



This second week in Advent draws us into the possibilities of real peace for us and our world – God’s Shalom realm. Ironically, there is so much in this time of year that works against a sense of peace – and much of it is the product of misguided faith and exclusivist religion. What would it mean if we really began to embrace the peace, the mutuality, the community and the enemy-love of the Gospel? These are the very powerful and practical challenges of the Lectionary this week.

May our worship lead us into God’s Shalom and transforms us into agents of Shalom in every moment, every situation and every interaction.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

The First Reading - Isaiah 11: 1-10

Many ancient prophets foretold the day of the Lord’s coming. He will be within the dynasty of Jesse’s great son David, and once again there will be peace and harmony. All peoples, and all the natural world too, will be reconciled.

The Psalm - Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19

The Second Reading - Romans 15: 4-13

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

Paul quotes the scriptures for evidence that Jesus always considered others before himself. so let all Christians now agree in a common hope, joy, and perseverance.

The Gospel Reading - Matthew 3: 1-12

The last of the old prophets, the one whom Jesus called greatest in his kingdom, was John the Baptist. John like Paul, quotes Isaiah, to explain his function of preparing the way for the Lord's coming.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah

[%2011:%201-10%0Acw%20Psalm%2072:%201-7,%2018-19%0ARomans%2015:%204-13%0AMatthew%203:%201-12](#)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

ADULT: Today - the second Sunday in Advent - we hear about Isaiah's vision of a new and transformed world.

CHILD/YOUTH: A world where all creatures live together in harmony and peace.

ADULT: We wait with hope for this vision to become reality.

CHILD/YOUTH: The God of hope fills us with joy and peace in believing. We light the candle of hope. (*The first purple candle is relit*)

ADULT: We proclaim our belief in God's faithfulness in keeping promises, as we light the candle of peace. (*A second purple candle is lit*)

PRAYER: God of all faithfulness - Isaiah's vision paints a picture of a world shaped in accordance with your will and your design. He tells of One so enlightened by your Spirit that he would open eyes and ears and hearts to a new understanding of your will and your design for the world. Isaiah described the one for whom the people waited - the Messiah .

We wait also, but we wait in the joyful knowledge that the Messiah has come in the form of your beloved Son. We wait in faith, praying that through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus - Prince of Peace - will be born anew in our hearts and in our lives. Amen

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O 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,

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The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, world without end.
Collect of 5th before Advent may be used.

Collect Two

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Presider or deacon

As we prepare the way of the Lord, let us offer prayers to God who will baptize us with Spirit and fire.

Deacon or other leader

For the peace of the world, and for our unity in Christ.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For our bishop and all bishops, for the presbyters, for the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the church throughout the world and the faithful in every place.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the leaders of the nations and all in authority.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For justice, peace, and freedom among peoples of the earth.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For travellers, for the sick and the suffering, for the hungry and the oppressed, and for those in prison.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the dying and the dead.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

Joining our voices with St _____ and with all the saints and angels of God, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

www.churchnewsireland.org

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

O Root of Jesse, who rises as a signal among all peoples, in whose presence rulers stand silent and nations bow in worship, come and deliver us without delay. Glory to you for ever.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P God of love, you call your people to live in harmony with one another. Where there is discord in your church, restore it to unity and truth. Where there is strife between peoples, bring repentance, reconciliation, and peace. Where we have harmed ourselves through our own sinful action, grant us true repentance and the assurance of forgiveness. Lord in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P Lord, you call us to various vocations and responsibilities. Bless our daily work, and inspire us to faithfulness in our callings both great and small. Lord in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P Grant peace to regions around the world that are afflicted with warfare (*especially...*). Guard and protect all those who serve the cause of freedom and justice in our armed forces (*especially...*). Strengthen also the families of the soldiers during their difficult time of separation. Lord in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P Grant hope to those who are hopeless, and strength to those whose strength is failing. Grant your grace especially to _____, and all who are sick. Lord in your mercy.

C Hear our prayer.

P Prepare our hearts to welcome your Son, as he comes to us through the gifts of bread and wine. That having welcomed Christ, we may declare in word and deed His presence among us. Lord in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P We give you thanks for the saints, who through their lives bore witness to you. Keep us in unity of faith with them, that we may share in their eternal joy and with them the salvation you have prepared for all your children. Lord in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

POST COMMUNION

Lord,
here you have nourished us with the food of life.
Through our sharing in this holy sacrament
teach us to judge wisely earthly things

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

and to yearn for things heavenly.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. Amen

PRAYERS

God of timeless grace,
you fill us with joyful expectation.
Make us ready for the message that prepares the way,
that with uprightness of heart and holy joy
we may eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

God of hope,
you raised up John the baptizer
as a herald who calls us to conversion.
As we joyfully await the glorious coming of Christ,
we pray to you for the needs of the church and the world.

