

Morning Prayer – 2nd Sunday of Advent

4th December 2022, from The Book of Common Prayer

Hymn – Long ago, prophets knew

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPGN-k9yuJQ>

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new;
bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon.

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
when he comes,
who will make him welcome?

God in time, God in man,
this is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
born himself of woman,
God divinely human.

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring.....

Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlehem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes!
Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!

Opening prayers

God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God in him.

1 John 4.16

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray, as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and shew forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all men such things as their well-being doth require.

Wherefore let us kneel in silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

**Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.
We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own
hearts.
We have offended against thy holy laws.
We have left undone those things
which we ought to have done;
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.
Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults.
Restore thou them that are penitent;
according to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesu our Lord.
And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy name.
Amen.**

Pause

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord,
to thy faithful people pardon and peace,
that they may be cleansed from all their sins,
and serve thee with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

O Lord, open thou our lips
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Venite, exultemus Domino

O come, let us sing unto the Lord,
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving
and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God
and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are all the corners of the earth
and the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it
and his hands prepared the dry land.

O come, let us worship, and fall down
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is the Lord our God
and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 11.1-10

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.

New Testament Lesson

Romans 15.4-13

For 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.

Benedictus

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel
for he hath visited, and redeemed his people;

And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us
in the house of his servant David;

As he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets
which have been since the world began;

That we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hands of all that hate us;

To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers
and to remember his holy covenant;

To perform the oath which he swore to our forefather Abraham
that he would give us,
That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies
might serve him without fear,

In holiness and righteousness before him
all the days of our life.

And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest
for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people
for the remission of their sins;

Through the tender mercy of our God
whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us;

To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 3.1-12

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.'

Jubilate

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands
serve the Lord with gladness,
and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God
it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise
be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting
and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth:
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

○ Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
And grant us thy salvation.

○ Lord, save the King.
And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
And make thy chosen people joyful.

○ Lord, save thy people.
And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.
**Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.**

○ God, make clean our hearts within us.
And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day

○ Lord, raise up we pray thee thy power and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness
we are sore let and hindered
in running the race that is set before us,
thy bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord,
to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit
be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord,
in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life,
whose service is perfect freedom;
defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in thy defence,
may not fear the power of any adversaries;
through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect for Grace

O Lord, our heavenly Father,
almighty and everlasting God,
who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day;
defend us in the same with thy mighty power;
and grant that this day we fall into no sin,
neither run into any kind of danger,
but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance,
to do always that is righteous in thy sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn – Hills of the North, rejoice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5LOPA7EqF0>

Hills of the North, rejoice;
river and mountain spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing;
though absent long, your Lord is nigh;
he judgment brings and victory.

Isles of the southern seas,
deep in your coral caves
pent be each warring breeze,
lulled be your restless waves:
he comes to reign with boundless sway,
and makes your wastes his great highway.

Lands of the East, awake,
soon shall your sons be free;
the sleep of ages break,
and rise to liberty.
on your far hills, long cold and grey,
has dawned the everlasting day.

Shores of the utmost West,
ye that have waited long,
unvisited, unblest,
break forth to swelling song;
high raise the note, that Jesus died,
yet lives and reigns, the Crucified.

Shout, while ye journey home;
songs be in every mouth;
lo, from the North we come,
from East, and West, and South.
City of God, the bond are free,
we come to live and reign in thee!

Sermon

I love the passage from Isaiah – a prophecy about the future, that foresees a happy time when all the troubles of the world will be over, when the child shall safely play with a snake, and the meek and poor will receive righteous treatment.

Such a prophecy raises hopes, is exciting to anticipate, is upbeat and promising. I'm very much in favour!

It's quite a change from the "Prophets of Doom" that we so often come across in the Old Testament. Prophets like Jeremiah, telling everyone that the end is nigh unless they repent. Such prophets are using the opposite approach, trying to instil fear, making people feel weak and useless and frighten them into action.

Well, I know which type of prophet I would follow – give me a cheerful and optimistic view of the future and I'll happily tag along! I can't resist the image of "the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." I want to be inspired and optimistic, safe in the knowledge that God's ultimate plan is for our complete happiness.

So what to make of John the Baptist? Am I one of the “Brood of Vipers” that he castigates? Is he trying to frighten me into submission?

John is indeed scathing about anyone who tries to avoid what he calls the “wrath to come” – they should get what they deserve. This is pure “prophet of Doom” stuff.

But in fact what he is really passionate about is the need for us to make a choice, and the choice he offers is not difficult – eternal happiness or eternal damnation?

Given everyone gets things wrong, everyone sometimes behaves badly, that no one is worthy of a place in God’s heavenly kingdom, we can all be made to feel guilty quite easily. And we should indeed suffer the consequences of our behaviour.

But John is not saying that, despite the fact that we are guilty, we will inevitably be condemned for our bad behaviour. Rather he is inviting us to change our behaviour, to repent, and then joyfully be gathered into God’s granary. By being forgiven, we become wholesome and clean.

It turns out that John’s message is attractive and positive. He is indeed offering a choice, but by making the right choice, we enter the best of all possible worlds.

The crowds flocked to see John, because people who had already been baptised found what a joy it was, and spread the word that it was wonderful to be forgiven, to repent.

Then came God’s firm affirmation when Jesus himself came for his baptism and the receiving of God’s spirit.

Both Isaiah and John are excited about the future. Both can see that God’s plan for his world is that everyone becomes fulfilled, and violence and antagonism are set aside. As peace comes on earth.

The bad things in life “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.”

Advent is the season when he rekindle our enthusiasm for a joyful world, where God is ultimately in control, so that we can rest in his loving arms when we are struggling, and joyfully sing his praises when we are happy.

As the days of Advent creep past, and Christmas slowly gets nearer and nearer, let’s see if we too can be inspired by Isaiah’s wonderful vision.

Amen.

Prayers

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Almighty and ever-living God, who by thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men: we humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy divine majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord; and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love.

We beseech thee also to lead all nations in the way of righteousness and peace; and so to direct all kings and rulers, that under them thy people may be godly and quietly governed. And grant unto thy servant Charles our King, and to all that are put in authority under him, that they may truly and indifferently administer justice, to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops, priests and deacons, especially to thy servant Robert our bishop, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments.

Guide and prosper, we pray thee, those who are labouring for the spread of thy gospel among the nations, and enlighten with thy Spirit all places of education and learning; that the whole world may be filled with the knowledge of thy truth.

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present, that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

And we commend to thy gracious keeping, O Lord, all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee, according to thy promises, to grant them refreshment, light and peace.

And here we give thee most high praise and hearty thanks for all thy saints, who have been the chosen vessels of thy grace, and lights of the world in their several generations; and we pray that, rejoicing in their fellowship and following their good examples, we may be partakers with them of thy heavenly kingdom.

Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate. **Amen.**

Silence

You may like to add your own prayer(s) at this point, perhaps focusing on those you are most concerned about.

Hymn – All over the world

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vF9h9n19yz0>

All over the world, the Spirit is moving,
All over the world, as the prophet said it would be;
All over the world, there's a mighty revelation,
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

All over his church, the Spirit is moving,
All over his church, as the prophet said it would be;
All over his church, there's a mighty revelation,
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Right here in this place, the Spirit is moving,
Right here in this place, as the prophet said it would be;
Right here in this place, there's a mighty revelation,
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea

All over the world, the Spirit is moving,
All over the world, as the prophet said it would be;
All over the world, there's a mighty revelation,
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Ending

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,
be with us all evermore.
Amen.