

# **The Benefice of Chew Valley East**

## **Morning Prayer for Sunday 15 December 2025, Third Sunday of Advent**

*If you wish to join in the service, then the words in bold are to be said together.  
Please join in with the Psalms and Canticles by reciting each one in its entirety.*

### **Preparation**

O Lord, open our lips  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Reveal among us the light of your presence  
**that we may behold your power and glory.**

Blessed are you, Sovereign God of all,  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
In your tender compassion  
the dawn from on high is breaking upon us  
to dispel the lingering shadows of night.  
As we look for your coming among us this day,  
open our eyes to behold your presence  
and strengthen our hands to do your will,  
that the world may rejoice and give you praise.  
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Silence is kept.*

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **The Word of God**

### **Psalm 146:4-10**

<sup>4</sup>Happy are those who have the God of Jacob for their help, ♦  
whose hope is in the Lord their God;

<sup>5</sup>Who made heaven and earth,  
the sea and all that is in them; ♦  
who keeps his promise for ever;

<sup>6</sup>Who gives justice to those that suffer wrong ♦  
and bread to those who hunger.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord looses those that are bound; ♦  
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind;

<sup>8</sup>The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; ♦  
the Lord loves the righteous;

<sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>The Lord shall reign for ever, ♦  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Alleluia.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

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

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
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.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup>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.'

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
<sup>6</sup>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;  
<sup>7</sup>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.  
<sup>8</sup>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.  
<sup>9</sup>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.  
<sup>10</sup>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.

## **Canticle**

**Lift up your voice with strength, O herald of good tidings.**

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall rejoice, ♦  
the desert shall blossom and burst into song.  
<sup>2</sup>They shall see the glory of the Lord, ♦  
the majesty of our God.  
<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weary hands, ♦  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
<sup>4</sup>Say to the anxious, 'Be strong, fear not, your God is coming with judgement, ♦  
coming with judgement to save you.'  
<sup>5</sup>Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, ♦  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
<sup>6</sup>Then shall the lame leap like a hart, ♦  
and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.

<sup>7</sup>For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, ♦  
and streams in the desert;

<sup>8</sup>The ransomed of the Lord shall return with singing, ♦  
with everlasting joy upon their heads.

<sup>9</sup>Joy and gladness shall be theirs, ♦  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

*Isaiah 35.1, 2b-4a, 4c-6, 10*

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Lift up your voice with strength, O herald of good tidings.**

## **Second Reading: Matthew 11:2-11**

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to Jesus, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’ <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.’

<sup>7</sup>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? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>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.”

<sup>11</sup>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.’

## **Responsory**

Now it is time to awake out of sleep,

**for the night is far spent and the day is at hand.**

Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed,

**for the night is far spent.**

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness

and put on the armour of light,

**for the day is at hand.**

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ

and make no provision for the flesh,

**for the night is far spent and the day is at hand.**

*from Romans 13*

## **Gospel Canticle: Benedictus**

**Look towards the east, O Jerusalem,  
and see the glory that is coming from God.**

<sup>1</sup>Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦  
who has come to his people and set them free.

<sup>2</sup>He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦  
born of the house of his servant David.

<sup>3</sup>Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦  
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,

<sup>4</sup>To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦  
and to remember his holy covenant.

<sup>5</sup>This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: ♦  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

<sup>6</sup>Free to worship him without fear, ♦  
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

<sup>7</sup>And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, ♦  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

<sup>8</sup>To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.

<sup>9</sup>In the tender compassion of our God ♦  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

<sup>10</sup>To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, ♦  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Luke 1.68-79*

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Look towards the east, O Jerusalem,  
and see the glory that is coming from God.**

## **Intercessions**

Into the earthly deserts of hopelessness and sin  
our God is coming with the water of healing and forgiveness.  
Lives that are grey, dismal and barren  
will blossom with beauty, joy and love.

The Messiah came to bring sight to the blind.  
Loving God, we pray for the visually impaired.

*Silence*

And for those who are spiritually blind,  
who stumble sightlessly along life's rocky path.

*Silence*

Light of the World, may they see your face.

The Messiah came to heal the lame.

Loving God, we pray for those with disabilities.

*Silence*

And for all those who struggle on their daily journeyings,  
burdened by poverty and anxiety, by guilt or fear.

*Silence*

Living Way, may they walk and leap with you.

The Messiah came to cleanse the leper.

Loving God, we pray for the outcasts of today.

*Silence*

And for those who feel alone and unloved,  
forgotten by a society that doesn't seem to care.

*Silence*

Friend and Saviour, may they feel your loving touch.

The Messiah came to bring hearing to the deaf.

Loving God, we pray for those with poor hearing.

*Silence*

And for all those who are deaf to your Word,  
hearing only the noisy clamour of the world.

*Silence*

Word of Salvation, may they hear your call.

The Messiah came to raise the dead.

Loving God, we pray for the recently bereaved.

*Silence*

And for all those whose lives are empty and dark,  
entombed by feelings of hopelessness and sorrow.

*Silence*

Victor over death, may they find new life in you.

We make our prayers joyfully in the name of him who came to bring good news  
to the poor and all humankind. **Amen.**

## **Collect**

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. **Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

Awaiting his coming in glory,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray  
**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.**  
**Lead us not into temptation**  
**but deliver us from evil.**  
**For the kingdom, the power,**  
**and the glory are yours**  
**now and for ever. Amen.**

## **Conclusion**

May the Lord, when he comes,  
find us watching and waiting. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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