

Barthol Chapel and Tarves Sunday 6 December 2020

Second Sunday in Advent Worship Materials



Call to Worship for Advent

Place the cloth,
prepare the table;
**look for hope
and light the candle.**

Ring the bells,
bring out the cradle;
**look for peace
birthed in the stable.**

Praise CH4 279 Make way! Make way!
Make way, make way, for Christ the King
In splendour arrives
Fling wide the gates and welcome him
Into your lives.
*Make way, make way, for the king of
Kings
Make way, make way, and let his kingdom
in.*

He comes the broken hearts to heal
The prisoners to free;
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
The blind shall see.

Sing the songs,
through starshine's sparkle;
**look for love:
in manger's marvel.**

Deck the halls
and 'hark!' with angels—
**look for joy:
Come, all ye faithful!**

And those who mourn with heavy hearts
Who weep and sigh,
With laughter, joy and royal crown
He'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him
As Lord of all,
To have no gods before him,
Their thrones must fall!

Peace – The theme for the first Sunday of Advent is peace. You might like to light your own advent candle and say the following prayer,

*A candle burns
The second marker of our Advent journey.
As we continue
May we travel in peace
As we continue
God of journeys, speak to us.*

(Adapted from Signposts through Advent by David Hamflett)

The Word of God:

Isaiah 40:1-11

¹Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

²Speak 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.

³A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

Mark 1:1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight" ',

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And 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. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He 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. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

Reflection

Start at the very beginning, a very good place to start. It's all right I'm not going to burst into song. But most of you will, I'm sure, remember Sister Maria teaching the von Trapp children to sing in the film, the Sound of Music – When you read you begin with ABC. When you sing you begin with Do-re-mi. Whether it is learning to read, or learning to sing, the alphabet or the musical scale form the starting point for a great and wonderful adventure into the world of literature or music.

Today our reading comes from the very beginning of Mark's Gospel. The reading is only 8 verses. And these 8 verses form the starting point for Mark's story – which opens the door to an adventure of a very different kind. Because Mark's story is nothing less than the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark begins his story by taking us out into the wilderness to introduce us to John the Baptist. John the Baptist is the one who has come to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah. John is the voice crying out in the wilderness "Prepare the way of the Lord!" John is the one who dresses in the same way as Elijah, the greatest of the prophets. All of this would have had a special significance for the people for whom Mark first wrote his Gospel. Because it was to the wilderness that the people of God traced their origins after the exodus from slavery in Egypt.

The Exodus was recognised as the story of God doing a new thing. It is by and through God's initiative that the people are led out of slavery in Egypt. It is God who leads them through the wilderness, to freedom and faith. By beginning his story in the wilderness Mark is preparing his listeners to expect a story about the next new thing that God is doing. The story of Jesus Christ the Son of God is the start of a new adventure in faith.

The story that Mark has to tell will include healings and miracles. There will be, amazement and confusion, tears and laughter, ambition and jealousy, grief and fear, suffering and death. Throughout it all people will struggle to understand who Jesus is, until a Roman centurion stands at the foot of a cross, beside the broken body of Jesus and utters those words "Truly this man was God's Son".

And that adventure story with all its ups and downs, with its search for understanding and meaning, is also our story. It is the story of human life. Mark shows us God, in Jesus, embracing that human life and transforming it; Jesus bringing God's own life into our lives so that we may know that our story is part of God's much greater story. And understanding our story in that light makes all the difference not only to the way we see the world around us but also to the way we live our lives.

We will know laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, fear and grief, suffering and death. We may lament what we see around us, we may question the ways of the world, even the ways of God. We may wander from the path. But Mark wants us to see that Jesus, the one who has experienced all these things and more besides is the Son of the God who loves us enough to share our human life that we may share his risen life. And in doing so find the peace and wholeness that comes from a new relationship with God.

It is worth remembering that the thing that gets most in the way of peace is our desire to tread our own path through life. When Jesus Christ who is the Son of God invites us to an

adventure in faith with him, he does not promise that things will be easy. But he does promise us his presence with us in the gift of his Holy Spirit, his forgiveness and peace, his healing and wholeness in the midst of all the challenges we face.

