



**Chet Valley Churches**



**Prayer Book Holy Communion  
Third Sunday of Advent**

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

## Welcome

Welcome to all our service of Holy Communion for the third Sunday of Advent. Today we are concentrating on John the Baptist.

We come together to worship and praise God, to ask forgiveness of our sins and to hear the Good News of Jesus. We have this Advent ring to remind us of the coming of Jesus, the light of the world.

Lord, let your light scatter the darkness.

**And fill the world with your glory.**

We light this candle to remind us of John the Baptist who passed on God's message: "Get ready for your king!" Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, just and true: to you be praise and glory for ever! Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the truth as a burning and shining light.

May we your servants rejoice in his light, and so be led to witness to him who is the Lord of our coming Kingdom,

Jesus our Saviour and King of the ages. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Faithful one, whose word is life, come with saving power to free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives for the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Hymn: Hills of the North Rejoice**

**Hills of the North, rejoice;  
River and mountain-spring,  
Hark to the advent voice!  
Valley and lowland, sing!  
Though absent long, your Lord is nigh;  
He judgment brings, and victory.**

**Isles of the southern seas,  
Deep in your coral caves  
Pent be each warring breeze,  
Lulled be your restless waves;  
He comes to reign with boundless sway,  
And makes your wastes his great highway.**

**Lands of the East, awake!  
Soon shall your sons be free;  
The sleep of ages break,  
And rise to liberty.  
On your far hills, long cold and grey,  
Has dawned the everlasting day.**

**Shores of the utmost West,  
Ye that have waited long,  
Unvisited, unblest,  
Break forth to swelling song;  
High raise the note, that Jesus died,  
Yet lives and reigns, the Crucified.**

**Shout, while ye journey home!  
Songs be in every mouth!  
Lo, from the North we come,  
From East, and West, and South:  
City of God, the bond are free,  
We come to live and reign in thee!**

*Lord's Prayer said by priest alone*

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. **Amen.**

## **Prayer of Preparation**

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee  
and worthily magnify thy Holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



## Our Lord's Summary of the Law

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.

And the second is like, namely this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Lord have mercy upon us, and write both these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee.**

## 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 forever. **Amen.**

## OT Reading: *Zephaniah 3:14–end*

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

At that time, I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

### **Hymn: *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent***

**Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,  
For with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
Our full homage to demand.**

**King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
As of old on earth he stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
In the body and the blood,  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heav'nly food.**

**Rank on rank, the host of heaven  
Spreads its vanguard on the way,  
As the light of light descendeth  
From the realms of endless day,  
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish  
As the darkness clears away.**

**At his feet the six-winged seraph,  
Cherubim, with sleepless eye,  
Veil their faces to the presence,  
As with ceaseless voice they cry:  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
Alleluia, Lord Most High!**

### **The Gospel: *Luke 3.7–18***

The Holy Gospel is written in the third chapter of Luke beginning at the seventh verse.

**Glory to thee O Lord.**

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have

Abraham as our ancestor”; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.’

And the crowds asked him, ‘What then should we do?’ In reply he said to them, ‘Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.’ Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, ‘Teacher, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.’ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.’

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

## **The Creed**

**I believe in one God the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible:  
and in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father  
before all worlds, God of God,  
Light of Light, very God of very God,  
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost  
of the Virgin Mary and was made man,  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.**

**He suffered and was buried,  
and the third day he rose again  
according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.**

**And he shall come again with glory  
to judge both the quick and the dead:  
whose kingdom shall have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who with the Father and the Son together,  
is worshipped and glorified,  
who spake by the prophets.**

**And I believe one catholic and apostolic church.  
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.**

**And I look for the resurrection of the dead,  
And the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **Sermon [Rev Ros]**

John the Baptist was a strange man. He was a miracle baby born to Zechariah and Elizabeth in their old age, promised by God. It seems that from an early age he lived on his own in the harsh Judean desert, clothed in camel hair and existing on locusts and wild honey. I would think he was unkempt and rather wild. He was the sort who would call a spade a shovel! But he was born for a purpose. He was to prepare the way for Jesus the Messiah. Before a king visited a place he sent his heralds to make sure the road was clear, rocks removed and potholes filled in, so that the king and his entourage could travel smoothly.

He was to be the one foretold by Isaiah, the one who would go before God's chosen one, the one who would cry out in the desert.

In some verses before our reading Luke is at great pains to place John at a particular time in history. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness."

This is important because Luke is saying this is when it happened and John didn't start his ministry until the time was right. None of these rulers was particularly pleasant or moral. In fact they were downright cruel and corrupt. John lived under the rule of some of these men and it was against this background that he started preaching and baptising. He wasn't afraid to condemn Herod as a sinner for marrying his brother's wife, even though John was imprisoned for it.

Word got round that there was a fiery preacher proclaiming a message of repentance, and baptising, in the wilderness. Could he be a prophet? There had been none in Israel for centuries.

People came out to the desert to find him but if they were looking for a comfortable message they were in for a shock.

As a sign of repentance, John expected them to be baptised and to change their lives. Gentile converts to the Jewish faith were baptised but John was expecting Jews to be baptised!

"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Not exactly how to make friends and influence people. John continued "it's no use saying", 'We have Abraham as our ancestor' so we're alright, and count on that to save you." That will cut no ice with God because he wants to see proof of repentance. It's not enough to say sorry. It's got to be meant and your life changed from doing bad things to doing good.

To us he might say it's no good counting on going to church, reading your Bible and saying your prayers, if you neglect the needs of others, or cheat in your workplace. A true believer doesn't just talk about faith but lives it, day by day.

It reminds me of times when you say to a child that something they've done wasn't nice and to say sorry. The child dutifully says sorry but being made to say sorry isn't the same as recognising the need to apologise. And you can't be sure that they won't do it again.