Intercessions...

Hear our humble prayer
that we may serve you in holiness and faith
and give voice to your presence among us
until the day of the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Labouring God,
with axe and winnowing fork
you clear a holy space
where hurt and destruction have no place,
and a little child holds sway.
Clear our lives of hatred and despair,
sow seeds of joy and peace,
that shoots of hope may spring forth
and we may live in harmony
with one another. Amen.

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and Saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God.
Common Worship Shorter Collect

God of all holiness, your promises stand unshaken through all generations and you lift up all who are burdened and brought low: renew our hope in you, as we wait for the coming in glory of Jesus Christ, our Judge and our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

God of all time and space, who are we, that you should come to us? Yet you have visited your people and redeemed us in your Son. As we prepare to celebrate his birth, make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your word and move us by your Spirit to bless your

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

wonderful works. We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near, even your Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

We are sent In the name of the Father of the Poor; in the name of the Son of Justice; in the name of the Spirit of Love; To live God's promise that transforms and makes us new; to be signs of hope to all who struggle for a new world of justice & peace. **Amen.**

Teach us, O Lord, to love you, to trust you and for ever to praise you. Let us exalt your name both in the day and in the night. Let us serve you both in the house of prayer and in the world about us. Let us ascribe to you with all your saints both wisdom and majesty, both honour and glory, world without end. Amen. *Henry Vaughan, 1621-169*

Our loving Father, we give thanks for your goodness and love; for the joy of home and family, and the companionship of friends and neighbours; for the strength that supports us and the love that surrounds us, both when our joy is complete and when it is touched by pain. We give thanks for your Son Jesus Christ: the glory of his humble birth, the graciousness of his selfless life, the obedience and trust that led him to the cross, and the triumph of his resurrection and ascension. We give thanks for your Holy Spirit at work in your Church and in our hearts, revealing your truth, renewing our lives, and bringing us to your eternal Kingdom. *Alexander Siatwinda, Zambia/Halifax*

O God of all hope, we thank you for your promises which find their fulfilment in your Son. We rejoice in His coming in the flesh and look for His coming in glory. By your word, sacraments and Holy Spirit make us ready to receive Christ as our Lord and Saviour, and with thankfulness praise Him, now and for ever. Amen

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we wait for the coming of your Son; then when He appears, He will not find us sleeping in sin, but active in His service and joyful in His praise, for the glory of your Holy name. Amen

Lord Jesus, redeemer and judge of all people, who came that we might have life eternal, you have taught us that you will come again in great glory to take account of your servants and reward their faithful service; help us to live as people who wait for their master, prepared, engaged in service, and ready for action; that we might not be ashamed before you at your coming so that we might enter into your eternal joy. Amen

Grant, O God, that as we rejoice in the hope of the coming of our Saviour, we too may seek to prepare the way of His coming by demonstrating His love as we care for others. Amen

Christ the Son of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit, O Lord, and our minds with your light, our hearts with your love and our souls with your presence. Day by day may we live to your glory and rejoice in your praise; through Christ our Lord. Amen. Mozarabic Liturgy (seventh century)

BENEDICTION

May the God of all hope fill you with the all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

And may the blessing of God nourish you,
the faithfulness of Jesus sustain you,
and the fruit of the Holy Spirit grow in you.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

When Light in the Darkness

At this time of year with the cold temperatures, long nights and short days, life can seem quite lonely and desolate at times. Advent is a time to reflect on our life and look forward to the coming of Christ, both as infant Messiah and as the returning Lord and King. We're encouraged to ensure Christ is at the centre of our lives, helping us focus on the God who became incarnate so that our lives don't become a desolate wilderness, or a dark and hopeless place where we are trapped by our own humanity. As we open ourselves to Jesus, the light of the world, He releases us into new life and restores those places in our lives that have been marred, or even devastated by the effects of the darkness of the world. As Advent passes into Christmas we look to the light of Christ, who will return in a great blaze of glory to complete that work of restoration, but who first came as a small pinprick of light in a stable in Bethlehem. For some, all they ever see is the pinprick of light at Christmas and for the rest of the year the Christian faith means little to them. For others, the light in the stable at Christmas is the dawning of the realisation of Christ in their lives, lives which continue to be changed, transformed and restored by His incarnation. We are called to point to that light, and reflect its transformation and glory in our lives.

