13th December 2026 Year B Violet *Advent 3*

Sentence of Scripture

Bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners, proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
the day of vengeance of our God.

Isaiah 61.1–2

Prayer of the day

Eternal God,
you sent John the Baptist
to prepare the way for the coming of your Son:
grant us wisdom to see your purpose
and openness to hear your will,
that we too may prepare the way for Christ
who is coming in power and glory
to establish his rule of peace and justice;
through Jesus Christ our Judge and our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings

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 brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; [2]to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; [3]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. [4]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.

[8]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. [9]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. [10]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. [11]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. (NRSV)

Hear the word of the Lord, thanks be to God.

Psalm 126

1 When the Lord turned again the fortunes of Zion:
then were we like those restored to life.
2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter:
and our tongue with singing.
3 Then said they among the heathen:

'The Lord has done great things for them.'

4 Truly the Lord has done great things for us:

and therefore we rejoiced.

5 Turn again our fortunes, O Lord:

as the streams return to the dry south.

6 Those who sow in tears:

shall reap with songs of joy.

7 They that go out weeping, bearing the seed:

shall come again in gladness, bringing their sheaves with them.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–28

12 But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among
you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; 13 esteem them very
highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we
urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the
weak, be patient with all of them. 15 See that none of you repays evil for evil, but
always seek to do good to one another and to all. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray
without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in
Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise the words of
prophets, 21 but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22 abstain from every
form of evil.
23 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.
24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. 25 Beloved, pray for us.
26 Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. 27 I solemnly command you by
the Lord that this letter be read to all of them.
28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (NRSV)

Hear the word of the Lord, thanks be to God.

John 1:6–8, 19–28

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a
witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself
was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from
Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed and did not deny it, but
confessed, "I am not the Messiah." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you
Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Then
they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us.
What do you say about yourself?" 23 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.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, "Why then are
you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" 26 John
answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not
know, 27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his
sandal." 28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was
baptizing. (NRSV)

This is the Gospel of our Lord, praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.