

## **Gathering Prayer**

God for whom we watch and wait,  
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way  
of your Son:  
give us courage to speak the truth,  
to hunger for justice,  
and to suffer for the cause of right,  
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **Old/Original Testament:**

### ***Isaiah 35:1-10***

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the  
crocus it shall blossom abundantly and  
rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of  
Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of  
Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory  
of the LORD, the majesty of our God.  
Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the  
feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful  
heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your  
God. He will come with vengeance, with  
terrible recompense. He will come and save  
you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be  
opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be  
opened; then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert; the burning sand  
shall become a pool and the thirsty ground  
springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall  
become a swamp; the grass shall become  
reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way; the  
unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for  
God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall  
go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any  
ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not  
be found there, but the redeemed shall walk  
there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall  
return and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they  
shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and  
sighing shall flee away.

## **Psalm 146:5-10**

Who made heaven and earth, t h e  
sea and all that is in them; ♦ who keeps  
his promise for ever;  
**Who gives justice to those that  
suffer wrong ♦  
and bread to those who hunger.**  
The Lord looses those that are bound; ♦  
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind;  
**The Lord lifts up those who are  
bowed down; ♦  
the Lord loves the righteous;**  
the Lord watches over the stranger in the  
land;  
he upholds the orphan and widow; ♦  
but the way of the wicked he turns upside  
down.  
**The Lord shall reign for ever, ♦  
your God, O Zion, throughout all  
generations.**  
**Alleluia.**

## **New Testament: James 5:7-10**

Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters,  
until the coming of the Lord. The farmer  
waits for the precious crop from the  
earth, being patient with it until it receives  
the early and the late rains. You also must  
be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the  
coming of the Lord is near. Brothers and  
sisters, do not grumble against one  
another, so that you may not be judged.  
See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As  
an example of suffering and patience,  
brothers and sisters, take the prophets  
who spoke in the name of the Lord.

## **The Holy Gospel:**

### ***Matthew 11:2-11***

When John heard in prison what the  
Messiah was doing, he sent word by his  
disciples and said to him, "Are you the  
one who is to come, or are we to wait for  
another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and

tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, , those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

## **Advanced Service dates**

20/12	2 pm, Christmas Carols, Saham Toney
21/12	6 pm, Christmas Carols, Ovington
21/12	4 pm. Christmas Carols, Ashill
24/12	6 pm First Mass of Christmas, Ovington
24/12	11.30 pm, Midnight Mass, Saham Toney
25/12	9.30 am Holy Communion for Christmas Day, Ashill
28/12	10.30 am Group Service for the Feast of St John the Evangelist, Ovington (no service in Ashill or Saham Toney)
04/01/26	9.30 am Epiphany Holy Communion, Merton

## **Events.**

## **Postcommunion Prayer**

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.

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