In a world that predominantly only sees the pinprick of light at Christmas it's not surprising that many people are largely indifferent to God and the true meaning of Advent and God's first incarnation in obscurity and His second to come in glory. They believe they have no need of God and don't want to be inconvenienced by Him. And in their self confidence, God becomes remote or absent for them and many go for days without any sense of God in their lives, and certainly no recourse to worship or prayer and communication and communion with Him. It is a situation similar to that which Isaiah found himself in, Israel had become indifferent to God and stagnant in their ways and worship. Isaiah's calling was to prepare the people, through a call to repentance, so that God could break through their indifference and self confidence and become real and relevant to them once again. A message as relevant today as when it was first preached. The root of Jesse, as we looked at last week, will bring hope and revelation. John the Baptist too calls people to repentance and preparation for the coming age for when Christ would break through. His sole mission was to serve God, and he gave all he was and all he had so that others could come to see the Messiah who was shortly to be revealed. He was clear that His role was not to be the light which would break into the world, but to point people to that light.

The Christingle too reminds us of that light which came into the world. The orange represents the world. The gospel writer John reminds us that 'Jesus was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognise Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him'. (Jn 1 v 10 – 11). The red ribbon of the Christingle represents the blood of Jesus which was shed for us so that our sins may be forgiven. 'But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from every sin'. (1 Jn 1 v 7). The fruits and sweets on the four skewers represent God's gifts to us, the fruits of the earth and the four seasons. 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease'. (Gen 8 v 22). The lighted candle, pushed into the centre of the orange, represents Christ, the light of the world. 'He [Jesus]

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life".' (John 8 v 12).

The coming of Christ at Christmas is an event for the universe. It is an event for history and an event for each of us in our daily lives and the lives of those we touch. At Advent His teaching and His light penetrates the darkness of the Genesis world and our Genesis lives. It invites us to evaluate our lives and transform them in the light of His Advent and Christmas coming, and to point others to that light so that all can be ready and be prepared and so experience the true meaning of His coming. *Rev Dr Sam Cappleman*

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

John the Baptist adopted a very specific lifestyle, and a very public ministry . He was unafraid to point the finger at leaders of the people who let people down and behaved badly. Very forcefully he made his most vehement statements against the spiritual elite. . Everybody had to 'make straight paths for the Lord.' We are tempted sometimes to think that scriptures are directed at people outside the church, to imagine that we are the good ones and that the challenge is to people who are outside the church. The teachings of John the Baptist and Jesus of course, were always strongest to those who were most religious 'you brood of vipers' he said to the professionally religious. His parables taught that the wheat and the weeds were mixed together in the field, the sheep and the goats also shared the same field. Perhaps the greatest challenge from the reading today is to us who think that we are OK.

So we ask ourselves this morning whether we have paths which are suitable for the coming of our Lord this Christmas? Is our religion lifeless and boring? Our religion should be life changing, about a meeting with the living God, that is when it becomes a real faith, not just a set of rules and practices. How many Christians have slipped into a non-threatening cosy religion, like an old pair of slippers which fit us nicely. How easy it is for us to become accustomed to our Christianity, so that the words of Jesus no longer challenge and frighten us.

Yes, John the Baptist would be speaking to us this morning, us inside church, not those who are in bed sleeping off Saturday night. He would ask us to say how our religion was changing us and making a real difference. If it is not doing this, then sing no more hymns, say no more prayers, God does not desire our religion, he wants so much more.

John the Baptist tells us to make our paths straight. The Kingdom is not a far off event, the kingdom is here and now. It breaks into our lives every day and we do not need to ask when it will come. The kingdom seizes us, embraces us, challenges us, in the ordinary events of life. A sick friend, a discouraged spouse, a troublesome person on the telephone, a demand which is made on us which we think to be unfair. Situations which cause us to question how we will respond. Times when we can perhaps do much good with very little effort. How we react determines and tests our faith and questions our membership of the Kingdom. These are the places where we really show God's loving power coming through in our lives.

