

# Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Common English Bible

<sup>1</sup>The LORD God's spirit is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release for captives, and liberation for prisoners, <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and a day of vindication for our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup>to provide for Zion's mourners, to give them a crown in place of ashes, oil of joy in place of mourning, a mantle of praise in place of discouragement. They will be called Oaks of Righteousness, planted by the LORD to glorify himself. <sup>4</sup>They will rebuild the ancient ruins; they will restore formerly deserted places; they will renew ruined cities, places deserted in generations past. <sup>8</sup>I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and dishonesty. I will faithfully give them their wage, and make with them an enduring covenant. <sup>9</sup>Their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants among the peoples. All who see them will recognize that they are a people blessed by the LORD. <sup>10</sup>I surely rejoice in the LORD; my heart is joyful because of my God, because he has clothed me with clothes of victory, wrapped me in a robe of righteousness like a bridegroom in a priestly crown, and like a bride adorned in jewelry. <sup>11</sup>As the earth puts out its growth, and as a garden grows its seeds, so the LORD God will grow righteousness and praise before all the nations.

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

# Psalm 126

The Common English Bible

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD changed Zion's circumstances for the better, it was like we had been dreaming.

**<sup>2</sup>Our mouths were suddenly filled with laughter;  
our tongues were filled with joyful shouts.**

It was even said, at that time, among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them!"

**<sup>3</sup>Yes, the LORD has done great things for us, and  
we are overjoyed.**

<sup>4</sup>LORD, change our circumstances for the better, like dry streams in the desert waste!

**<sup>5</sup>Let those who plant with tears reap the harvest  
with joyful shouts.**

<sup>6</sup>Let those who go out, crying and carrying their seed...

**come home with joyful shouts, carrying bales of  
grain!**

# John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Common English Bible

<sup>6</sup>A man named John was sent from God. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. <sup>8</sup>He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light. <sup>19</sup>This is John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>John confessed (he didn't deny but confessed), "I'm not the Christ." <sup>21</sup>They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" John said, "I'm not." "Are you the prophet?" John answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>They asked, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>John replied, "*I am a voice crying out in the wilderness, Make the Lord's path straight*, just as the prophet Isaiah said." <sup>24</sup>Those sent by the Pharisees <sup>25</sup>asked, "Why do you baptize if you aren't the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered, "I baptize with water. Someone greater stands among you, whom you don't recognize. <sup>27</sup>He comes after me, but I'm not worthy to untie his sandal straps." <sup>28</sup>This encounter took place across the Jordan in Bethany where John was baptizing.