**St. Helen’s Surrey**

**Evening Prayer for Advent 4**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

**A light no darkness can extinguish.**

*As the candles are lighted, we sing*

**O come, O come, Emmanuel**

**and ransom captive Israel**

**That mourns in lonely exile here,**

**Until the Son of God appear.**

***Rejoice! Rejoice!***

***Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel***

**O come O Wisdom from on high,**

**Who orders all things mightily,**

**To us the path of knowledge show,**

**And teach us in her ways to go. *R***

**O come, O come, great Lord of might,**

**Who to your tribes on Sinai’s height**

**In ancient times once gave the law**

**In cloud and majesty and awe. *R***

**O come, O Rod of Jesse’s stem,**

**from every foe deliver them**

**that trust your mighty power to save,**

**and give them victory o’er the grave *R***

**O come, Desire of nations, bind**

**In one the hearts of humankind;**

**O bid our bitter conflict cease,**

**And be for us the Prince of Peace. *R***

**O Gracious Light**

O gracious Light,

**pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,**

**O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!**

**Now as we come to the setting of the sun,**

**and our eyes behold the vesper light,**

**we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

**You are worthy at all times to be sung by happy voices,**

**O Son of God, O Giver of life,**

**and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe,

creator of light and darkness.

In this holy season when the sun’s light is swallowed up

by the growing darkness of the night,

you renew your promise to reveal among us

the splendour of your glory,

enfleshed and visible to us in Jesus Christ your Son.

Through the prophets you teach us to hope for his reign of peace.

Through the outpouring of his Spirit,

you open our blindness to the glory of his presence.

Strengthen us in our weakness.

Support us in our stumbling efforts to do your will

and free our tongues to sing your praise.

For to you all honour and blessing are due,

now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Psalm 116**

**Bless the Lord my soul and bless God’s Holy Name**

**Bless the Lord my soul who leads me into life.**

1 Be joyful in God, all you lands; \*

sing the glory of his name; sing the glory of his praise.

2 Say to God, ”How awesome are your deeds! \*

because of your great strength your enemies cringe before you.

3 All the earth bows down before you, \*

sings to you, sings out your name”

4 Come now and see the works of God, \*

how wonderful he is in his doing toward all people.

5 He turned the sea into dry land,

so that they went through the water on foot, \*

and there we rejoiced in him.

6 In his might he rules for ever;

his eyes keep watch over the nations; \*

let no rebel rise up against him.

**Bless the Lord my soul and bless God’s Holy Name**

**Bless the Lord my soul who leads me into life.**

7 Bless our God, you peoples; \*

make the voice of his praise to be heard;

8 Who holds our souls in life, \*

and will not allow our feet to slip.

9 For you, O God, have proved us; \*

you have tried us just as silver is tried.

10 You brought us into the snare; \*

you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

11 You let enemies ride over our heads;

we went through fire and water; \*

but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

**Bless the Lord my soul and bless God’s Holy Name**

**Bless the Lord my soul who leads me into life.**

12 I will enter your house with burnt-offerings

and will pay you my vows, \*

which I promised with my lips

and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

13 I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts with the smoke of rams; \*

I will give you oxen and goats.

14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, \*

and I will tell you what he has done for me.

15 I called out to him with my mouth, \*

and his praise was on my tongue.

16 If I had found evil in my heart, \*

the Lord would not have heard me;

17 But in truth God has heard me; \*

he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, \*

nor withheld his love from me.

**Bless the Lord my soul and bless God’s Holy Name**

**Bless the Lord my soul who leads me into life.**

**The Reading –** Luke 1:5-25

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’ Zechariah said to the angel, ‘How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.’ The angel replied, ‘I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.’ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, ‘This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.’

Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the church

**Thanks be to God**

*A Reflection*

**An Advent Responsory**

My soul waits for the Lord; in his word is my hope.

**My soul waits for the Lord; in his word is my hope.**

Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord;

Lord, hear my voice.

**In his word is my hope.**

There is forgiveness with you; therefore you shall be feared.

**In his word is my hope.**

My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning.

**In his word is my hope.**

O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy.

**In his word is my hope.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**My soul waits for the Lord; in his word is my hope.**

**Intercession and Thanksgiving**

*All are invited to pray silently or to share their prayer aloud.*

*A candle is lighted for each of the petitions with a short silence following*

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor,

sight to the blind, freedom to captives and salvation to your people:

anoint us with your Spirit; rouse us to work in his name.

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor and freedom to the oppressed.

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world the good news of your healing love.

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,

to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

Send us to proclaim that the time is here

for you to save your people.

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

God of mercy, you know us and love us and hear our prayer:

keep us in the eternal fellowship of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty,**

**Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

Creator of the universe, the light of your glory shines in the

darkness of our lives. Make us attentive to your presence,

prompt to serve you, and ever eager to follow in the steps of

the one who is our true light, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

**Amen**.

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. **Amen.**

**The Collect**

Heavenly Father,

**who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace,**

**to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour,**

**now fill us with your grace,**

**that we in all things may embrace your will**

**and with her rejoice in your salvation;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord,**

**who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,**

**one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

And now, joining our voices as one,

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.**

**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.**

**The Blessing**

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,

scatter the darkness from before your path,

and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;

and the blessingof God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you, always.  **Amen.**