

early 1970's we changed it to our current lesson. It is curious that our current lesson only mentions Christ in the abstract. John's job was to introduce us to Jesus. John's Baptism was only an act of repentance (not to receive the Holy Spirit.) His work was inferior to the Christ Who was yet to appear. John understood His work. He explained who he was and the boundaries of his work. We could argue (on the basis of the historical lesson from Matthew) that John had doubts. He was fully as we are (human) and as much in need of the Savior, the Messiah as we. John is worth of mention because He introduced us to Christ.

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O God, our Father, in this most sacred hour we, Your children, bring to You, our prayers and supplications with thanksgiving. Send to each of us, according to what we need; the blessing of deliverance and renewal for our body and soul, forgive our sin, remove our temptation, if we are blind in spirit open our eyes, if we walk in uncertainty, guide our path, if we have impure thoughts, words or deeds cleanse us by Your Spirit, if we are deaf to You, open our ears to Your Word of truth, and if we are dead to salvation, bring us to life in You by Your mighty power.

Let Your Holy Spirit descend on us, we pray, that we may not fail in that day when our Lord comes again as the light of the world, showing forth the hidden sin and proclaiming the evil of our heart. Wash us and make us clean, that in that day we would be found without sin, and with our names printed in the Book of Eternal Life (our Savior Jesus Christ.)

We pray for Your Church throughout the world. Grant Your blessing on all Your servants who proclaim Your Word to the world. Give aid and strength to all Missionaries and through them imbue Your Word with power, that everyone may know You to be the only true God and Savior of all mankind. Rule over the hearts of the world, guide the decisions of those in authority, and sit in the secret councils of nations, to the end that peace and justice will prevail.

Bless all we who are gathered before You this day to praise You Holy name for all our blessings and gifts. Be with those who are sick or under any affliction of body, mind, or spirit. Comfort them that they may, through their trials, learn of Your gracious power and readiness to help in time of need.

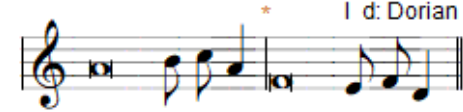
Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.)

As we await the days until the fulfillment of the promise of the Second Advent of our Savior, we ask that You would give us Your grace, that we can show forth the Love of Christ. In His name we pray.

© Amen.

ADVENT THREE

Chant Tone



<p>Introit Show us Your steadfast love, — O Lord,* and grant us Your sal — vation.</p> <p>Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,* for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints; but let them not turn back to — folly.</p> <p>Surely His salvation is near to those who — fear Him,* that glory may dwell in our land.</p>	<p>Yes, the Lord will give what is good,* And our land will yield its — increase. Righteousness will go be — fore Him* and make His foot steps a way.</p> <p>Glory be to the Father and to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen.</p> <p>Show us your steadfast love, — O Lord,* and grant us your sal — vation.</p> <p><i>(Antiphon, Psalm 85:7; Psalm 85:8-9, 12-13)</i></p>
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Collect of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of — Zion!*
Shout aloud, O daughter of Je | rusalem!
Behold, your King is com | ing to you,*
righteous and having salva | tion is He.
Blessèd is He who comes in the name | of the Lord.*
We bless you from the house | of the Lord .

(Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative)

THE ENTRANCE PRAYER: We praise You, O God; we acknowledge You to be the Lord. Heaven is Your throne and Earth Your footstool. From the beginning of creation to the present, You have shown Your concern for the welfare of the human race. In times of trouble You have rescued us; in times of joy You have increased our happiness. For Your steadfast love, O Lord accept our heartfelt thanks. Strengthen our sense of good judgment and use us to bring the good tidings to the people of the world. Hasten the day of universal peace promised at Your Second Coming. This we ask in the name that is above every other name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

WHEN JOHN APPEARED AT THE JORDAN, HE WAS PREACHING REPENTANCE, MANY WERE DRAWN TO HIM. These were the people who were living in anticipation of the fulfillment of Scripture. There did appear to be some confusion as to why John was at the Jordan. John was clear, he was there to prepare the Chosen People to receive their Savior. John was the last of the Old Testament Prophets and effectively the only other New Testament Prophet besides Jesus. By that we mean that the Prophets pointed to the coming Christ, and Christ pointed to Himself. The work of the Prophets passed as Christ has come. Now we are "pointed" to the event of our Savior's Second Advent, when He will come to take us to live with Him in Eternity. John worked in the shadow of the Love that God showered on him, we live in the Love of Christ so great that He died for our sins.

THEME OF THE DAY:

A Great Love

INTROIT—(Antiphon, Psalm 85:7;) Psalm 85:8-9, 12-13
Psalm 85 was written when the people returned to Jerusalem under Ezra. They are praying that they might please God because they knew they had been foolish. They were asking to please God because they recognized that they needed His Love to sustain and defend them.

COLLECT

In 2006 we changed many of the collects. This is one of the new ones. Historically we mention John the Baptist on Advent Three. Oddly, (as I will mention under the Gospel Lesson, we have taken mention of John out of this prayer. Today we are generically asking Jesus to hear us and allow us to live in His light.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The opening is a prophetic description of God's Love for us in Jesus. The closing is a description of our response to God's Love, as engendered through the work of the Holy Spirit. All three persons of the Trinity play a role in our salvation. God the Father set it up, Jesus the Son played it out, and the Holy Spirit makes the proclamation. The purpose of salvation is to keep us with God always and forever. His Love for us overcomes even our sin.

GRADUAL—Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative

Our knowledge of life centers on the return of our king, the Lord, we depend on the promise of His Second Advent. The Old Testament people put their trust in the prophecy of Zechariah, God counted up the days and fulfilled His promise. The Love of God overwhelmed the Old Testament people, the Love of God in the person of Jesus overwhelms us.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Throughout the first three chapters of the book of Thessalonians, Paul gave thanks to God for the fellowship he had with them and for their perseverance in the faith. The last two chapters of the book, are Pastoral instruction calling for Christian conduct that reflects God's will. The focus for today is instruction for the worship life of believers. Be joyful always, give thanks in all circumstances. Whatever we do, we are to do it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the Love of God surrounds and supports us in all activities to which we are led by that name.

GOSPEL LESSON—John 1:6-8, 19-28

Advent Three is John the Baptist's Sunday. This day has a dedicated historical theme. The Advent Wreath has a rose colored candle because today is, "love," Sunday. The historic lesson is Matthew 11:2-10. In the