person, we know that You are always with them. Help them and us to feel the love we share although for a little while it must be at a distance***

"Life is a constant Advent season: we are continually waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfil... Hope, struggle, fear, expectation and fulfilment are all part of our Advent experience. The world is not as just, not as loving, not as whole as we know it can and should be. But the coming of Christ and his presence among us—as one of us—gives us reason to live in hope that light will shatter the darkness, that we can be liberated from our fears and prejudices, that we are never alone or abandoned.

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