

bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ '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. ¹² 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.'

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Pew Reflections

The Second Sunday of Advent – Sunday 4 December 2022

- Isaiah 11.1-10; Psalm 72.1-7, 18-21; Romans 15.4-13; Matthew 3.1-12

John the Baptist quotes the prophecy of Isaiah: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'. How can we prepare the way of the Lord this Advent? As Isaiah tells us, by proclaiming (in deed and in word) good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed and the year of the Lord's favour.

- Pray this week for the chance to proclaim to others the fullness of life that Jesus offers the world.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*, the Anglican Church of Japan.

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Reflection

God has always called us to unity and being alongside each other. Jesus' living and being showed what that looks like, and how to live it out in our daily lives, if we so choose. The Christmas story drew the most unlikely people together, in the unveiling narrative of simple love, honest hope, just peacemaking and generosity, from those with the least to offer and those who were totally unrelated in background, faith or culture. All creation is included in the harmonies resounding loudly in the angelic voices. The gift of God's illuminating Light is this whole image of being and living that we celebrate each Christmas. As we travel in this Advent Season, following the Light that gathers us all, may the ancient reading from Isaiah illuminate what that may mean now in our everyday living. The image of a new world order is striking in such 'otherness' that chooses to live in peace and harmony. As Romans reminds us, everything written in the Scriptures teaches us, so that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement we find in them. The thread of unity that echoes down the millennia, encourages a hope and reconciliation that is as needed to today as it has previously been needed.

May our gifting to each other this season be the listening ear and open heart, that sits in harmony and tender love in the midst of creation, that Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah, the shepherds and the Wise Ones, the heavenly chorus and the tiniest creatures, all bring to this narrative of Light.

A clarity of inner vision and perspective, and an outward expression of Hope to all.



Readings - Sunday 8 December - Second Sunday in Advent

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 all peoples,
whose servant John came baptising
and calling for repentance:
help us to hear his voice of judgement,
that we may also rejoice in his word of promise,
and be found pure and blameless in that glorious Day
when Christ comes to rule the earth as Prince of Peace;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Isaiah 11.1-10

- ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- ² 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 .
- ³ 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;
- ⁴ 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.
- ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- ⁶ 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.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

For the word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

Psalm 72.1-7, 18-21

¹ Give the king your judgement, O God:
and your righteousness to the son of a king,

² That he may judge your people rightly:
and the poor of the land with equity.

³ Let the mountains be laden with peace
because of his righteousness:
and the hills also with prosperity for his people.

⁴ May he give justice to the poor among the people:
**and rescue the children of the needy,
and crush the oppressor.**

⁵ May he live while the sun endures:
**and while the moon gives light,
throughout all generations.**

⁶ May he come down like rain upon the new-mown fields:
and as showers that water the earth.

⁷ In his time shall righteousness flourish:
and abundance of peace, till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁸ Let his name live for ever:
and endure as long as the sun.

¹⁹ Let all peoples use his name in blessing:
and all nations call him blessed.

²⁰ Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel:
who alone does great wonders.

²¹ Blessed be his glorious name for ever:
**and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen, Amen.**

2nd Reading: Romans 15.4-13

⁴ 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. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ 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, ⁹ 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'; ¹⁰ and again he says, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people'; ¹¹ and again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him'; ¹² and again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.' ¹³ 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.

For the word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading: Matthew 3.1-12

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'
³ 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."' ⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ 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?' ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not