

## Morning Prayer

Tuesday, June 24



### Opening Statement

*Leader*

Their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world.

### Confession of Sin

*Leader*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Everyone together, all kneeling:*

Most merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*Leader*

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

### The Invitatory

*All stand.*

*Leader*

Lord, open our lips.

*Response*

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

*Everyone*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

### Antiphon

The Lord is glorious in his saints;  
Come let us adore him.

### Jubilate

*Psalm 100*

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; \*  
serve the Lord with gladness  
and come before his presence with a song.

Know this: The Lord himself is God; \*  
he himself has made us, and we are his;  
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving;  
go into his courts with praise; \*  
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.  
For the Lord is good;  
his mercy is everlasting; \*  
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.  
The Lord is glorious in his saints;  
Come let us adore him.

**Psalm 82** *Deus stetit*

<sup>1</sup> God takes his stand in the council of heaven; \*  
he gives judgment in the midst of the gods:  
<sup>2</sup> "How long will you judge unjustly, \*  
and show favor to the wicked?  
<sup>3</sup> Save the weak and the orphan; \*  
defend the humble and needy;  
<sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the poor; \*  
deliver them from the power of the wicked.  
<sup>5</sup> They do not know, neither do they understand;  
they go about in darkness; \*  
all the foundations of the Earth are shaken.  
<sup>6</sup> Now I say to you, 'You are gods, \*  
and all of you children of the Most High;  
<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, \*  
and fall like any prince."  
<sup>8</sup> Arise, O God, and rule the Earth, \*  
for you shall take all nations for your own.

**Psalm 98** *Cantate Domino*

<sup>1</sup> Sing to the Lord a new song, \*  
for he has done marvelous things.  
<sup>2</sup> With his right hand and his holy arm \*  
has he won for himself the victory.  
<sup>3</sup> The Lord has made known his victory; \*  
his righteousness has he  
openly shown in the sight of the nations.  
<sup>4</sup> He remembers his mercy and  
faithfulness to the house of Israel, \*  
and all the ends of the Earth  
have seen the victory of our God.  
<sup>5</sup> Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands; \*  
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.  
<sup>6</sup> Sing to the Lord with the harp, \*  
with the harp and the voice of song.  
<sup>7</sup> With trumpets and the sound of the horn \*  
shout with joy before the King, the Lord.  
<sup>8</sup> Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, \*

the lands and those who dwell therein.

<sup>9</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands, \*  
and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord,  
when he comes to judge the earth.

<sup>10</sup> In righteousness shall he judge the world \*  
and the peoples with equity.

### **Gloria Patri**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost:  
as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be.  
World without end. Amen. *Amen.*

### **The Old Testament Lesson**

#### *Reader*

*A reading from the Prophet Malachi 3:1-5*

<sup>1</sup>See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. <sup>5</sup>Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

The Word of the Lord.

#### *Everyone*

Thanks be to God.

*Silence may be kept after the Reading.*

### **Canticle 13 A Song of Praise**

*Benedictus es, Domine*

*Song of the Three Young Men, 29-34*

Glory to you, Lord God of our fathers; \*  
you are worthy of praise; glory to you.  
Glory to you for the radiance of your holy Name; \*  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.  
Glory to you in the splendor of your temple; \*  
on the throne of your majesty, glory to you.  
Glory to you, seated between the Cherubim; \*  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.  
Glory to you, beholding the depths; \*  
in the high vault of heaven, glory to you.  
Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; \*  
we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

## **The Gospel**

### *Reader*

*A reading from the Gospel according to John 3:22-30*

<sup>22</sup>After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. <sup>23</sup>John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized <sup>24</sup>John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison. <sup>25</sup>Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. <sup>26</sup>They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him." <sup>27</sup>John answered, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. <sup>28</sup>You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.' <sup>29</sup>He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, but I must decrease."

The Word of the Lord.

### *Everyone*

Thanks be to God.

