

COLLECT

Almighty God, who sent your servant John the Baptist to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah, inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth, to turn our disobedient hearts to you, that when the Christ shall come again to be our judge, we may stand with confidence before his glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Isaiah 40.1–11

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

1 Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' 6 A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. 9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!' 10 See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

For the word of the Lord **THANKS BE TO GOD**

PSALM Psalm 85.1–2, 8–13

R Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

1 You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, you have restored the good fortune of Jacob. 2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins. **R** 8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him. 9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. **R** 10 Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. 11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. **R** 12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase. 13 Righteousness shall go before him and peace shall be a pathway for his feet **R**

SECOND READING 2 Peter 3.8–15a

A reading from the second letter of Peter.

8 Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire,

and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. 11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? 13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. 14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

For the word of the Lord **THANKS BE TO GOD**

GOSPEL Mark 1.1–8

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark **Glory to Christ our Saviour**

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; 3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,"' 4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Faithful God, we thank you for feeding us with this heavenly banquet. Help us always to hear the prophet's call to turn our hearts to you; in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The notices for the week are on the reverse of this sheet

—please pass it onto a friend or neighbour

This sheet is also on our website—let others know how to find it to follow week by week.



