

Sunday 5 December 2021

The Second Sunday of Advent



Sermon © the Revd Jane Hyde.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.
- To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Lo he comes with clouds descending](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

When the Lord comes he will bring to light 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 love and peace with all.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power
and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness
we are grievously hindered
in running the race that is set before us,
your bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

First reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Malachi

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts. For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished.

Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, 'How are we robbing you?' In your tithes and offerings! You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me—the whole nation of you! Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. I will rebuke the locust for you, so that it will not destroy the produce of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says the Lord of hosts. Then all nations will count you happy, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

You have spoken harsh words against me, says the Lord. Yet you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What do we profit by keeping his command or by going about as mourners before the Lord of hosts? Now we count the arrogant happy; evildoers not only prosper, but when they put God to the test they escape.' Then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who revered the Lord and thought on his name. They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as parents spare their children who serve them. Then once more you shall see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him. *Malachi 3:1-20*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:1-11

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Ubi caritas

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 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 the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out 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 be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God".' *Luke 3:1-6*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

It's a while since I've taken a flight anywhere. The same may be true for many of you. But don't you think airport terminals are strange places? They have an almost unsettling atmosphere that seems to combine the excitement of going on holiday, the weariness of the business traveller, the anticipation of returning home, and the boredom of prolonged waiting ... at sometimes, unearthly hours of the day or night. They have the sort of clinical feel of a waiting room (except you have to buy your own magazines!) Even the shops selling enticing things such as watches, perfumes, souvenirs and huge bottles of whisky can't distract you (for long) from the fact there is nothing to do except shop or perhaps have drink. And then there are those endless loudspeaker announcements trying to find people who have got lost somewhere between check-in and take-off...that happened to me once on a trip to the Italian Lakes. In an airport, you are in a kind of geographical limbo—it's as if you belong neither to the country you are leaving, nor the country you are going to. For however long you have to wait, you are neither here nor there, and there is little to do except listen and look eagerly for your gate to be called.

The Bible has its own geographical limbo: the wilderness. Much more than a place of dust and rocks, the wilderness has a special spiritual significance in the relationship between God and his people. It is in the wilderness that God calls Moses from the burning bush to lead his people out of Egypt, and it is in the wilderness that those Israelites wander for forty years while they learn what it means to be the people of God. After his baptism, Jesus is led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, and filled with the power of the spirit.

So when we read that the word of the Lord came to John, son of Zechariah, in the wilderness, we know that something of real importance is about to happen. John has spent the best part of his life in this geographical and spiritual limbo. At the end of chapter one of Luke's gospel we read *'The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.'* In other words, he was in the wilderness from childhood until the day he began to call on Israel to repent and make themselves ready for what was soon to come. We might deduce that John was just a few month older than Jesus, so we can make a good guess that that is a long time to be hanging about in a desert. It is, therefore, a measure of the importance of John's future work that he required many years of the kind of spiritual preparation that only the wilderness can give, and when the word does come to John, it sets off something that will change the world.

John's call is a sort of 'drumroll' which announces that salvation is near ... that something really new and really good is about to happen. It is a turning point in time which is perhaps why Luke takes such care to locate this event precisely in

history, by giving us, in great detail, the names of the rulers of the day. John hears his call and sets off into public life to call people to repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and to baptise them as a mark of their decision to lead a new life. And so he becomes John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Lord

We all know, too well in these pandemic times, what it's like to be in limbo: to feel that we are neither here nor there. Generally speaking, we are creatures who love to have a purpose and we get restless and unhappy when we lack one. It may be that this wilderness is a stagnant time in our lives: a dead-end job, a relationship, a time of illness or injury, enforced isolation, working from home. Some people talk of retirement as a time when they feel lost and useless after many years of work. Some parents talk of feeling strangely empty when their children leave home, and for some children their school years have a kind of aching boredom that can only be described as a wilderness.

Our experiences are all different, but the thing to note is this: that just like the airport, the wilderness is a place where things are about to happen, a place of preparation, a time which may afford time to reflect and think and ready ourselves for the future, perhaps with new resolve (just like those called to be baptised by John). It may be a long wait; it may seem painfully boring, it may seem pointless, but the wilderness is where the seeds of change can be sown and nurtured. It may not be an easy time, but it is a time to embrace: it is a time for waiting and listening carefully for the voice of God. And when it comes, who knows where God might lead us?

May this Adventide be a precious 'wilderness' time for us, when we look forward with renewed hope, and an expectation of discovering His plans for us as we begin His work as members of a new Mission Community. Amen

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Watchful at all times,
let us pray for strength to stand with confidence
before our Maker and Redeemer.

That God may bring in his kingdom with justice and mercy,
let us pray to the Lord:

All Lord, have mercy.

That God may establish among the nations
his sceptre of righteousness,
let us pray to the Lord:

All Lord, have mercy.

That we may seek Christ in the Scriptures
and recognise him in the breaking of the bread,
let us pray to the Lord:

All Lord, have mercy.

That God may bind up the broken-hearted,
restore the sick
and raise up all who have fallen,
let us pray to the Lord:

All Lord, have mercy.

That the light of God's coming may dawn
on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death,
let us pray to the Lord:

All Lord, have mercy.

That, with all the saints in light,
we may shine forth as lights for the world,
let us pray to the Lord:

All Lord, have mercy.

We commend ourselves and all for whom we pray
to the mercy and protection of our heavenly Father:

Silence is kept

Almighty God,
as your blessed Son Jesus Christ
first came to seek and to save the lost;
so may he come again to find in us
the completion of his redeeming work;
for he is now alive
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

May the God of peace make you completely holy, ready for the coming of our
Lord Jesus Christ

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Will you come and follow me (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love

And the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 [Christ whose glory fills the skies](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

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.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.