***Introit (Psalm 146)***

P: Rejoice in the Lord always.

C: I say again, rejoice!

P: Happy is a person when God helps him.

C: Happy is a person who trusts the Lord his God.

P: The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and everything.

C: The Lord is always faithful.

P: He saves people from trouble.

C: He gives food for hungry people.

P: The Lord frees prisoners. He makes blind people see.

C: When people are burdened, the Lord supports them. He loves righteous people.

**All: Glory give to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, the same as it was in the beginning, is now, and will continue forever. Amen.**

***Prayer for God’s Word***

P: Lord Jesus Christ, we beg You to attend our prayers. Our hearts are dark with sin. Come to us and put Your light in our hearts. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (copy) Amen.

The Old Testament lesson is from Zephaniah chapter 3.

 Daughter of ZION, sing! Israel, shout! Daughter of JERUSALEM, be happy and rejoice with all your heart! The Lord will cancel your punishment. He will chase-away your enemies. The Lord is King of ISRAEL, and He lives with you. Then you will never again be afraid.

 On that day God will tell the people in JERUSALEM, “City of God, don’t fear. Don’t give-up. The Lord your God lives with you. He has power to save you. He will rejoice for you. His love will calm you. He will rejoice and shout with joy for you.” The Lord says, “You who are sad because the worship celebrations are no more, I will bring you together again. Your burden will be finished.”

 “At that time, I will punish your enemies. I will save the lame people. I will gather together the lonely people. I will end their shame and they will have praise and fame in all the earth. I will bring you together, and I will give you fame and all people will praise you. You will see Me give you great blessings again. The Lord announces this.”

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

The New Testament lesson is from Philippians chapter 4.

 Rejoice in the Lord always! Again, I say, rejoice! Let everyone see your gentleness. The Lord is near. Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, pray and give thanks. That is how you ask God for what you need. The peace from God is above all understanding, and His peace will protect your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

*You have two choices for the Gospel lesson, a shorter reading from Luke 7 and a longer reading from Luke 7. Choose one.*

*This is the shorter reading.*

The Gospel lesson is from Luke chapter 7.

C: (copy) Glory to You, O Lord.

 JOHN the Baptizer’s disciples told him everything Jesus was doing. JOHN called two of his disciples. He sent them to Jesus to ask, “Are you the Savior God promised, or should we watch for someone else?”

 The two men came to Jesus and said, “JOHN the Baptizer sent us to You to ask, are You the Savior God promised, or should we watch for someone else?”

 That time, Jesus was busy healing people from sickness and blindness and troubles and evil spirits.

 Jesus said to them, “Go and tell JOHN what you see and hear. Blind people can see, lame people can walk, LEPERS become clean, the deaf can hear, the dead become alive again, and I preach good news to poor people. Blessed is the person who doesn’t lose faith in Me.”

 JOHN’s disciples left, then Jesus spoke to the people about JOHN. He asked, “Why did you go into the desert? To see the wind blow on a plant? A man wearing nice clothes? No, people wearing fancy clothes and rich live in king’s houses.”

 “What did you go to see? A prophet? Yes, and more than only a prophet. The Bible talked about JOHN. The Bible says, ‘Look, I send My messenger in-front-of You. He will prepare Your way in-front-of You.’ I tell you, among all people born from women, no one is greater than JOHN. But the last important person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than JOHN.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: (copy) Praise to You, O Christ.

*This is the longer reading.*

The Gospel lesson is from Luke chapter 7.

C: (copy) Glory to You, O Lord.

 JOHN the Baptizer’s disciples told him everything Jesus was doing. JOHN called two of his disciples. He sent them to Jesus to ask, “Are you the Savior God promised, or should we watch for someone else?”

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 All the people heard Jesus say that. Also the TAX collectors heard Jesus. They all said God did right, because JOHN baptized them. But the PHARISEES and law teachers rejected God’s plans for them, because they didn’t get baptized.

 Jesus asked, “How can I describe people today? What are people the same-as? The people are the same-as children in the city shouting to their friends, ‘We played music for you and you didn’t dance. We sang a sad song and you didn’t cry.’”

 “When JOHN the Baptizer came, he didn’t eat bread or drink wine. People said, ‘JOHN has a demon.’ The Son of Man (Jesus) came eating and drinking. People said, ‘Look at Him! Jesus eats too much and drinks too much. He is a friend with TAX collectors and sinners!’ But the children of wisdom will show that wisdom is right.’”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: (copy) Praise to You, O Christ.