

Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 11

Old Testament, New Testament and Gospel will be read from the New American Standard Bible

The Collect, Psalms and Canticles will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

The Collect: 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 for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 35:1-10

35 The wilderness and the desert will rejoice,
And the desert will shout for joy and blossom;
Like the crocus

2 It will blossom profusely
And rejoice with joy and jubilation.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
The majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They will see the glory of the Lord,
The majesty of our God.

3 Strengthen the exhausted, and make the feeble strong.

4 Say to those with anxious heart,
“Take courage, fear not.

Behold, your God will come with vengeance;
The retribution of God will come,
But He will save you.”

5 Then the eyes of those who are blind will be opened,
And the ears of those who are deaf will be unstopped.

6 Then those who limp will leap like a deer,

And the tongue of those who cannot speak will shout for joy.

For waters will burst forth in the wilderness,

And streams in the desert.

7 The scorched land will become a pool

And the thirsty ground springs of water;

In the haunt of jackals, its resting place,

Grass becomes reeds and rushes.

8 A highway will be there, a roadway,

And it will be called the Highway of Holiness.

The unclean will not travel on it,

But it will be for the one who walks that way,

And fools will not wander on it.

9 No lion will be there,

Nor will any vicious animal go up on it;

They will not be found there.

But the redeemed will walk there,

10 And the redeemed of the Lord will return

And come to Zion with joyful shouting,

And everlasting joy will be on their heads.

They will obtain gladness and joy,

And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Hear what he Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 146:4-9 or Canticle 3 or Canticle 15

Psalm 146:4-9

4 Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help! *

whose hope is in the Lord their God;

5 Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; *

who keeps his promise for ever;

6 Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, *

and food to those who hunger.

7 The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; *
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
8 The Lord loves the righteous;
the Lord cares for the stranger; *
he sustains the orphan and widow,
but frustrates the way of the wicked.
9 The Lord shall reign for ever, *
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.
Hallelujah!

Or

Canticle 3

My soul doth magnify the Lord, *
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath regarded *
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold from henceforth *
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, *
and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him *
throughout all generations.
He hath showed strength with his arm; *
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat, *
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy has holpen his servant Israel, *
as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Or

Canticle 15

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *

for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Epistle: James 5:7-10 read from New American Standard Bible

7 Therefore be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9 Do not complain, brothers and sisters, against one another, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. 10 As an example, brothers and sisters, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11 read from New American Standard Bible

2 Now while in prison, John heard about the works of Christ, and he sent word by his disciples, 3 and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or are we to look for someone else?” 4 Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5 those who are blind receive sight and those who limp walk, those with leprosy are cleansed and those who are deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is any person who does not take offense at Me.”

7 As these disciples of John were going away, Jesus began speaking to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ palaces! 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written:

‘Behold, I am sending My messenger ahead of You,
Who will prepare Your way before You.’

11 Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The Gospel of the Lord

On December 15 we celebrate the life of Robert McDonald Priest. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses

Robert McDonald was a priest, missionary, and archdeacon, who served among the First Nations peoples of Canada.

McDonald was born in 1829 in Point Douglas, Manitoba. He attended local schools, worked alongside his father on the family farm, and married Julia Kuttag, with whom he had nine children.

Although McDonald showed initial reluctance, he responded to the church's call to mission service among the native peoples of Canada. He was ordained a priest in 1853 and took charge of the Islington Mission on the Winnipeg River. It was there that he discovered his gift for languages, and it was there that he became fluent in the language of the Ojibway Tribe and began to translate the Bible.

In 1862, the Church Missionary Society persuaded McDonald to establish a new mission at Fort Yukon. It was here, as later at Fort McPherson, where McDonald made his enduring contribution to the tribes of the Tinjizoo Nation. He developed a written alphabet for the Tukulth language so that the people could read the texts of the Christian tradition. He also published a grammar and dictionary in Tukulth, both of which remain standard reference works. Over the next forty years, working together with his wife, Julia, and other translators, he accomplished the translation of the whole of the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, a hymnal, and other texts. Possessing these common texts was critical not only to the Christian mission, but also had a unifying impact on the common life of the various tribes in the region.

McDonald retired from the Church Missionary Society in 1904 and lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba, until his death on August 29, 1913. He is buried in the cemetery of St. John's Anglican Cathedral.

Let us pray: God of ice, sea, and sky, you called your servant Robert McDonald and made him strong to endure all hardships for the sake of serving you in the Arctic: Send us forth as laborers into your harvest, that by patience in our duties and compassion in our dealings, many may be gathered to your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**