



**Sentence.** The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news. *Mark 1.15*

### Collect

God of the keen blade, which cuts the roots of arrogant power:  
you raise voices of promise in the dry lands of our desire,  
and children of faith from the stones of the earth;  
make us ready to receive the Spirit and the fire of love, wild and fierce  
and free; through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

### A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

*Isaiah proclaimed God's message to Judah and Jerusalem from 742-701 BC, a violent and unjust time when the northern kingdom was annexed to the Assyrian empire. In this reading the shoot sprouting from 'the stump of Jesse' means a king of David's line. Isaiah may be referring to king Hezekiah, a devout reformer in Israel. Christians now read this passage as pointing to Jesus, a universal 'king' and to the ultimate reconciliation of God's universal kingdom of justice and peace inaugurated by Jesus.*

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,

and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,

the leopard shall lie down with the kid,

the calf and the lion and the fatling together,

and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze,

their young shall lie down together;

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,

and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy

on all my holy mountain;

for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD

as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the

nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

*Isaiah 11.1-10*

Reader     Hear the word of the Lord

**ALL           Thanks be to God**

### **Psalm 72.1-7, 18-21, APBA page 294**

*The occasion for this psalm is prayer for God's blessing on the king and may have been a coronation or annual commemoration. The king was called "God's son" and held to be the guarantor of justice; the nation's well being was bound up with the king's right behaviour.*

## **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Christians in Rome**

*Paul wrote this letter between 54-58AD; it is the longest and most influential.*

*In this reading, Paul argues that Jesus became the servant of the Jews to demonstrate the truth that is the faithfulness of God's promises to the patriarchs which are now seen to be for all peoples.*

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles,

and sing praises to your name';

and again he says,

'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people';

and again,

'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,

and let all the peoples praise him';

and again Isaiah says,

'The root of Jesse shall come,

the one who rises to rule the Gentiles;

in him the Gentiles shall hope.'

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Romans 15.4-13*

Reader May your word live in us

**ALL And bear much fruit to your glory.**

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**ALL Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

**ALL Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Reader The Lord be with you

**ALL And also with you**

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

**ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Matthew's gospel was written sometimes after 70AD and presents Jesus as the new and greater Moses who brings about a new and greater exodus of humanity from sin and death. This reading demonstrates how explicitly Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfilment of the Hebrew scriptures. 'Repent' meant to return to the way of life charted by God's covenant with Israel. It implies turning around and facing the right way, or turning away from the wrong path, as in re-orienting one's life.*

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."'

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree

therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

*Matthew 3.1-12*

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

**ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

**Bible Readings next week**

**Advent 3**

Isaiah 35.1-10 Song of Mary James 5.7-10 Matthew 11.2-11

**Prayer for the Week.** O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Pray for the Faithful Departed**

We remember before God: Florence Richards, Nicholas Andrew, Colin Lachlan McInnes, Peter Reid, Maurice Street, Frederick Davis, Vera Estaugh *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

**Commemorations of the Week : December 6 Nicholas of Myra**

(Asia Minor). Bishop and teacher. Little is known of him. He is the Patron Saint of sailors (and churches in his name were built on landmarks to guide ships), of children ('Santa Claus is an American corruption of 'Saint Nicholas'), and of Russia. **December 7 Ambrose of Milan** (c.339-397). One of the greatest of the early bishops. Famous as a preacher and influential in the conversion of St. Augustine of Hippo. Champion of orthodoxy and the independence of the church from the civil power. Stimulated the development of church music (the 'Ambrosian Chant' is named after him). **December 8 The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** We know little of Mary's life except for the gospel references to her and her presence at Pentecost. Tradition has it that she later lived in Jerusalem; she is honoured as the mother of Jesus and called *Theotokos*, the bearer of God. **December 8 Richard Baxter** (1615-1691). An English Puritan divine and spiritual writer, Baxter wrote over 200 works.