

The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. Amen.

Leader: Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

People: The maker of heaven and earth.

Collect for Advent

Leader: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins to God and our Neighbor:

**God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

*Leader: May the Almighty God grant us forgiveness of all our sins,
and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Leader: O God, make speed to save us.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us.

People: Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Canticle 16, The Song of Zechariah; Luke 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *

he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *

born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old,

that he would save us from our enemies, *

from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers *

and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, *

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear, *

holy and righteous in his sight

all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation *

by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God *

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *

and to guide our feet into the way of peace

Leader: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

People: Thanks be to God.

Meditation-Reflection: Repairing the Breach

Leader: Are we able to see ourselves in every part of this canticle? It is natural to imagine our own community of faith, or ourselves, as the ones whom God needs to keep safe from the hands of the enemy. And yes, we all are in need of God's saving hand, yet many of us hearing these reflections during Advent may also be the descendants of those who created the systems

that have intentionally prevented our siblings, sisters, and brothers from having the same freedom “to worship God without fear.” Can we individually, and corporately, take a deep breath and plunge into our own history to see our whole selves? Can we both honor and celebrate the good our ancestors did while working to undo the great harm they also did in their zealotry or in ignorance? Can we then bring this self-examination forward, recognizing that in our own lives we may be in need of God’s saving grace precisely because we have taken no personal action toward real change in our Church or wider communities? A breach cannot be repaired if we cannot admit to ourselves that it exists.

...Are you willing to turn, pray, love, and learn so that you can see the blessing in your own life as it is in relation to all? Make a beginning today. Commit today.... Begin...then continue. It takes more than one encounter with the sacred to refine a soul. — the Rev. Erin Kirby

Reader: The coming of Christ is so close we can sense him. Dwell for a moment with your own longing for Jesus’ coming.

**O Come, O Come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lowly exile here, until the son of God appear
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel**

Imagine communities near and far who wait for ransom and relief: refugees, immigrants with or without documentation, prisoners and detainees in the criminal justice system, victims of human trafficking, and many others.

℣. Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;

℟. For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

℣. Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of your eye;

℟. Hide us under the shadow of your wings.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer;

People: And let our cry come to you.

Leader: Let us pray. Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.

Prayers of Petition for Our Families Friends and Neighbors

Leader: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

*Leader: Light of the world, in grace and beauty, mirror of God's eternal face, transparent flame of love's free duty, You bring salvation to our human race.³
As mighty God and tender infant, you come. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you.*

People: Sacred Mystery, look upon your world. Give us faith and courage so we can repair the breach created through injustice and oppression. Help us to heal your land and your people. This Advent, teach us, like you, to be tender and just. Amen

The Song of Simeon *Nunc dimittis*

Luke 2:29-32

Lord, you now have set your servant free *
to go in peace as you have promised;

For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, *
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:

A Light to enlighten the nations, *
and the glory of your people Israel.

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.

Leader: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen.

About the service:

The Rev. Dr. Erin Kirby is the Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Marion, NC. Prior to serving as Rector at St. John's Erin served as Rector of St. Matthias, Minocqua in the Diocese of Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin where she served as Chair of the Mosaic Task Force and on the Executive Council. She received her MDiv in 2011 from Church Divinity School of the Pacific.

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