

**Barthol Chapel and Tarves Sunday 13 December 2020**

**Third Sunday in Advent Materials for Worship**



**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 286** Tell out my soul

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the  
Lord  
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit  
voice;  
Tender to me the promise of his word;  
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his  
name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his arm  
has done;  
His mercy sure, from age to age the  
same;  
His holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

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!**

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his  
might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to  
flight,  
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.  
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
To children's children and for evermore!

**Love** – the theme for the third Sunday in Advent is love – please take a few moments to think about the things which symbolise love for you.

**The Word of God:**

**Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-9**

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
 because the LORD has anointed me;  
 he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
 to bind up the broken-hearted,  
 to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
 and release to the prisoners;  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour,  
 and the day of vengeance of our God;  
 to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup> to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
 to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
 the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
 the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
 They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
 the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.  
<sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
 they shall raise up the former devastations;  
 they shall repair the ruined cities,  
 the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice,  
 I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
 I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
 and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
<sup>9</sup> Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
 and their offspring among the peoples;  
 all who see them shall acknowledge  
 that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

**John 1:6-8:19-28**

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.....

<sup>19</sup> This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' <sup>23</sup>He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup> Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' <sup>26</sup>John answered

*them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.*

## **Reflection**

The passage from Isaiah printed above is often read at this time of year. And we have come to associate it with Advent. And as a result we tend to read it through the lens of the Christchild. It is Christ who has come to set us free; to heal us and help us, to carry us and to bring us comfort and joy. But this passage from Isaiah is not only about God's yearning to heal the broken human condition. These words also, as pointed out by a former Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Susan Brown, contain a challenge to God's people. We are not only to be recipients of God's love that will eventually lead to Jesus' birth. We are also called to be the bearers and sharers of that love in our own time and place.

Our second reading from John's Gospel shows John the Baptist explaining who he is in relation to Jesus. He himself is not the light of the world but he has come to bear witness to that light. Again, we can look at this passage in two ways. First and foremost, it is a passage giving us a picture of who John is – the one who is preparing the way for Jesus. But the passage also challenges us to identify who we are in relation to Jesus. How can we spread the light in these times, times that are dark and difficult for so many in our own communities but also in the far wider world around us? How can we expand our understanding and vision of Christmas, to light up the whole world in every corner?

When we take these two readings together, they present us with some questions that we need to ask ourselves. What is it that we are doing to work with God to bring about healing and justice? That might be serving the Care in the Community project. It might be supporting the work of Crossreach or Christian Aid. What are we saying in God's name, that helps to bring hope? It might be looking after the person next door who is self-isolating. How are we working to bring peace and joy? It might be by helping with the preparation for a netful of angels. Who are our hands reaching out to and our hearts opening up to in love?

## **Pointers for Prayer**

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- 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
- For patience and wisdom when we are tired with the way in which our lives are restricted

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

**Praise CH4 314** Child in the manger

Child in the manger

Infant of Mary;

Outcast and stranger, Lord of all!

Child who inherits

All our transgressions,

All our demerits

On him fall.

Once the most holy

Child of salvation

Gently and lowly

Lived below;

Now as our glorious

Mighty Redeemer,

See him victorious

O'er each foe.

Prophets foretold him,

Infant of wonder;

Angels behold him

On his throne;

Worthy our Saviour

Of all their praises

Happy for ever

Are his own.

**Blessing****Notices****Next Sunday 20 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](mailto:sessionclerk@bartholchapel.org) or Susanna Tel 851345 or e-mail [smbichard@aol.com](mailto:smbichard@aol.com).

**4.00pm Lessons and Carols on Zoom** – usual link for all services

**Christmas Services** – we will be using the usual Zoom link.

**Thursday 24 December Christmas Eve** 7.00pm Nativity

**Friday 25 December Christmas Day** 10.00am Christmas Celebration (finishes 10.30am)

**Tuesday 15 December 7.00pm Second Christmas Bauble Workshop on Zoom** – please e-mail [VMitchell@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto: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.