



A7 Centre of Mission
St Peter's, St John's & St Cuthbert's Scottish Episcopal Churches
6th December, second Sunday of Advent Newsletter

Collect for Second Sunday of Advent

Stir up our hearts, Lord, to prepare the way of your only-begotten Son: that, in his coming, we might serve you with our hearts made pure; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Advent Prayers Advent one



A candle burns, the sign of our hope.
God of hope, come to us again this Advent.
May your hope live with in us,
burning as a light in our lives. Amen

Isaiah 40:1-11 New International Version Comfort for God's People

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD^[a]; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will 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 like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever." You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Mark 1:1-8 New International Version John the Baptist Prepares the Way

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"—"a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



It All Starts Here – Sermon on Mark 1:1-8 for Advent

It all starts here. From what we can tell, Mark's version of the story of Jesus was probably the earliest to be written. Mark is writing to Gentiles. Specifically, he is writing to Gentile believers, followers of The Way.

Mark begins his story as abruptly as he will end it. Suddenly Jesus simply appears as a full-grown adult in the middle of the wilderness. But before Jesus can appear, someone has to prepare the way for him. Mark's good news story begins with John the Baptizer.

To get to John, we have to go back to Isaiah's prophecy we heard earlier today, in our Old Testament reading. And for that Old Testament's prophecy to make sense, we have to know why Mark starts his story with Isaiah. The answer is right there in the first verse. Mark tells us this is "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God*."

Mark gets right to the point. This story is about the Son of God. From our vantage point, more than 2000 years later, this might not seem so startling, but for the people hearing Mark's words for the first time, it was news indeed. And it was *good* news.

First, he looks back in time to the prophet Isaiah. He looks back to a time when Israel was lost in the wilderness, hoping for deliverance. Then he draws his audience into his own present time, describing the wilderness ministry of John the Baptizer, whose call to repentance and call to baptism are one and the same thing.

By the eighth verse, John is pointing Mark's listeners to the future, when One who follows him through the wilderness will baptize them with the Holy Spirit. Mark connects the past, present, and future of this wilderness journey through the prophetic cry, "Prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!"

But John's baptism, as far as we can tell, was something new. The ritual washing for purification that was required of anyone entering the temple was nothing like this baptism John performed in the Jordan River.

We think of baptism as a sign of responding to God's saving grace already at work in our lives. It is a covenant that binds us into the life of Christ's church after we have accepted God's grace for ourselves, or on behalf of our children.

But John's baptism was something different. The call to repent and the call to be baptized were the same invitation, and this invitation was urgent. "One is coming," John announced. "I'm here to build the road for the one who will come after me. The road has to be straight. It has to be true. *We are that road.*"

John's call to baptism was a call to come down into the water, to be immersed completely so that all those sins being confessed could be washed away in the forgiveness of the One who would be coming soon, the very Son of God. "I baptize you with water," John said, "but one comes after me who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Some of us have heard this story many times. It isn't news to us any more. We forget just how amazing God's grace really is. We think we know how the story ends, so we stop paying attention. But remember Mark's title for this story? He didn't call it "The Life Of The Son of God, From Start To Finish." He didn't call it "All You Need To Know About Jesus the Christ." He called it, "The **Beginning** of the Good News." He wasn't just referring to the first few verses of his story. The whole book is called "**The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**" It all starts here.

Through the voice of John the Baptizer, and all the prophets who went before him, Mark is calling us to turn away from whatever is keeping us out of the water. He's calling us to dive into the river of God's grace, to be forgiven of all our sins, and to be made whole. The *beginning* of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was written to be read aloud. This Good News was meant to be shared. And the story isn't finished. As we share the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we also continue that story, by participating in it. It all starts here. Whenever we gather at Christ's Table, whenever we remember the poor, the hungry, the sick, the imprisoned, the least of these, whenever we tell someone else of the way God has changed us, we continue the story, we proclaim the Good News that Jesus is the Christ, the very Son of God.

This is the beginning. It all starts here.

Intercessions for 2nd Sunday of Advent



Give us now a sense of your presence Lord, as we bring our prayers and requests to you, and enable us to open our hearts and minds to you. We seek to put aside our busy rushing, and to sense that awe and wonder which comes from an awareness that we are in your presence. Dearest Lord, for us you humbled yourself and lived a human life. We know that you understand our worries and fears, and so we pray trusting in your willingness to share our concerns for ourselves and others.

An Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus forgive us when we live our lives without trusting in your promise that you will come again. Help us to be watchful and prayerful, and living in such a sense of expectation that we use our time modelling our lives on your example. Help us to hear afresh the challenge of John the Baptist to make our lives ready for your coming. May we be filled with an expectancy which causes us to make ourselves ready this Christmas for you to make your home with us. We seek afresh to straighten our crooked paths and may our lives holy places fit for our King.

