

Sunday Message

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year C • 8 December 2024 • Psalter Week 2

TO BE A LIGHT

LUKE 3:1-6



John the Baptist is the last of the great prophets of the Bible, and he is the forerunner of Christ. A prophet isn't someone who sees into the future as if into a crystal ball. A prophet is one who reads the signs of the times and speaks with the voice of God.

John preached a message of repentance. He called for an end to division and conflict and for a time of peace and harmony. He pointed to the one who will bring this about - Jesus. Both the first reading and the Gospel speak about the coming of one with integrity who will bring peace to the nations. There is a sense of excitement in the book of Baruch - a time of joy is coming - and in the Gospel we are told to get ready, to prepare, because things are going to change. With the coming of Jesus nothing will ever be the same again. ■

DO

Light a single match or candle. See the difference even one little light makes.



PRAY

Pray that God's light will shine in you, so that all will know that hope has broken into our broken world and that darkness has been overcome.

LEARN

The Christian is one who points towards Jesus.

The Christian is called to be prophetic.

To be people of the light is to let God's light shine in us and through us.

REFLECT

In 1989, newly elected U.S. president George H.W. Bush used an expression in his inaugural address that also describes the Christian calling. He spoke of a 'thousand points of light.' If you've ever been in a pitch-dark church or arena that is illumined by candles, you know the wonderfully soothing, intimate atmosphere that is created. The candlelight cuts through the darkness, smothering its power. The glow from even one candle punctuates the darkness, like a little flicker of defiant hope.

It is no coincidence that this time of year is dank, dreary and dull. We are in deep mid-winter. Darkness envelops us. The nights seem endless; nature and the weather perpetually glum.

When we look at the world around us, it seems that darkness has also taken hold: the catastrophic impact of climate change; war in Ukraine and in the Middle East; more refugees than at any time since the end of the Second World War; the rise in racism and right-wing populism; the pressure on our hospitals and other public services; the many burdened by loneliness, depression, financial worries or physical illness.

On days when the news is filled with grim tidings, it can seem as if we're stuck in deep mid-winter, as if the darkness will engulf us... and then Advent comes along.

Advent is the great season of light. In this dreary mid-winter, Advent reminds us that darkness doesn't have the last word, because into the darkness a light has come - Jesus, God-with-us, light of the world. Advent reminds us that God has heard the cry of God's people and responded by sending his Son as one like us to give us life. Our Christian hope is rooted in the knowledge that God has come among us, is with us now, and will come again at the appointed time. Hope has taken shape in Jesus, our point of light. As his followers, we are people who walk in the light. ■

SAY

"What marvels the Lord has worked for me. Indeed, I am glad."

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*O people of Sion, behold,
the Lord will come to save the nations,
and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard
in the joy of your heart.*

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Baruch 5:1-9

A reading from the Prophet Baruch.

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,
and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God.
Put on the robe of the righteousness from God;
put on your head the crown of the glory of the Everlasting.
For God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven.
For your name will for ever be called by God:
'Peace of righteousness and glory of godliness'.
Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height
and look towards the east
and see your children gathered from west and east,
at the word of the Holy One,
rejoicing that God has remembered them.
For they went forth from you on foot,
led away by their enemies;
but God will bring them back to you,
carried in glory, as on a royal throne.
For God has ordered that every high mountain
and the everlasting hills be made low
and the valleys filled up to make level ground,
so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.
The woods and every fragrant tree
have shaded Israel at God's command.
For God will lead Israel with joy
in the light of his glory,
with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 126(125):1-2b. 2c-3. 4-5. 6. R. 3

R: *What great deeds the LORD worked for us!
Indeed, we were glad.*

- When the LORD brought back the exiles of Sion,
we thought we were dreaming.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter;
on our tongues, songs of joy. **R.**
- Then they said among the nations,
'What great deeds the LORD worked for them!
What great deeds the Lord worked for us!
Indeed, we were glad. **R.**
- Bring back our exiles, O LORD,
as streams in the Negeb.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. **R.**
- They go out, they go out, full of tears,
bearing seed for the sowing;
they come back, they come back with a song,
bearing their sheaves. **R.**

SECOND READING Philippians 1:3-6. 8-11

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.

Brothers and sisters: I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Luke 3:4. 6

R: *Alleluia, alleluia.*

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;
all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

R: *Alleluia.*

GOSPEL Luke 3:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,
'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall become straight,
and the rough places shall become level ways,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings,
and, since we have no merits to plead our cause,
come, we pray, to our rescue
with the protection of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights,
and behold the joy which comes to you from God.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment,
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,
that, through our partaking in this mystery,
you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth
and hold firm to the things of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.