

FIRST READING. Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to  
bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the  
broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of  
vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up  
the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined  
cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and  
wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.  
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall  
exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments  
of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of  
righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a  
garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

SECOND READING. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL. John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ He said, ‘I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord” ’, as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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*Light the second candle.  
Sing Hymn 240, verse 3*



## Psalm 85 Tune: 257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**Unto the Lord I lift my soul;  
I trust in God to make me whole.**

**My voice with joy is raised to sing:  
"The Lord has done a wondrous thing!"**

**Let all, on earth, his glory tell,  
The Holy One of Israel!**

**Unto the Lord I lift my soul;  
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"The Lord has done a wondrous thing!"**

**Let all, the earth, his glory tell,  
The Holy One of Israel!**

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## Dates to Remember

## Year End Financial Appeal

*A donation of any size would truly be appreciated.*

**Social Ministry** needs your Christmas help as our funds are low, and we wish to give, as usual, to our Church members in need. If you wish to donate, please indicate Social Ministry and the amount on your envelope by Dec. 17. Many thanks!

## GATHERING

**WORD**

Sermon  
Hymn of the Day ..... 241 O Lord, How Shall  
I Meet You

**MEAL**

Offering Prayer  
Great Thanksgiving (spoken) .....Page 129  
Eucharistic Prayer  
“Holy, holy, holy...” .....Page 130  
The Lord’s Prayer .....Page 134  
Communion  
“Lamb of God...” .....Page 135  
Communion Hymns .....528 (3x), 253, 256  
Prayer after Communion

## SENDING

Dismissal: Go in peace. Keep awake.  
**Thanks be to God.**