

Third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 15

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer
The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the World English Bible

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: Zephaniah 3:14-20

14 Sing, daughter of Zion! Shout, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem. 15 Yahweh has taken away your judgments. He has thrown out your enemy. The King of Israel, Yahweh, is among you. You will not be afraid of evil any more. 16 In that day, it will be said to Jerusalem, "Don't be afraid, Zion. Don't let your hands be weak." 17 Yahweh, your God, is among you, a mighty one who will save. He will rejoice over you with joy. He will calm you in his love. He will rejoice over you with singing. 18 I will remove those who grieve about the appointed feasts from you. They are a burden and a reproach to you. 19 Behold,† at that time I will deal with all those who afflict you; and I will save those who are lame and gather those who were driven away. I will give them praise and honor, whose shame has been in all the earth. 20 At that time I will bring you in, and at that time I will gather you; for I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says Yahweh.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Canticle 9 — The First Song of Isaiah (Isaiah 12:2-6)

Surely, it is God who saves me; *

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, *

and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing *

from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, *

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; *

see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, *

and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, *

for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-7

4 Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, "Rejoice!" 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

7 He said therefore to the multitudes who went out to be baptized by him, "You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore produce fruits worthy of repentance, and don't begin to say among yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father;' for I tell you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones! 9 Even now the ax also lies at the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 The multitudes asked him, "What then must we do?"

11 He answered them, "He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. He who has food, let him do likewise."

12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what must we do?"

13 He said to them, "Collect no more than that which is appointed to you."

14 Soldiers also asked him, saying, "What about us? What must we do?"

He said to them, "Extort from no one by violence, neither accuse anyone wrongfully. Be content with your wages."

15 As the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he was the Christ, 16 John answered them all, "I indeed baptize you with water, but he comes who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loosen. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor, and will gather the wheat into his barn; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

18 Then with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people,

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.**