A prayer for our world

Heavenly Father, our world is facing enormous problems which seem of such magnitude that we cannot easily imagine how we can live at peace. Global terrorism, economic crisis, environmental challenge and poverty and suffering which in some countries we seem powerless to bring to an end. Especially we pray for all of those affected by the terrorist attacks in Mumbai and for all of those affected in South Africa by the cholera epidemic in Zimbabwe. We pray for those who have no daily bread and we are humbled when we seek to possess more, when so many have so little. When we are faced with world problems which are of such enormity, help us never to give up hope, but to place our trust in you for the future.

A prayer for our communities

Lord Jesus you lived an ordinary life in Nazareth, with human parents, brothers and sisters. You understand the difficulties faced in families. We pray for all of those involved in providing support for troubled families and strengthening our community life. Especially we pray this week for those engaged in supporting families. We pray for social workers, those who struggle often with poor resources and lack of adequate funding to provide social welfare. Help us to care more for each other so that the vulnerable are supported and protected. As we draw closer to Christmas we think of those who are concerned about money worries, those who have no homes or who fear losing their homes through lack of finance. In whatever difficulties we face, may our eyes be drawn to your presence amongst us and may we seek your strength to provide the answer to our needs.

A prayer for our spiritual leaders

Lord God, John the Baptist called the people to change their lives and make themselves ready for the coming of your son. Raise up we pray, prophetic voices in our own time. Enable our souls to discern the authentic voices which draw us closer to you. Give us courage to reject those voices which pander to our selfish desires and speak words devoid of your challenge to real commitment. We pray for all those who teach and preach, those who minister to congregations to bring your Gospel truth to life in human hearts. May they be as unwavering as your servant John, as fearless in proclaiming the truth and as willing to suffer for being faithful and true. Enable our spiritual leaders to recognise the validation of their ministry not in the realisation of human ambition, but in the spiritual peace which comes from serving you.

A prayer for ourselves

Lord Jesus we often pray that your kingdom would come. So we ask that your reign in our lives would flourish and grow. Strengthen us especially at this busy time, that we might make time for preparation. In the midst of the rush of life, help us to find inner quietness and an awareness of your presence. Let this Christmas be a time when we concern ourselves not so much with material presents, but rather our spiritual blessings.

A prayer for those sick or troubled

Saviour, may your blessing be upon all those who are in pain or sickness, those who are anxious or troubled. You are always present with us, even when sometimes you seem far away. You are with us when we pass through dark places, close by our side. In our pains and sorrows, in desolate times when we feel perplexed and forsaken, help us to look upon your cross, to see the depth of your love for us. When we are wounded in body or mind, help us to see your wounds and be mindful that you carry our pain. Sustain us in times of suffering and brings us through the valleys of darkness into the light of your presence.

A prayer for those who have been bereaved

Give rest, dear saviour, to the souls of those who have gone from our lives to meet with you. May they no longer have pain or sorrow, but only life eternal at rest in your presence.

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



As part of the ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) will be broadcasting video coverage of Eucharistic services via its website, social media channels and YouTube channel. The web page is located at www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship. For those who are not online the Archbishop of Canterbury has set up a Freephone Daily Hope service of hymns, prayers and readings. It is available 24 hours a day on 0800 8048044

TV and Radio Sunday Worship: BBC RADIO SCOTLAND – 7.30am Acts of Worship BBC RADIO 4 - 08:10am Morning Worship BBC 1 TV – 1.15pm Songs of Praise BBC Radio 4 Longwave – 9.45am Morning Service (Mon-Fri)

Those who enjoyed BBC Scotland's worship offering **Reflections At The Quay** when it was introduced at this start of lockdown will be pleased to know that a second series has been commissioned, starting from Sunday 6 December.

Join Pip this week at Holy Trinity at <https://www.holytrinitymelrose.org/> and click on the link - Holy Trinity YouTube channel. 11.00am <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJkxEqnglnze4SeN4I54Ecw>

St John's Selkirk now has their weekly Sunday services on their YouTube channel, with several (different) familiar voices each week, music, inspirational quotes and images

at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9ITNAH6VHZkqM0NiH6Vt9w> available from 10am each Sunday morning..



11am to 11:30 every Wednesday morning.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87979280424?pwd=UEJzRXk0UFpVcnJuaUVZTzJvaE92UT09>

Meeting ID: 879 7928 0424 Password: 023545 Host: Tim Hatton



Bible Studies hosted on Zoom - all are welcome. Wednesday 7:30pm & Thursday 10:30am hosted by John Marsden Follow this

link <https://zoom.us/j/7538094986?pwd=Q0x4YVvk2b3Y5eEt0VkoXSOZWWVWxGUT09>

or use this information to open a Zoom meeting: Meeting ID: 753 809 4986 Password: 751474



Communion for the Homebound

Home Communion is only available to those people can't come out or get to church for self-isolation reasons. Please book through Sheena then Simon will contact to arrange a time.

