

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Second Sunday of Advent

Year B



Prepare the way of the Lord

The Parish Mass

with healing ministries

Sunday 10th December 2023

10.15 am

Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church

Mark begins his gospel account with two Christological titles: Jesus is the Christ and Son of God. Then he introduces us to Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist.

John appears in the desert and announces the coming of one far greater than he who will pour out the gift of the Spirit. He urges the people to prepare themselves for the imminent coming of the Saviour by a radical conversion that finds symbolic expression in baptism.

John wore a garment made of camel-skin, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Why these details about his clothes and diet? Because this is how Elijah was clothed (2 Kings 1.8). Mark is telling us that John is that 'Elijah' who was to come.

It is our custom to spend some time in quiet preparation before the liturgy begins, and save further conversation until we meet socially for refreshments afterwards. The following reflection, based on today's themes, may be found helpful:

Reflection

John the Baptist was a prophet.
We require prophets to live what they preach.
When there is a wide gap between the message the prophet is preaching
and the kind of life he is living,
a shadow is cast over the authenticity of the message.
John the Baptist was a living example of what he preached.
Lord, we have the joy of belonging to your Kingdom.
Grant that we may live in such a way
that the blessings of the Kingdom will be evident in our lives.

Setting

Mass of the Altar of Life (Kyries only) *David Halls (born 1963)*

Missa de Angelis *plainsong*



Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

§ *Please stand at the sound of the bell*

The Advent Prose

1. *Choir*
2. *All*



Drop down, ye hea-vens from a - bove, and let the skies pour down right - eous - ness.

Choir We have sinned, and are as an unclean thing,
and we all do fade as a leaf:
and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away;
thou hast hid thy face from us:
and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Hymn

The procession enters from the West End

All **On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
come then and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings!**

**Then cleansed be every Christian breast,
And furnished for so great a guest!
Yea, let us each our heart prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.**

**For thou art our salvation, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward;
Without thy grace our souls must fade,
And wither like a flower decayed.**

**Stretch forth thine hand to heal our sore,
And make us rise, to fall no more;
Once more upon thy people shine,
And fill the world with love divine.**

**All praise, eternal Son, to thee
Whose advent sets thy people free,
Whom, with the Father, we adore,
And Spirit blest, for evermore. Amen.**

Words *Jordanis oras praevia* Charles Coffin (1676-1749)
translated by John Chandler (1806-1876)

Music Winchester New
Adapted from a chorale in *Musicalisches Hand-Buch*
Hamburg 1690

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

The second purple candle is lit

All **Lord Jesus, light of the world,
the prophets said you would bring peace
and save your people in trouble.
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas
and show all the world God's love. Amen.**

All † In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Greeting

All May the light and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you.
and also with you.

The service is introduced

Invitation to Confession

A voice cries out in the wilderness.
'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight.'
So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.

Silence is kept

Confession

All **Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Kyries

Heavenly Father, you call us to repent of our sins:
soften our proud and stubborn hearts.

All **Kyrie eleison.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you declared the forgiveness of God:
teach us to forgive one another.

All **Christe eleison.**

Holy Spirit, you search our hearts and show us the truth:
direct us in your way of righteousness.

All **Kyrie eleison.**

Absolution

May the God of love bring you back to himself,
forgive † you your sins,
and assure you of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray.

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 hingered
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.

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Reader A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak 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.
A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every 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.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

and all people shall see it together,
 for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'
 A voice says, 'Cry out!'
 And I said, 'What shall I cry?'
 All people are grass,
 their constancy is like the flower of the field.
 The grass withers, the flower fades,
 when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
 surely the people are grass.
 The grass withers, the flower fades;
 but the word of our God will stand for ever.
 Get you up to a high mountain,
 O Zion, herald of good tidings;
 lift up your voice with strength,
 O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
 lift it up, do not fear;
 say to the cities of Judah,
 'Here is your God!'
 See, the Lord God comes with might,
 and his arm rules for him;
 his reward is with him,
 and his recompense before him.
 He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
 he will gather the lambs in his arms,
 and carry them in his bosom,
 and gently lead the mother sheep.

Isaiah 40.1-11

This is the word of the Lord.

All

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Response Stephen Moore

Musical notation for the response: A single line of music in 3/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of the following notes: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). The lyrics 'Show us O Lord, your mercy.' are written below the notes, with hyphens under the final three notes.

Lord, you were gracious to your land;
 you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
 You forgave the offence of your people
 and covered all their sins. **Response**

I will listen to what the Lord God will say,
for he shall speak peace to his people and to the faithful,
that they turn not again to folly.
Truly, his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
Mercy and truth are met together,
righteousness and peace have kissed each other; **Response**

Truth shall spring up from the earth
and righteousness look down from heaven.
The Lord will indeed give all that is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness shall go before him
and direct his steps in the way. **Response**

Psalms 85.1-2, 8-13

Holy Gospel

Acclamation

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

All **Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
Glory to you, O Lord.

All

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight”’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And 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. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a

leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He 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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

Mark 1.1-8

All This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

The Homily

At the end, silence for reflection

Affirmation of Faith

All We say together in faith:
**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.**

All We believe in God the Father, who created all things:
**for by his will they were created
and have their being.**

All We believe in God the Son, who was slain:
**for with his blood, he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.**

All We believe in God the Holy Spirit:
**the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Priest God is faithful in all his words and loving in all his deeds.
Let us pray to him with confidence for the needs of the Church,
the world, and our own needs.

After each petition ...

All Lord, change us:
and we shall be changed.

