



Second Sunday of Advent

10 December 2017

Sentence Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it
together. *Luke 3.4; Isaiah 40.5a*

Collect

God of the wastes,
whose gospel begins with a cry and a summons:
take us to a pathless place where we can start again
to taste creation's gifts anew and await the Spirit's touch,
through Jesus Chris, the one who is to come. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

This chapter is one of the most beautiful poems in the Hebrew scriptures, written while in exile in Babylon. The Jewish people were devastated by the loss of their land and homes. As the psalmist lamented, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept" (137). Through the prophet, God assures the people that God is faithful; God will lead the people with the tenderness of a shepherd taking a lamb in his arms. This chapter has strengthened Jews and Christians through centuries of suffering.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,

Psalm 85.1-2, 8-13 at 8am APBA page 311

This lovely psalm, with the same theme as the Isaiah passage, asks for divine favour and blessing.

A reading from the second letter of Peter

Peter asserts that delay is no proof that God will not act. Notice God's coming promises not destruction but renewal. We are to live holy lives while we wait for God's appearing.

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

2 Peter 3.8-15a.

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 straight his paths;
all people shall see the salvation of God.

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 Mark

ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”
A voice says, “Cry out!”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”
See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Isaiah 06.7-11

Reader Hear the word of the Lord
ALL **Thanks be to God**

Mark's Gospel has neither birth stories nor a prologue; it begins suddenly with John the baptizer and picks up the message of Isaiah 40. John assures his hearers that God is about to come and redeem Israel from its spiritual exile, just as once the exiles were brought back from Babylon.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Mark 1.1-8

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord

ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Bible Readings next week Advent 3

Is. 61.1-4.8-11 Ps 126 1Thess. 5.12-28 John 1.6-8,19-28

Prayer for the Week

Merciful God,

who sent your messenger John the Baptist

to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation:

give us grace to heed his warning and forsake our sins,

that we may greet with joy the coming of our Redeemer,

Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one god, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Pray for the Faithful Departed

We remember before God: Frederick Davis, Vera Eastaugh,
Harriet Hood, Janette Mary Ray, Colin Prain, Cecil Macnaughtan,
John Lindley Daish, George Matthews and Colin Harris
whose anniversaries occur this week.

December 13 Lucy, virgin and martyr (d. c.304). Martyred for her faith in the Roman persecutions under the Emperor Diocletian. She is most celebrated in Sweden when young girls wear a wreath of candles on this day and serve spicy biscuits in her honour.

December 14 John of the Cross (1542-1591). A Carmelite friar and one of the greatest poets and mystics that Spain has produced. His writings remain influential.

