

The Order of Service for Home Worship

THE SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT



Hymn 1: Hark a Herald Voice is Calling

1. Hark! A herald voice is calling:
"Christ is nigh!" it seems to say;
"Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day.
2. Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, her sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.
3. Lo, the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heaven;
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all to be forgiven.
4. So when next he comes with glory,
Wrapping all the earth in fear,
May he then, as our defender,
On the clouds of heaven appear.
5. Honour, glory, virtue, merit,
To the Father and the Son,
With the co-eternal Spirit,
While unending ages run.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father of glory, holy and eternal, look upon us now in power and mercy. May your strength overcome our weakness, your radiance transform our blindness, and your Spirit draw us to that love shown and offered to us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace is our hearts.

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into your kingdom of peace.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you will come in glory to judge the living and the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Collect:

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

40. 1-11

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, 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 for ever. 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 85. 8-13

Response: Show us your steadfast love, O Lord.

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land. (R)

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

The Lord will give what is good and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before him and will make a path for his steps. (R)

A reading from the second letter of Peter

3. 8-15a

But 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let us hear what the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Mark

1. 1-8

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation: On this second Sunday of Advent we are introduced, in our gospel reading today, to John the Baptist. John cries out in the wilderness, "prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Mark immediately identifies John as the messenger of whom Isaiah speaks in our first reading when he says, "A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'" There is no mistaking that for Mark John is that messenger. On this second Sunday of our Advent journey we honour the prophets, the likes of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Malachi and others. Those who spoke to the word of God to the people of Israel. One thing that the prophets seem to have in common is that they each echo the same message. Throughout the Old Testament God raised the prophets when the people moved away from God when they began to neglect His ways, when they were under attack, when they were taken into exile in Babylon. At such times. God raised the prophets who called on the people to repent and return to God. This call to repentance is one made by John as he begins to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. John is in many ways the last of the Old Testament prophets. He echoes their message and yet his mission is more urgent for he knows that the advent, the coming, of the Messiah is imminent. John is alerting the people to the fact that Jesus the Messiah, his cousin, is about to begin his ministry. In listening to the

call of John his words comes down to us through the ages. His words resonate with us today. As disciples of Christ we are called to work with him in preparing the way for him to enter the lives of all we encounter day by day. In answering John's call to repentance we look to remove all in our own lives which keep us from giving ourselves and our lives more wholly to the service of God and his people. In preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ at Bethlehem we help alert the world around us to his continued presence in our lives and the life of the whole world. In alerting the world around us to his presence he help prepare the way for him to come to those in need, to bring the hope and peace which only he can give to those who live in fear and despair. The ministry of John in preparing the way for Jesus to come among his people, among us, is our shared ministry today, a ministry we are called to embrace afresh today. Amen.

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Mary our bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own ministry area; may the Church, following the example of John the Baptist, be a faithful sign of Christ's love and compassion for all.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; May the leaders of the Nations strive to bring peace and reconciliation between their people's that all may live safe and secure lives.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; May we bring the hope that only Christ can give to all who we meet each day.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our parish intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who 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.**

The Peace:

Jesus said, Peace I bequeath to you; my own peace I give you; a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.

The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

God of our pilgrimage, you have willed that the gate of mercy should stand open for those who trust in you: look upon us with your favour that we who follow the path of your will may never wander from the way of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn 2: Come, thou long-expected Jesus

1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in thee.
2. Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.
3. Born thy people to deliver;
Born a child and yet a king;
Born to reign in us for ever;
Now thy gracious Kingdom bring.
4. By thine own eternal Spirit,
Rule in all our hearts alone:
By thine all-sufficient merit,
Raise us to thy glorious throne.

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