After the final petition

Priest Almighty and ever-living God,
take the blindness from our eyes,
the weakness from our wills,
and the hardness from our hearts,
so that through the coming of your Son,
we may know the happiness of those who walk in your way.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

God will speak peace to his people,
to those who turn to him in their hearts.

All The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

The Offertory

Hymn

The Gifts are presented and the altar is prepared

A collection is taken. Please give as you are able.

All

**Hills of the North, rejoice,
Echoing songs arise,
Hail with united voice
Him who made earth and skies:
He comes in righteousness and love,
He brings salvation from above.**

**Isles of the Southern seas,
Sing to the listening earth,
Carry in every breeze
Hope of a world's new birth:
In Christ shall all be made anew,
His word is sure, his promise true.**

**Lands of the East, arise,
He is your brightest morn,
Greet him with joyous eyes,
Praise shall his path adorn:
The God whom you have longed to know
In Christ draws near, and calls you now.**

**Shores of the utmost West,
Lands of the setting sun,
Welcome the heavenly guest
In whom the dawn has come:
He brings a never-ending light
Who triumphed o'er our darkest night.**

**Shout, as you journey on,
Songs be in every mouth,
Lo, from the North they come,
From East and West and South:
In Jesus all shall find their rest,
In him the sons of earth be blest.**

Words Editors, based on
Charles Edward Oakley (1832-1865)

Music Little Cornard
Martin Shaw (1875-1958)

Invitation to Prayer

Pray, my brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord, be pleased 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 Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

All Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world
to open for us the way of salvation.
Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,
we now watch for the day
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.

And so we join our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven
to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and saying:

<i>Choir</i>	Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis.	<i>Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might. heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.</i>
	Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine. Osanna in excelsis	<i>Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.</i>

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way,
after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:

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.

All Praise to you, Lord Jesus:
**Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life:
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts
in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit,
inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:
**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

The Lord's Prayer

God guides the humble in the right path.
Let us pray with confidence as Jesus our Saviour has taught us:

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

All Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Agnus Dei

Choir Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
 miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
 miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
 dona nobis pacem.

*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.*

Invitation to Communion

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

Giving of Communion

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

*Baptised persons who are communicant members of other Churches
are warmly invited to receive Holy Communion.*

*Alternatively, if you wish to receive a blessing, please bring this booklet
with you as a sign.*

Spiritual Communion – *for those at home*

Act of Reception

All In union, blessed Jesus,
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,

(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)

I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,
for creation and all the blessings of this life,
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,
and resurrection,
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,
I pray you to come into my heart.
I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,
my soul, and my mind.
Let nothing separate me from you;
let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,
I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.
Amen.

§ *The **healing ministries** of the laying on of hands and the sacrament of anointing are being offered in the Lady Chapel*

Motet

The truth from above

Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

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.

All

**Generous God,
you feed us at your heavenly table.
Set us on fire with your Spirit
that when Christ comes again
we may shine like lights before his face;
who with you and the Spirit lives for ever.
Amen.**

Hymn

All

**We have a gospel to proclaim,
Good news for men in all the earth,
The gospel of a Saviour's name:
We sing his glory, tell his worth.**

**Tell of his birth at Bethlehem,
Not in a royal house or hall,
But in a stable dark and dim:
The Word made flesh, a light for all.**

**Tell of his death at Calvary,
Hated by those he came to save,
In lonely suffering on the cross:
For all he loved, his life he gave.**

**Tell of that glorious Easter morn,
Empty the tomb, for he was free:
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share his victory.**

**Tell of his reign at Gods right hand,
By all creation glorified:
He sends his Spirit on his Church,
To live for him, the Lamb who died.**

**Now we rejoice to name him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel message we proclaim;
We sing his glory, tell his worth.**

Words Edward Burns (born 1938)

Music Fulda
William Gardiner in *Sacred Melodies* 1815

Notices for the Community

¶ Sending Out

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

All May your path be illuminated by the light of a steadfast faith.
Amen.

All May the Lord's mercy overshadow you and his love surround you.
Amen.

All May you live in such a way that your life will be an example for others.
Amen.

All And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

The Dismissal

All As we await our coming Saviour,
go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Organ Voluntary

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme BWV 645 *J S Bach (1685-1750)*

§ *The procession departs*

§ *Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the organ voluntary*

- § Refreshments are being served in the parish centre, please do join us
- § If you are a newcomer to the parish, please introduce yourself to the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.

This afternoon at 4.00 pm
Christingle Celebration

This evening at 5.30 pm
Congregational Evensong

Collection – responding to God’s generosity

We invite you to make a monetary offering towards the ministry and mission of St Matthew’s Church. You may do so using any of the following methods:

Cash, cheques, stewardship envelopes - using the receptacle provided at the back of church. If you are a taxpayer please use the envelopes in the chairs, and fill out the details in order that our parish may also benefit from the Gift Aid (an extra 25p for every pound given) associated with your giving.

Contactless giving - using the terminal provided. Just press the button for the amount you wish to give - £5, £10, or £20, and then hold your bank card over the reader.

Giving on your smart phone - using the QR code printed below. It gives you the option of any amount, Gift Aid, and making a regular payment.

Giving online - click the donate button on the parish website or Facebook page and follow the instructions.

Your generosity is gratefully received. Thank you.



*Our thanks are due to Anonymous Donor 10
who has generously financed
the production of this week's service booklet.*

**Please take this booklet home
as an aid to prayer and reflection during the week,
and then re-cycle it.**

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St Matthew's Parish Church, The Parish Office, 27A The Drive, Kingsley, Northampton NN1 4RY
Tel: 01604 791251 www.stmatthews-northampton.org.uk office@stmatthews-northampton.org.uk