It is as we do this of course that we become like John the Baptist in declaring God and proclaiming the coming of our Lord. Our life, our deeds our words, all speaking of the Kingdom of God. It is when we do this that are perhaps the most powerful advertisement for our Lord, in so doing we make straight paths which perhaps allow others to see more easily the living Lord, the worship of whom transcends human religion. *Charles Royden*

Commentary John The Baptist

The Gospels do not offer much biographical detail concerning John the Baptist. Rather, we are given an impression of what John was like, what his preaching was like, and the effect that he had on the people of ancient Israel. The picture we get is of a prophet, i.e. a public preacher with a message from God.

John is portrayed as the fulfilment of prophecies (Matt 3.3 citing Isaiah 40.3). Note that this is a reinterpretation of Isaiah 40.3, which in its own context dealt with the return of the people of Israel from exile in Babylon. In Isaiah, the text emphasizes the way that God was preparing for the people to come home to Israel through the wilderness; Matthew's focus is on a person (i.e. John the Baptist) in the wilderness who is preparing the way for the coming of Jesus the Messiah.

John lived a life of asceticism (denial of the flesh/body) in the wilderness (Matt 3.4). In the Jewish tradition the wilderness symbolizes a place of repentance and purification (e.g. the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years before they were permitted to enter the promised land). In other words, the wilderness symbolizes a place where human beings struggle with the powers that resist God.

John's work consisted of preaching and baptizing (Matt 3.1-2, 5-6). For background to the importance of the river Jordan as a place of cleansing, see the story of Naaman the leper in 2 Kings 5. John's baptism was an innovation: for example, its once and for all character differed from the daily washing for purification that was practiced among the Dead Sea Scrolls community at Qumran.

John's preaching and baptizing focussed on the theme of repentance (Matt 3.1-2, 7-10). Repentance (Greek *metanoia*) is not an instantaneous experience, and it is more than just a matter of emotions, more than just an act of the will: it means turning one's whole life toward God (cf. Joel 2.12-13). According to Matt 3.5, many people responded to John.

John recognized that someone far more powerful than he would come and baptize with the Holy Spirit those he had baptized with water (Matt 3.11-12). The coming of the Holy Spirit was connected with the end of time and the coming of the Messiah, based on Joel 2.28, Isaiah 44.3, Ezekiel 36.26-28.

John the Baptist is an appropriate person to focus on during the season of Advent: during Advent we prepare for the Lord's coming, and of course in the Gospels the story of John the Baptist is all about preparation. But preparation for what ?

John's whole work and his whole ministry was all about getting ready for the Lord's coming.

Of course it is easier to think of the reigning of God as being in some other world - so as not to have to change this world! Matthew used the word Heaven because of a Hebrew reluctance to say the word for God. If the reigning of God was "in Heaven" the urgency of John's preaching would make no sense - nor would the teaching of Jesus! John's urging is that people should, "make the way straight - here and now! Change your attitude - NOW!!" John used words like, "Change your society so that your personal change will make clear your conversion!" John's audience wanted a ritual (bath) and to keep on being selfish - and

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

so he calls them "brood of vipers" and warns of the danger of depending on one's own efforts for salvation (Mt.3:7).

John came to baptise so that people would change their attitude and look for the straight path to which Isaiah refers (Is.40:4). The ritual of washing with water alone would not do it. People have to change their attitude and become less selfish and start to live a radical love. John had announced that the Liberator (the Messiah) was near with his shovel ready to separate the wheat from the chaff (Mt.3:12). Wheat is a source of nourishment and is kept for its value. Chaff is no good as food, and has no other use so it gets thrown out. The chaff, it seems, is an image of selfish people empty of love for others. The wheat is an image of people who are devoted to the needs of others. *Charles Royden*

LECTIONARY NOTES 3

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

From the dream of the future world where God's reign is actively and visibly manifest, the Lectionary now moves to the promise of the Messiah, and the harmony and justice he will bring. Both dreams are essentially one – that God's Reign will take root among us bringing in a world in which the weak and vulnerable are cared for, in which justice prevails and in which all people live in harmony in spite of (or maybe even because of) their differences. Perhaps the word that best sums up the Messianic dream of this week, and which John proclaimed, is the word "shalom" – well-being, peace, salvation, harmony, goodness, justice are all implied in this word. Isaiah proclaims it in the image of predators living in harmony with their prey. The Psalmist uses the word 'shalom' in describing the peaceful refreshed world for which he prays. Paul pictures Jew and Gentile as one celebratory voice offered to God in worship, and John the Baptist, while speaking of judgement, which may seem to be the opposite of shalom, invites people to be ready for the coming of the Messiah who will immerse people in God's Holy Spirit. God's presence and power are available to all, irrespective of title, position or background – this is, perhaps the ultimate shalom!

