

## Reflection Philippians 4. 4-7 Advent 3

This Sunday is often also called Gaudete Sunday – based on the day's Epistle reading from Philippians. There is a focus on Advent as a season of joy, when we are encouraged to draw closer to God. We welcome God in the incarnation of Jesus, and prepare for when Jesus returns in glory.

The theologian Henri Nouwen described the difference between joy and happiness. While happiness is dependent on external conditions, joy is "the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing – sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death – can take that love away." Thus joy can be present even in the midst of sadness.

In his 2014 Gaudete Sunday homily, Pope Francis said that Gaudete Sunday is known as the "Sunday of joy", and that instead of fretting about "all they still haven't" done to prepare for Christmas, people should "think of all the good things life has given you."

The tradition is to light a pink candle and wear rose coloured vestments.

*Fr David*



**Codes for the Zoom Evening Prayer & discussion for the 4 Sundays of Advent at 5pm.**

**Meeting ID:** 861 6577 7243

**Passcode:** 202677

**Telephone numbers:** 0203 481 5237,  
0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

**NEXT SUNDAY 12.12.2021 3rd Sunday of Advent**

**SERVICES:** 10.30am in Church. 5pm Zoom

**READINGS:** OT Micah 5: 2-5a  
NT Hebrews 10: 5-10  
GOSPEL Luke 1: 39-45 (46-55)



### CONTACT US

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# St Thomas, Exeter

**Sunday 12th December 2021**

**Third Sunday of Advent**

**10.30am in Church, 5pm Zoom Advent  
Prayer and Discussion**

Please note our timings for **Christmas services**, subject to any further restrictions:

*Christmas Eve* 4pm Crib Service + Carols (Hall),

11.30 Midnight Mass in Church

*Christmas Day* 9.30 Sung Eucharist in Church  
26 December (Sunday) 10.30 St Stephen Sung Eucharist in Church

2 January 10.30 Epiphany Sung Eucharist in Church

9 January 10.30 Baptism of Christ Sung Eucharist in Church

Here is the Advent Response and the Verse we sing together at the **offertory**:

*Blessed be God, blessed be God, blessed be God forever, Amen. (x2)*

Blessed are you Lord God of all creation.

Thanks to your goodness ourselves we offer.

Fruit of the womb, formed by your hands, we are your people for your world. *Blessed be God ...*

*Fr David*



## Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## Zephaniah 3.14–20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The LORD, your God, is in our midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

## Philippians 4.4–7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## Luke 3.7–18

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 baptised, 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 baptise 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 baptise 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.

## Post Communion

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen**

## NOTICES

For our services in Church, we believe that **mask wearing** is now compulsory. On most Sundays you can also be seated with some social distancing if you wish.

**Coffee and tea** will be offered after the 10.30am Mass. It will be served in the Hall. **There are a few gaps in the rota before Christmas. Volunteers are required for after Christmas. See Judith.**

**Knit and Natter December 2021** We shall be meeting every Thursday from 10.30 to midday at 19 Maple Road. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

**House Group. Tuesdays at 7.30pm.** We will be looking at themes of Advent. **Tuesday 14th December**, new people very welcome!

**Tuesday 14th December. Scientists in Congregation Tea Party.** 5-6.15pm in the Hall. All welcome. Come and find out how this project finished.

**Community Larder** The Community Larder will be collecting on **Tuesdays** from 10am-12noon. The collecting point is in the Choir Vestry via the Tower door. Please continue to be generous.

**Please see** the middle column for the Zoom codes for the **Advent Evening Prayer and discussion** on the 4 Sundays of Advent at 5pm.

We are delighted to restart the **Walsingham Mass on 15th December** at 10am. Fr Dominic Cyrus from SWMTC has agreed to lead these celebrations in principle once a month. How appropriate that we initiate this again in Advent.

**16th December St Thomas Tots & Adults** Christmas Party 9.30-11am. Please leave a message if you would like your child to attend.

**Volunteers are needed to clean the Church nave.** The nave is divided up into small blocks for people to take on and clean about fortnightly. Please see Judith for details.

