

Sunday Worship at Home, 6th December, 2nd Sunday of Advent

Opening Prayers:

O Lord, open our lips

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Reveal among us the light of your presence

that we may behold your power and glory.

A Prayer of Confession:

When the Lord comes, He will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, And will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins in penitence and faith firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in and peace with all:

God of mercy, we acknowledge that we are all sinners. We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done, and are mindful of all that we have failed to do. For the sake of Jesus, who died for us, forgive us for all that is past, and help us to live each day in the light of Christ our Lord. Amen.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

A Collect for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God now and for ever. **Amen**

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1-8

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.'

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Reflection on the reading:

when John called out “Prepare the way of the Lord,” make his paths straight he wasn’t talking about laying tarmac to make a road, he was talking about preparing our hearts to receive him. There are many things that might be in our hearts that stop Jesus from getting in: Lust. Greed, Gluttony, Jealousy. These add up to unhealthy desire of money, possessions or power as well as the disordered love of other people and the desire to have what others have. These are sins that lead us to selfish ambition, consumption to the point of waste and social injustice. But top of the list of things that stop Jesus getting into our hearts is ignoring him, looking to other things for our protection and wellbeing, or simply being too busy to allow time for him.

With every passing year the Christmas season seems to be less and less connected with the Holy day and celebration of the birth of Christ. And more and more like a festival of shopping, with Christmas Day itself an unfortunate interruption between the pre-Christmas and New Year sales. So many people in our nation are not just no longer ready to receive Jesus, or even not able to see God. The reality is they are no longer even looking for him. The really good news is that because of Jesus, all these things that we may have blocking the way can no longer stop God from getting to us, but we have to start first by turning back to him and asking him in. In this advent time we have to do our part in preparing the way of the Lord in our hearts, by doing what we can to get rid of the things that stop God from reaching us and asking God to help us with the rest. When we do that, then through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Glory of the Lord will be revealed in us. **Amen.**

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.
We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Be still and pray: In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Particularly pray for:

The Church as its leaders prepare for COVID safe celebrations of Christmas; For national and local governments as they struggle to control COVID-19 and put into place vaccination programmes; For our Government and the EU as the deadline for negotiating a BREXIT agreement draw closer; for healing and peace for those who are ill; and for the souls of those who have recently died and comfort for those who are mourning their loss.

Finish with The Lord’s Prayer:

Conclusion

May 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 blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit remain with you always. **Amen.**

Remain forever in the light and peace of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

Reverend Eddie