And like the prophets before us, we are challenged with the adventure of preparing the way for God to come. Let me close with a story:

It was Advent and Peter waited for God to come. He prayed every day, using one of the psalms "God show me your face and I shall be saved".

Peter had tried to live a good life. He was now old and looked forward to the coming of God. He continued to work in his paper shop, where he had worked most of his life. Here he heard all sorts of conversations and met many people. A single mum was telling a friend how she did not have enough money to buy presents for her child. When everyone else had gone, Peter said to her, "I heard what you said. I have a few toys on the shelves. They are not selling very well. Go and pick anything you would like." She could hardly believe it for there were some wonderful things on the shelves. As she went away with her arms full, Peter was delighted. His reward was her smile.

Later that day, he caught a young lad stealing a magazine from the shelves. The boy was on his way out with the magazine up his jumper when Peter stopped him. Peter could have called the police or told the boy's parents. But he saw the boy was poor and afraid and he felt sorry for him, "If you want a magazine and have no money, talk with me," he said, "Magazines are soon out of date. I can always find one to give you. You must not help yourself. Take the magazine free and ask me another time". The boy's face changed from a look of fear to a beaming smile. He thanked Peter and ran out of the shop.

An old man came into the shop and was saying how lonely he was since his wife died. This would be his first Christmas on his own – he was not looking forward to it. Peter said, "We were expecting a friend to come for Christmas, and he has said that he cannot make it. We have prepared for his coming. Would you come to us instead? We would love to share Christmas with you". The old man's face lit up into a beautiful smile and he said, "You have made me feel so wanted and I would love to come".

That night Peter prayed his Advent prayer, "Show me your face and I shall be saved". In a dream God spoke to him and said, "Peter, today I came to you and three times you made me smile. Grace and peace be upon you".

Pointers for Prayer

- Remember those suffering from or bereaved by the corona virus
- The NHS
- Give thanks for the work of scientists and researchers on a vaccine and pray for those tasked with the logistics of delivering it
- The governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland and their advisers
- Those negotiating for a Brexit deal
- Businesses struggling and all who are facing redundancy and financial hardship
- Family, friends and neighbours, those most affected by the current restrictions
- Murray Nicol and his family as he is baptised today in Barthol Chapel Kirk.

You might like to close your time of prayer with the Lord's prayer.

Praise CH4 277 Hark the glad sound

Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long
Let every heart exult with joy
And every voice be song!

He comes the prisoners to relieve,
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before him burst
The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken hearts to bind,
The bleeding souls to cure;

And with the treasures of his grace
To enrich the humble poor.

The sacred year has now revolved,
Accepted of the Lord,
When heaven's high promise is fulfilled
And Israel is restored.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's exalted arches ring
With thy most honoured name.

Notices**This Sunday 6 December Barthol Chapel Kirk**

1.00pm Service of Baptism for Murray Nicol

Next Sunday 13 December

9.45am for 10.00am Joint Worship on Zoom (Service commences 10.00am) If you would like to be added to the e-mail list for the link to Sunday's live worship gathering on zoom or join in on your land-line please contact: Rob e-mail sessionclerk@bartholchapel.org or Susanna Tel 851345 or e-mail smbichard@aol.com.

Advent Worship

During the four Sundays of Advent our worship is linked to the traditional themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Over the next week please think about these themes and e-mail Alison with suggestions of objects or images that symbolise for you one of these themes and I will include these in our worship. Also we are still looking for photos (preferably local) to include in prayer powerpoints.

Tuesday 8 December 11.00am Tarves Session Coffee on Zoom

Tuesday 8 December 7.00pm Christmas Bauble Workshop on Zoom – please e-mail VMitchell@churchofscotland.org.uk to register your interest and receive the link.

Wednesday Worship Tarves Church 2.00pm a short act of worship in the Church.

Care in the Community if you are aware of anyone in Tarves who needs help of any kind please contact Ruth 851887.

Pastoral Care Please contact the Minister 01651 851295

Christmas Offerings As we will not be taking our special offerings for others this year you might like to support Christian Aid or Crossreach's Covid -19 Emergency Appeal. Their websites have details of their work and you can donate on-line. Alternatively you may have another charity you would like to support.