

THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Give us strength;
build up our courage,
mighty God,
because we are sometimes
weak and afraid.
You sent Jesus
to make the sick better
and to be a friend of the poor.
May we believe in him
and be happy
that you always support us.
We pray to you
through Jesus, our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Good news for the poor! Christ, our Light, is among us!

Our first reading focuses on justice. The One sent by God is anointed by the Spirit for mission, and his mission is to the poor, the oppressed, the brokenhearted. He will bring justice to the world and the poor will be exalted—bedecked with the jewels of salvation.

The Gospel reading focuses on Christ the Light. Again we hear from John the Baptist who is the witness to the Light. John calls us to see the Light who is already in our midst. That Light is Christ, and he is the God who comes to save.

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11*

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.

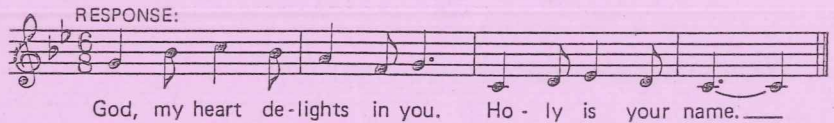
The spirit of God is upon me.
God has anointed me
and sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to comfort those whose hearts are broken,
to proclaim freedom
to those who are being held captive
and to those who are oppressed by others,
and to announce a time of blessing
and justice from our God.

My heart is happy and filled with joy,
for God has given me the clothes of salvation.
God has put on me a robe of justice.
I am like a bridegroom wearing a crown
or a bride wearing her jewels.
And now, our God will bring justice
and glory to all the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

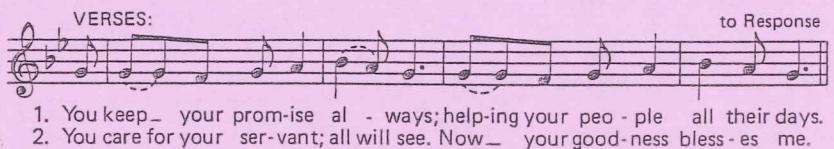
RESPONSE: *Luke 1:46-55*

RESPONSE:



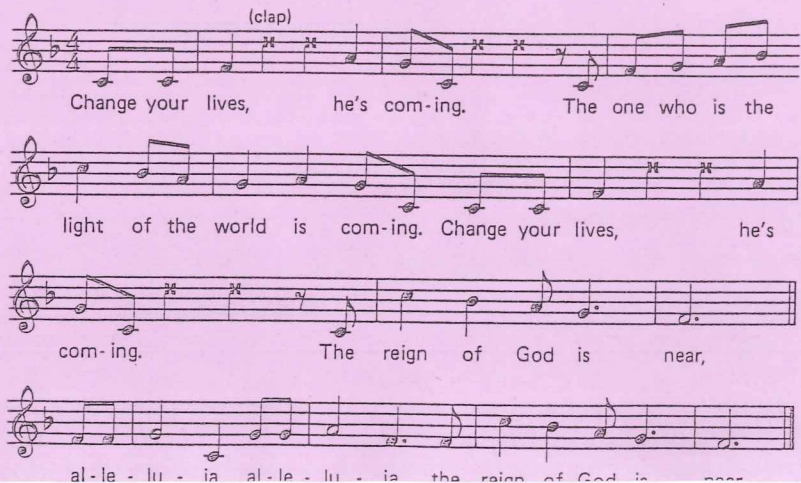
God, my heart de-lights in you. Ho-ly is your name.

VERSES:



1. You keep your promise always; helping your people all their days.
2. You care for your servant; all will see. Now your goodness blesses me.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



(clap)

Change your lives, he's coming. The one who is the
light of the world is coming. Change your lives, he's
coming. The reign of God is near,
al-le-lu-ia al-le-lu-ia the reign of God is near

GOSPEL: *John 1:6-8, 28, 19-27*

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

There was a man sent by God—
a man whose name was John.
He came as a witness
to tell the world about the light
so that everyone would believe.
John was not the light
but only a witness
to tell others about the light.
John was baptizing people
near the Jordan River. One day the Pharisees
sent priests and levites to ask John,

“Who are you?”

He told them very clearly,

“I am not the Messiah.”

Then they asked him,

“Are you a prophet?”

John said,

“No, I am not.”

Finally, they said to him,

“Tell us who you are
so we can give some answer
to those who sent us.

What do you say about yourself?”

John told them,

“I am the one the prophet Isaiah wrote about.
I am ‘the voice in the desert, proclaiming,
‘Make a straight path for our God!’ ”

Then they asked John,

“If you are not the Messiah
and not the prophet, why do you baptize?”

John answered,

“I baptize with water.
But the one I am telling you about
is with you now,
but you do not recognize him.
I am not even worthy to untie his sandal.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Begin by giving the children an opportunity to reflect on what they heard.

The children were introduced to John the Baptist in last Sunday's Gospel. There he was presented as the one who calls us to change our lives. This week, help the children understand the meaning of a “witness.” Spend some time on this. Allow the children time to verbalize their understanding of the word. They may be familiar with witnesses on T.V. programs. Perhaps some have personal family experiences of witnessing an accident. Help them understand that a witness is one who has seen and then speaks out. How was John the Baptist a witness to Jesus? How can we be witnesses to Jesus? As always, it is important that the children focus on ways of witnessing that are truly possible at their age rather than on generalities or projects beyond the sphere of their lives. The Gospel will impact their lives only if it is related to their real lives.

Like the prophet in *Isaiah*, Jesus came to “bring good news to the poor, to comfort those whose hearts are broken. . . .” Explore with them the meaning of this today. Who are the poor, the brokenhearted, and so forth? Can we be a witness to Jesus by helping the poor, comforting those who are sad, and so forth?

Above all, this Third Sunday of Advent, proclaim the joy that we have because God loves us and sent Jesus for us.