

**Third Sunday of Advent,
Sunday, 12th December 2021**



Dear Friends,

'He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

(Luke 3: 16-17)

This meditative sequence for the Third Sunday of Advent was written in honour of John the Baptist and was found in a 14th Century Venetian manuscript:

Pointing The Way

John shows us to the path of truth and grace,
The way made ready for the Heavenly one;
We walk there safely if our hearts embrace
In humble faith and love, God's own true Son.

Fr now God's bounty, free and unreserved,
Allows the gates of heaven to be stormed
By force of love, and mercy unreserved
Enriches hearts by penitence reformed.

This time of grace by prophets was foretold;
Their words brief sparks which darkness did enmesh.
A greater prophet now is here: behold
his finger pointing to the Word-made-flesh.



'The Preaching of St. John the Baptist' by Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Prayer for the Third Sunday of Advent – The Candle of Peace

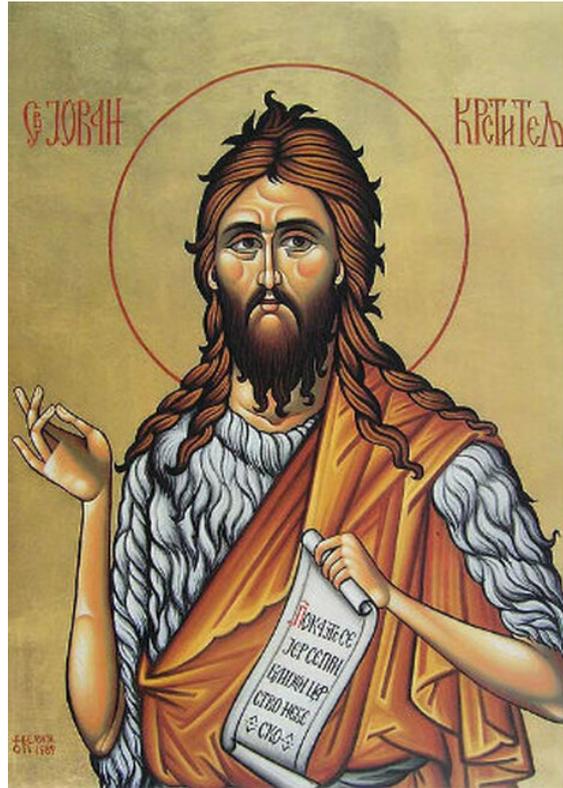
Lord God, Your witness, John the Baptist, grew up strong in spirit,
and prepared people for the coming of the Lord.

He loved your people and baptized them in the River Jordan to wash away their sins.

Help us to have the same love,
that we would be witnesses to the Messiah and spread the good news of your love.

As Christmas draws closer day by day,
help us to be ready to welcome Jesus into our hearts.

Amen.



Luke 3:7-18 - John the Baptist Prepares the Way

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Schedule of Services

This schedule is correct at this time but may be subject to future alterations – please check on our website for the most up-to-date information.

All services start at 10am, unless marked differently on the table below.

Owing to the new Government Coronavirus restrictions, masks must once again be worn in church services and services must be booked by contacting the Benefice Office on 01962 880 845 or office@downsbenefice.org.uk

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>12th Dec</i>		6pm – Carol Service	Holy Communion	6pm – Carol Service	10am - Carol Service
<i>19th Dec</i>	4pm – Carol Service	Holy Communion	6pm – Carol Service		
<i>22nd Dec (Wed)</i>			Mid-Week Holy Communion		
<i>24th Dec</i>	4pm – Crib Service	4.30pm – Nativity in the Barn	4pm – Crib service	4pm – Crib Service and 11.30pm – Midnight Service	2.30pm – Crib Service
<i>25th Dec</i>	Family Service	Family Service	Holy Communion	Family Service	Family Service
<i>26th Dec</i>	No Services				
<i>2nd Jan</i>	Morning Prayer		4pm – Café Church	10am – Patronal Festival - BCP Sung Eucharist	