Reserved Sacrament is still suspended until further notice due to corona virus restrictions.



opening for communal worship from September.

St John's are overjoyed their first service in church will be in Sunday 6th December at 10.30 am.

St Peter's 10.30am services on 1st and 4th Sundays will be Communion with Simon or other clergy. 2nd & 3rd Sundays will be Service of the Word. Thursday mornings will be a Said Communion service.

St Cuthbert's 10.30am services on 2nd & 3rd Sundays will be Communion, 1st & 4th Sundays Service of the Word. Wednesdays at 11.00am will be Said Holy Communion. Please remember to bring a face covering to wear unless you have health issues and the service booklet and newsletter which contains the readings etc for the week.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE FOR THE SERVICE AT ANY OF THE A7 CHURCHES PLEASE BE READY TO FILL IN THE FORM FOR GOVERNMENT TRACK AND PROTECT.

Spiritual Communion

Here is a prayer that can be used at 10.30 on Sundays when Simon will be celebrating the Eucharist

For an Act of spiritual Communion, the following prayer -

My Jesus,

I believe that you are present in the most Holy Sacrament.

I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you.

Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.



St Peter's Christmas Cards

As we can't have our usual greetings banner at the back of St Peter's this year we are planning a hand delivery to our congregation in Galashiels. If you would like to have cards collected and delivered please let Karen or Sheena know. If possible please drop your cards into the box at church by 15th December – if you aren't able to do this let us know and someone will collect them before 15th December. After 15th December you will need to send cards by Royal Mail. All cards collected for St Peter's will be hand delivered before Christmas Eve.

St John's and St Cuthbert's should have their own arrangements so please contact someone from your own congregation.



To Messy Church and Sunday Squad Families

Happy Advent - the season of preparation before Christmas.

Hopefully you will all have the details of the Christingle services and sheep hunt. If not let Karen know and she will get them over to you.

The Advent Angels are out, waiting for a home too.



To Liz Watrett on Friday 4th December. Best wishes from us all.

A7 Centre of Mission

Hello Everyone

Simon would like to know from your own understanding of what is the A7 centre of Mission and what is it all about?

Please e mail or wright down and return to Sheena as e mail smstcg1945@gmail.com or talk to Simon or Tim when you see them.

many thanks Sheena



Just to let you know Patricia Maitland-Cullen is back in hospital

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

Priest in charge of St Peter's, St John's & St Cuthbert's Rev Simon Cake 07710523856 cakekands@btinternet.com

St Peter's pastoral support contact Monica Reynolds 01896 757114 monica@tempelstowe.com

St Peter's prayer support Muriel Lounsbach 01896 831418 gordon.lounsbach@btinternet.com

Tim Hatton (A7 Church Army) 07784872307 tim.w.hatton@gmail.com

St Cuthbert's pastoral and prayer contact Sue Crozier 01450 376499 susancrozier17@yahoo.co.uk

St John's pastoral and prayer contact Margaret Moyes mmoyes2@gmail.com

S	M	E	S	S	E	N	G	E	R		RIVER
T	S	L	A	D	N	A	S	E	E		ISAIAH
S	T	E	M	S	I	T	P	A	B		MESSANGER
U	R	W	N	S	P	E	S	R	O		WILDERNESS
C	A	F	A	R	N	I	E	E	O		BAPTISM
O	P	I	S	T	E	T	R	V	K		REPENTANCE
L	A	T	A	N	E	D	E	I	A		CAMELSKIN
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Advent Prayers



Advent one

A candle burns, the sign of our hope.
God of hope, come to us again this Advent.
May your hope live with in us,
burning as a light in our lives. Amen



Advent two

A candle burns, the sign of your Word.
God of the prophets, come to us again this
Advent.
May your Word be a lamp to our feet
and a light on our path. Amen



Advent three

A candle burns, the sign of our
faith.
God of the Baptising One,
come to us again this Advent.
May we have a faith that renews our lives.
May we live in the light of your promises. Amen



Advent four

A candle burns, the sign of your love.
God of Mary, come to us again this Advent.
May the light of your love
be born anew in us. Amen



Christmas Day

A candle burns, the sign of your presence.
God among us, born as one of us,
may we live in the light of your presence,
the Light who gives life to all. Amen

Please keep this page for the season of Advent.

Advent candle song

Light one candle
Burning slow
Advent weeks of waiting
Three to go
Mary's waiting
Joseph too
Waiting for the baby
Coming soon.

Light two candles
Burning slow
Advent weeks of waiting
Two to go
Wise men watching
For a star
Going on a journey
In the dark

Light three candles
Burning slow
Advent weeks of waiting
One to go
Shepherds listening
In the night
Will they hear the angels
Sing tonight

Light four candles
Burning slow
Soon it will be Christmas
For me and you
One white candle
Christmas Day
Welcome, baby Jesus
Come and stay

