Year B – Third Sunday in Advent – Dec. 13, 2026

OPENING PRAYER *(excerpts from Luke 1:47-54, Mary's Magnificat):*

Leader:	My soul shall exult in my God.
All:	**My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for God has looked with favor on my lowliness.**
Leader:	For the Mighty One has done great things for me and holy is God's name
All:	**God's mercy is from age to age, on those who revere him**
Leader:	God fills the hungry with good things, and sends the rich away empty.
All:	**God protects Israel his servant, remembering mercy forever.**
	AMEN.

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11
This message with its promises of glad tidings, liberty, release and favor was originally addressed to people standing in the wreckage of Jerusalem after their return from the exile. Isaiah rejoices in God and what he will do. He asks the people to live in hope. Jesus will later recite this passage from the Book of Isaiah when he begins his ministry.

1. What is the mission of the anointed messenger is this passage from Isaiah? How did Jesus carry out this message?
2. We too have the spirit of the Lord upon us. How are we called to carry out the mission of Jesus?
3. How do you "greatly rejoice in the Lord?

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
This letter to the Thessalonians is thought to be the first written account included in the New Testament, a passage written around 50 AD. Paul was concerned about the Christians in Thessalonica. Hearing that they were continuing in the faith that Paul brought to them, Paul writes to encourage them and give them more understanding of the "will of God in Christ Jesus." There are only three more verses to end this letter and in those verses he asks for prayer, that they greet each other with a holy kiss and that they read this letter to everyone.

1. The Christians in Thessalonica were certainly experiencing distress and hardship in their lives, but Paul speaks about rejoicing and giving thanks. When do we need to hear that same message?
2. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and is a companion of prayer and thanksgiving. All is not well with our world. There is a lot to do to bring healing to our world. What must be the real cause for our joy?

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

This passage is very close to the beginning of John's Gospel. Using symbolic language, John the Evangelist describes who John the Baptist is and what his mission will be. In every gospel John the Baptist plays an important part but always he is subordinate to Christ. John the Baptist is the one to prepare the way of the Lord, but he is not the Lord. Undoubtedly there were some at that time who thought John the Baptist was the messiah. But John the Baptist knew who he was.

1. John the Baptist is very certain of his own identity. Do we know who we are?
2. How did John the Baptist prepare the way for Jesus?
3. How is John the Baptist a model for us?
4. We can never take the light for granted. It needs to be tended carefully. In what ways can we be joyful witnesses to the light during this Advent season?

LIVING THE WORD

Become a source of joy and light for others. When asked "what you would like for Christmas?" suggest that an offering be made to a favourite charity on your behalf.

PRAYING THE WORD

For those who are in sorrow and despair; for those who are suffering and alienated, for those forgotten and overlooked, for all those who have no light in their eyes, we pray to the Lord.

Invite personal intentions, ending with, "Our Father…"

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

Leader: Sweet Light, Loving Jesus, whose tenderness shines into the darkest corners, let us be light for one another.

All: Let us be light for all whose paths we cross

Leader: We rejoice on this day, in this season of lights, in this circle of friends.

All: We join our prayers together, to ask You to bless and protect all those who experience darkness.

Leader: We thank You for the gifts of grace, the privilege of doing Your work, and Your Presence in our lives.

All: Amen

(Share a sign of peace.)