Interestingly, the crowds ask John what they should do and his answers throw light on to the way some people lived then. If you have a spare coat, give one away to someone who hasn't got one. The same with extra food. Share it out.

Even tax collectors and soldiers came to John. What about us? Collect only what is due and to the soldiers, likely to be Herod's men, don't use your

power and strength to intimidate people into giving you money. Be honest in all your dealings.

All of this got the crowds into a pitch of excitement. Could this be the Messiah? John takes no praise or glory for himself but deflects their attention away from himself towards Jesus. One is coming whose sandals he is not fit to undo. John says he is lower than the lowest slave who would normally do this task. The one who is coming will baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire. When he comes there will be judgement. Like the farmer, he will separate the wheat from the chaff. He is no tame Messiah, like Aslan in the Narnia Chronicles, he is no tame lion.

Does John have anything to say to us? What would he say if he walked down our high streets, especially at this time of the year? Would he cry out against consumerism and extravagance? What would he say about the on-going homelessness? He was against exploitation and injustice and as he was speaking of one who when he came preached that the Kingdom of God had come, we can be sure that that kingdom is also concerned with these things.

As we continue on our way to Bethlehem, John's call of repentance is for each of us and our response is to turn around and make changes in our lives. It's a call to be honest with ourselves and with God and to allow him to take us in new directions.

### **♪ Hymn: *On Jordan's Bank***

**On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Come then and hearken, for he brings  
Glad tidings of the King of kings.**

**Then cleansed be every Christian breast,  
And furnished for so great a guest!  
Yea, let us each our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.**

**For thou art our salvation, Lord,  
Our refuge and our great reward;  
Without thy grace our souls must fade,  
And wither like a flower decayed.**

**Stretch forth thine hand to heal our sore,  
And make us rise, to fall no more;  
Once more upon thy people shine,  
And fill the world with love divine.**

**All praise, eternal Son, to thee  
Whose advent sets thy people free,  
Whom, with the Father, we adore,  
And Spirit blest, for evermore. Amen.**

## **Prayers**

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's church militant here in earth.

Almighty and ever-living God, who by thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men:

We humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord: and grant, that all they that do confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity, and godly love.

We beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors; and specially thy servant Elizabeth our Queen; that under her we may be godly and quietly governed: and grant unto her whole council, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and impartially minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments: and to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear, and receive thy holy word; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom: grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate. **Amen.**

## **Prayers of Penitence**

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways: draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

**Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
maker of all things, Judge of all men:  
we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins  
and wickedness, which we from time to time  
most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed,  
against thy divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath  
and indignation against us.**

**We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry  
for these our misdoings;  
the remembrance of them is grievous unto us;  
the burden of them is intolerable.  
Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;  
for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,  
forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter  
serve and please thee in newness of life,  
to the honour and glory of thy Name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## The Comfortable Words

Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him.

Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. *St. Matthew 11.28*

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *St. John 3.16*

Hear also what Saint Paul saith.

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. *1 Timothy 1.15*

Hear also what Saint John saith.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins. *1 St. John 2.1*

## The Communion

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up unto the Lord.**

Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

**It is meet and right so to do.**

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

Because as at this time thou didst send him to redeem us from sin and death and to make us inheritors of everlasting life; so when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may with joy behold his appearing and in confidence may stand before him.

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising thee, and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,  
heaven and earth are full of thy glory:  
Glory be to thee, O Lord most High. Amen.**

## Prayer of Humble Access

We do not presume to come to this thy table,  
O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in thy manifold and great mercies.

We are not worthy so much as to gather up  
the crumbs under thy table.

But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always  
to have mercy: grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ,  
and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies  
may be made clean by his body,  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. **Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son  
Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption;  
who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered)  
a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction,  
for the sins of the whole world; and did institute,  
and in his holy Gospel command us to continue,  
a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again:

Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee; and grant that  
we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son  
our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and  
passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood:  
who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took Bread; and, when he had  
given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat; this  
is my Body which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of me.

Likewise after supper he took the Cup; and, when he had given thanks, he  
gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this is my Blood of the New  
Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins:  
Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. **Amen.**

## The Communion



## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

“Lord,  
teach us to  
pray...”



## Prayer After Communion

O Lord and heavenly Father,  
we thy humble servants entirely desire thy fatherly goodness  
mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving;  
most humbly beseeching thee to grant,  
that by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ,  
and through faith in his blood,  
we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission  
of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord,  
ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable,  
holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee,  
that all we, who are partakers of this holy Communion,  
may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction.

And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins,  
to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee  
to accept this our bounden duty and service;  
not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom,  
in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee,  
O Father Almighty, world without end. **Amen.**

## **The Gloria**

**Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace,  
good will towards men.**

**We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee,  
we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee  
for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King,  
God the Father Almighty.**

**O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ;  
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.**

**Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.**

**Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.**

**Thou that sittest at the right hand  
of God the Father,  
have mercy upon us.**

**For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord;  
thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,  
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### **Hymn: *Thy Kingdom Come, O God***

**Thy kingdom come, O God,  
Thy rule, O Christ, begin;  
Break with thine iron rod  
The tyrannies of sin.**

**Where is thy reign of peace  
And purity and love?  
When shall all hatred cease,  
As in the realms above?**

**When comes the promised time  
That war shall be no more,  
And lust, oppression, crime  
Shall flee thy face before?**

**We pray thee, Lord, arise,  
And come in thy great might;  
Revive our longing eyes,  
Which languish for thy sight.**

**O'er lands both near and far  
Thick darkness broodeth yet:  
Arise, O Morning Star,  
Arise, and never set!**

### **The Blessing**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge  
and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you  
and remain with you always. **Amen.**