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: The dream of shalom may seem like a fantasy in a world at war, a world in which so many issues divide us so strongly – "pro-life" or "pro-choice", "liberal" or "conservative", "creationist" or "evolutionist", "capitalist" or "socialist", "pro-gay" or "anti-gay", "rich" or "poor". It's tempting to define the world in clear terms like this, but when we do so, all we do is deepen the enmity between us, and keep us all from knowing and living God's shalom. Ultimately justice is not something that can be achieved by alienation and by taking sides. While there are real evils in the world that must be resisted, it is wise to remember Paul's words that it's not the people we fight so much as the "principalities and powers", and as we embrace a shalom way of being – which includes loving even those we consider to be our enemies – we reflect the light of God's grace and love, and we begin to bring God's shalom into our world as a lived reality. In what ways can you opt out of the polarising habits of your society and embrace a shalom-bringing inclusiveness that welcomes all and that seeks and celebrates common ground wherever it may be found?

LOCAL APPLICATION: In so many ways we attempt to create shalom for ourselves. Unfortunately, though, our attempts are often the exact opposite of what God shows us is the real route to shalom. We think we can find security by preemptive attacks on our enemies, and then we find ourselves more at risk. We think we can find peace by

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

excluding those who challenge and disagree with us, only to find our safe community growing smaller and smaller, until we only have ourselves to agree with (and even that fails sometimes!). We think we can find joy and abundance by amassing money and stuff, only to discover scarcity growing around us, and our planet dying, and the reality of losing it all robs us of any joy we might have known. We think we can find love by turning inward and making our own needs, potential and purpose more important than relationships, or the service of others – even those closest to us – only to find that our self-absorption leaves us alone and empty. We think we can find God by ignoring the realities of our world and escaping to an other-worldly faith, while waiting for a heavenly bliss after death, only to discover that our souls remain dissatisfied and God feels distant and unattainable. If we are to know shalom, we need to change how we do things. We must allow ourselves to be driven to the risky acts of listening, dialogue, hospitality, service, justice and compassion. Then, as we give ourselves to create shalom not just for ourselves but for others, we discover that shalom finds us, and God's reign is truly within us.

A WORD WITH THE CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

An idea from the church in Australia -

Prop - a branch of a gum tree with leaves attached. Ask the children/young people if they have

ever seen the bush after a fire has gone through it. How would they describe it? Someone once described such a scene as looking like a crowd of black skeletons - the trees looked lifeless and branches stuck out in the air without a single leaf left on them. Black and grey - no green at all. Yet - even when they appear dead - because the roots are usually still intact, growth can take place. Therefore, what seems like a miracle takes place just underneath all that charred bark. Immediately under the bark, many eucalypts have an emergency reserve of leaf buds. The changes made in the bark by the fire send a signal to these hidden buds telling them to shoot quickly - which they do and you have the wonderful picture of new shoots appearing out of the black, charred bark. Shoots that quickly grow into branches like this (show branch with leaves). Isaiah the prophet was using an example a bit like that when he described the coming of a new king from the roots of the previous kingship. Isaiah's vision was of a world shaped by justice, righteousness and peace, ruled by one with God's Spirit resting on him - so it is not surprising that, in time, the description came to fit Jesus.

Bushfires are perhaps most likely to occur when the hot north wind blows, but our hymn calls attention to the fact that we celebrate the birth of Christ in the heat of summer - "when the north wind is tossing the leaves..." that is when "we lift up our voices and sing to the Christ child, the heavenly King

SERMON OUTLINE

Matthew 3:1-12 John the Baptist appeared...

God was beginning a new initiative with His people in & through the ministry of John/Baptist after 400 years of prophetic silence.. Who was this magnetic preacher?...

1. A Hermit -1-4: *appeared in the wilderness of Judea* – as prophesied by Isaiah (40.3) - *The voice of one...* Note his:

a) Declaration – *Repent the kingdom of heaven has come near*

The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

b) Dress - *clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt...* He lived simply & ate simply - *locusts and wild honey...*

2. A Hero – 5-6: with the crowds – going both to see him & hear his message - *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.*

3. A Herald – 7-12: of the King – fulfilling in his ministry the Prophecy of old– Isaiah 40.3: *“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*

He truly prepared the way for Jesus...