*Silence may be kept after the Reading.*

## **Canticle 18** A Song to the Lamb

*Dignus es*

*Revelation 4:11; 5:9-10, 13*

Splendor and honor and kingly power \*  
are yours by right, O Lord our God,  
For you created everything that is, \*  
and by your will they were created and have their being;  
And yours by right, O Lamb that was slain, \*  
for with your blood you have redeemed for God,  
From every family, language, people, and nation, \*  
a kingdom of priests to serve our God.  
And so, to him who sits upon the throne, \*  
and to Christ the Lamb,  
Be worship and praise, dominion and splendor, \*  
for ever and for evermore.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.*

## **The Apostles' Creed**

### *All stand*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and Earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

### **The Prayers**

*Leader*

God be with you.

*Response*

And also with you.

*Leader*

Let us pray.

*Everyone*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on Earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. *Amen.*

### **Suffrages**

*Leader*

Help us, O God our Savior;

*Response*

Deliver us and forgive us our sins.

*Leader*

Look upon your congregation;

*Response*

Give to your people the blessing of peace.

*Leader*

Declare your glory among the nations;

*Response*

And your wonders among all peoples.

*Leader*

Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;

*Response*

Never forget the lives of your poor.

*Leader*

Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

*Response*

And your favor to those who are true of heart.

*Leader*

Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

*Response*

So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

**The Collect of the Day:** *The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist*

*Leader*

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Savior by preaching repentance: Make us so to follow his teaching and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and, following his example, constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**A Collect for Mission**

O God and Father of all, whom the whole heavens adore: Let the whole earth also worship you, all nations obey you, all tongues confess and bless you, and men and women everywhere love you and serve you in peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**Trinity Cycle of Prayer**

*Douglas Grote*

Let us pray now for our own needs and those of others.

**A Prayer of St. Chrysostom**

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

**Benediction**

*Leader*

Let us bless the Lord.

*Response*

Thanks be to God.

*Leader*

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen. Ephesians 3:20, 21*

## **The Commemoration**

Our principal sources of information about John the Baptist are

- (1) references to his birth in the first chapter of Luke,
- (2) references to his preaching and his martyrdom in the Gospels, with a few references in Acts, and
- (3) references in Josephus to his preaching and martyrdom, references which are consistent with the New Testament ones, but sufficiently different in the details to make direct borrowing unlikely.

According to the Jewish historian Josephus (who wrote after 70 AD), John the Baptist was a Jewish preacher in the time of Pontius Pilate (AD 26-36). He called the people to repentance and to a renewal of their covenant relation with God. He was imprisoned and eventually put to death by Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great, who was king when Jesus was born) for denouncing Herod's marriage to Herodias, the wife of his still-living brother Philip. To marry Herodias, Herod divorced his first wife, the daughter of King Aretas of Damascus, who subsequently made war on Herod, a war which, Josephus tells us, was regarded by devout Jews as a punishment for Herod's murder of the prophet John.

In the Book of Acts, we find sermons about Jesus which mention His Baptism by John as the beginning of His public ministry (see Acts 10:37; 11:16; 13:24). We also find accounts (see Acts 18:24; 19:3) of devout men in Greece who had received the baptism of John, and who gladly received the full message of the Gospel of Christ when it was told them.

Luke begins his Gospel by describing an aged, devout, childless couple, the priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. As Zechariah is serving in the Temple, he sees the angel Gabriel, who tells him that he and his wife will have a son who will be a great prophet, and will go before the Lord "like Elijah." (The Jewish tradition had been that Elijah would herald the coming of the Messiah = Christ = Anointed = Chosen of God.) Zechariah went home, and his wife conceived. About six months later, Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, a kinswoman of Elizabeth, and told her that she was about to bear a son who would be called Son of the Most High, a king whose kingdom would never end. Thus Elizabeth gave birth to John, and Mary gave birth six months later to Jesus.

After describing the birth of John, Luke says that he grew, and "was in the wilderness until the day of his showing to Israel." The people of the Qumran settlement, which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, sometime use the term "living in the wilderness" to refer to residing in their community at Qumran near the Dead Sea. Accordingly, it has been suggested that John spent some of his early years being educated at Qumran.

