

## Beaminster Area Team

God our Father, renew our hope. By the Holy Spirit's power, strengthen us to pray readily serve joyfully and grow abundantly rejoicing in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### Week: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Third Sunday of Advent

**Old Testament:** Zephaniah 3: 14-20

**Psalm:** Canticle: Isaiah 12: 2-6

**New Testament:** Philippians: 4: 4-7

**Gospel:** Luke 3: 7-18

### Reflection on the Gospel reading, written by Ven. Patrick Evans.

Luke brings John the Baptist to us again this week. This rough and outspoken rebel emerging from the desert and yet with a charisma and magnetism the crowds flock to hear him. 'Vipers' he calls them and then 'Repent and be baptized' and he spells out what repentance means and baptizes them.

John appears to see a future of imminent judgement, strict accountability and tells them that there is one coming after him whose sandals he is unworthy to untie who will baptize with fire and the Holy Spirit. John acknowledges that he is preparing the way for someone greater ..... and this person is here now on the horizon so the people must be ready to meet him. This man will be on fire for God.

I do not believe John was a prophet of unrelieved austerity and gloom. After all the main purpose of the winnower was to not to get rid of the chaff **but** to gather the wheat into the granary. Perhaps John can see the Messiah gathering to himself the new Israel and Luke in bringing us this gospel with hindsight is able to tell us that 'with many exhortations John preached good news to the people'.

John is looking to the future and whilst it may have turned out very different from what he imagined, he senses in hope that the heartbeat of humanity can change with the coming of Jesus.

### collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

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.

**A Useful Telephone Link from The Church of England.** This is a free number where you can listen to prayers, reflections and hymns and join in worship with others.



### Worship to enjoy at home

BBC Radio 4, 8.10am Sunday Morning Worship, Songs of Praise BBC1 1.15pm