He truly pointed to the Way- Jesus:- v11 *‘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*

In forthright terms John urges the people to

a) Repent: *for the kingdom of God has come near...*

b) Return: - turn away from sin & turn to God - *“Bear fruit worthy of repentance... Make ready your hearts and minds for the Coming of the Messiah/Christ – prepare to welcome/ worship...*

Norman Porteous

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"New life stirring in and old stump," the Rev. Whitney Rice, *Sermons that Work*, Episcopal Digital Network

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2013/11/21/2-advent-a-2013-2/>

The Lectionary Lab, Advent 2A, the Rev'ds Dr. John Fairless and Delmer Chilton (aka "Two Bubbas and a Bible"), 2013. Lectionary Lab Live

<https://lectionarylab.com/2013/12/02/year-a-the-second-sunday-of-advent-december-8-2013/>

"Not Much But Enough for Me," the Rev. Dr. Stephen Montgomery, Day 1

http://day1.org/2385-not_much_but_enough_for_me

Waiting in Advent

In her book, *Amazing Grace*, author Kathleen Norris learned about waiting and about silence when she visited classrooms in North Dakota. She asked the students to sit still and to be as silent as possible – to listen, and not to make a sound. She then asked them to write about what they experienced in the silence. “It’s scary,” one fifth grader wrote. When Norris asked him why, he said, “It’s like we’re waiting for something – it’s scary.”

<http://aronkramer.blogspot.co.uk/2006/12/sermon-from-sunday-dec-10th-advent-2.html>

Repent!?

I must admit that in all my 22 years of ministry, It has never seriously crossed my mind to begin a sermon by calling my listeners a “brood of vipers!” I could be missing out on a great opportunity in preaching here, but somehow it just doesn’t seem to me to be the most tactful way of communicating my message. Evidently, John the Baptist didn’t have the same seminary courses that I had.

<http://stlukesburlington.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/advent-2-repent.html>

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An Undiluted Prophetic Hope

[Isaiah 11:1-10](#) If I were ever to be on a TV show, I think [Grumpy Old Men](#) might suit me. Not that I would ever be famous enough to be invited, but I can be the sort of person who thinks that [Ebenezer Scrooge](#) was given an unfair press. It's not simply that this is the time of year when Debbie gets out all the Singing Santa toys that she and the children love (and which can drive me mad), it's this Second Sunday in Advent.

You see, the grump in me wonders why it got changed in the current Lectionary. You used to know where you were in the four Sundays of Advent. The first Sunday was about the Advent Hope – not just Christ's original coming but the promise of his appearing again in glory. The second Sunday was about the promise of the Messiah in the Old Testament prophets. Sunday number three introduced you to the man with the extreme diet, John the Baptist. Then on the fourth Sunday it's the Annunciation by Gabriel to Mary.

<http://bigcircumstance.com/2010/12/05/sermon-advent-2-an-undiluted-prophetic-hope/>

CHILDREN

"I Will, With God's Help," Advent 2A, Lesson Plans that Work, Episcopal Digital Network
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/2013/07/09/i-will-with-gods-help/>

Building Shalom, Anna Shirey, Anna's Hosannas, Children's Lesson for Advent 2A
<http://annashosannas.net/Advent-2A.php>

Worshiping with Children, Advent 2A, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/08/year-second-sunday-of-advent-december-8.html>

"Gathering Advent" Fran Woodruff, On The Chancel Steps.
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2013/11/17/gathering/>

Episcopal Church

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2012/11/07/childrens-worship-2-advent-c/>

Faith Formation Journeys

Christmas Devotional Resource - scroll down

<http://faithformationjourneys.blogspot.co.uk/p/childrens-sermons.html>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

- 250* All hail the power of Jesu's name
- 296* Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire
- 297* Come, thou Holy Spirit, come
- 263* Crown him with many crowns
- 481* God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year
- 161 I know a rose-tree springing
- 133* Long ago, prophets knew
- 49 Lord, bring the day to pass

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The Second Sunday of Advent Year A Dec 4, 2016

- 431* Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour
- 636* May the mind of Christ my Saviour
- 135* O Come, O come, Emmanuel
- 197* Songs of thankfulness and praise (omit v.4)

[Hail To The Lord's Anointed](#)

[O Come, O Come, Immanuel](#)

[See How Great A Flame Aspires](#)

[I Cannot Tell Why He Whom Angels Worship](#)

[Everyone Belongs](#)

[Jesus Messiah](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Mighty To Save](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Consuming Fire](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[God With Us](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

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