All of the gospels tell us that John preached and baptized beside the Jordan river, in the wilderness of Judea. He called on his hearers to repent of their sins, be baptized, amend their lives, and prepare for the coming of the Kingship of God. He spoke of one greater than himself who was to come after. Jesus came to be baptized, and John told some of his disciples, "This is the man I spoke of." After His baptism by John, Jesus began to preach, and attracted many followers. In fact, many who had been followers of John left him to follow Jesus. Some of John's followers resented this, but he told them: "This is as it should be. My mission is to proclaim the Christ. The groomsman, the bridegroom's friend, who makes the wedding arrangements for the bridegroom, is not jealous of the bridegroom. No more am I of Jesus. He must increase, and I must decrease." (John 3:22-30)

John continued to preach, reproving sin and calling on everyone to repent. King Herod Antipas had divorced his wife and taken Herodias, the wife of his (still living) brother Philip. John rebuked him for this, and Herod, under pressure from Herodias, had John arrested, and eventually beheaded. He is remembered on some calendars on the supposed anniversary of his beheading, 29 August.

When John had been in prison for a while, he sent some of his followers to Jesus to ask, "Are you he that is to come, or is there another?" (Matthew 11:2-14) One way of understanding the question is as follows: "It was revealed to me that you are Israel's promised deliverer, and when I heard this, I rejoiced. I expected you to drive out Herod and the Romans, and rebuild the kingdom of David. But here I sit in prison, and there is no deliverance in sight? Perhaps I am ahead of schedule, and you are going to throw out the Romans next year. Perhaps I have misunderstood, and you have a different mission, and the Romans bit will be done by someone else. Please let me know what is happening."

Jesus replied by telling the messengers, "Go back to John, and tell him what you have seen, the miracles of healing and other miracles, and say, 'Blessed is he who does not lose faith in me.'" He then told the crowds: "John is a prophet and more than a prophet. He is the one spoken of in Malachi 3:1, the messenger who comes to prepare the way of the LORD. No man born of woman is greater than John, but the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John." This has commonly been understood to mean that John represents the climax of the long tradition of Jewish prophets looking forward to the promised deliverance, but that the deliverance itself is a greater thing. John is the climax of the Law. He lives in the wilderness, a life with no frills where food and clothing are concerned. He has renounced the joys of family life, and dedicated himself completely to his mission of preaching, of calling people to an observance of the law, to ordinary standards of virtue. In terms of natural goodness, no one is better than John. But he represents Law, not Grace. Among men born of woman, among the once-born, he has no superior. But anyone who has been born anew in the kingdom of God has something better than what John symbolizes. (Note that to say that John symbolizes something short of the Kingdom is not to say that John is himself excluded from the Kingdom.) Traditionally, the Birth of Jesus is celebrated on 25 December. That means that the Birth of John is celebrated six months earlier on 24 June. The appearance of Gabriel to Mary, being assumed to be nine months before the birth of Jesus, is celebrated on 25 March and called the Annunciation, and the appearance of Gabriel to Zechariah in the Temple is celebrated by the East Orthodox on 23 September. At least for Christians in the Northern Hemisphere, these dates embody a rich symbolism.

John is the last voice of the Old Covenant, the close of the Age of Law. Jesus is the first voice of the New Covenant, the beginning of the Age of Grace. Accordingly, John is born to an elderly, barren woman, born when it is really too late for her to be having a child, while Jesus is born to a young virgin, born when it is really too early for her to be having a child. John is announced (and conceived) at the autumnal equinox, when the leaves are dying and falling from the trees. Jesus is announced (and conceived) at the vernal equinox, when the green buds are bursting forth on the trees and there are signs of new life everywhere. John is born when the days are longest, and from his birth on they grow steadily shorter. Jesus is born when the days are shortest, and from his birth on they grow steadily longer. John speaks truly when he says of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

(Of course, it is to be noted that none of this symbolism proves anything, since the Scriptures do not tell us that Jesus was born on 25 December. The symbolism of the dates is used by Christians, not as evidence, but as material for the devout imagination.)