



St Benedict's Episcopal Church
Los Osos, California
~ Tending Mind and Soul ~

The Second Sunday of Advent
December 5, 2021 ~ 8:00 AM SERVICE

Whoever you are and wherever you are on your faith journey, there's a warm welcome for you here!

Officiant: *Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.*

People: *Glory to God for ever and ever!*

All: *Holy and Life-Giving Spirit, You know our innermost thoughts even before they break through into consciousness; You teach us how to pray. Breathe your breath into our hearts and minds this morning. Prepare us for worship, that our thoughts may turn to you and our hearts bow down in grateful praise of God - Creator, Word and Holy Spirit, Amen.*

Canticle D

A Song of the Wilderness

Isaiah 35:1-7,10

*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, *
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
It shall blossom abundantly, *
and rejoice with joy and singing.
They shall see the glory of the Lord, *
the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weary hands, *
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to the anxious, "Be strong, do not fear!" *
Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you."
Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, *
and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.
Then shall the lame leap like a deer, *
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness *
and streams in the desert;
The burning sand shall become a pool *
and the thirsty ground, springs of water.
The ransomed of God shall return with singing, *
with everlasting joy upon their heads.
Joy and gladness shall be theirs, *
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Collect of the Day

Officiant: God be with you

People: *And also with you.*

Officiant: Let us pray.

All: *Lord of the wilderness way, whose word scours our smooth evasions: take us on the unbending road to the raw center of our world with a cry of invitation and the call of sudden grace; through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. Amen.*

Prayers for an Inclusive Church © 2009 Steven Shakespeare

The Readings from Holy Scripture

[A period of silence is kept following each reading.]

Baruch 5:1-9

— *A reading from the book of Baruch*

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven. For God will give you evermore the name, "Righteous Peace, Godly Glory." Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look toward the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

— *Hear What the Spirit is Saying to God's People.*

Canticle 16

The Song of Zechariah

Luke 1: 68-79

Blessed be the God of Israel; who has come to the people and set them free.
Who has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of David.

Through the holy prophets God has promised of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us.
God promised to show mercy to our forbearers and to remember this holy covenant.

This was the oath sworn to our father Abraham,
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship God without fear, holy and righteous in God's sight
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before God to prepare the way,
To give the people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Philippians 1:3-11

— *A Reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians*

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

— *Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.*

Luke 3:1-6

— *A Reading from Luke's Gospel.*

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

— *Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.*

~ ~ ~ Reflections on the Readings ~ ~ ~

Prayers of the People

Wherever we are, in the wilderness, the countryside, or the city, God, you are there. That our hearts may be stirred up in thanksgiving for the life you have given us, let us pray, saying: God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the gifts of creation, for the sun that lights our day and the moon and stars that shelter the night: May our eyes be open to the beauty around us, the subtle changes in the sky, the delicate coating of soil from which breaks forth our food and flowers and in which animals make their home. Help us to protect and nurture your creation around us and ever proclaim its wonders. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the church in every place: May we be ever mindful of the richness of the family of the church, the persons next to us in the pew, those in our neighboring churches, the national, international, and ecumenical church of every race, nation and economic circumstance. Let us give thanks for the web of friendship and trust that you give to those who are called the friends of Christ. God, in your mercy, ***hear our prayer.***

For those in authority: Let us pray for Christians who witness in places hostile to the gospel, and let us be thankful for our freedom to practice our faith. Let us pray for the leaders of nations that Christ may transform strangers into friends that all may see your salvation. God, in your mercy, ***hear our prayer.***

For this community in our joys and sorrows: Let us remember those who have gone before us, those who have sacrificed for us. Help us to look for what is below the obvious, and from this depth to reach out to others. Help us to know the joy that is mingled even with our utmost grief. Let us give thanks for this gathering of God's people and for the renewal of life we are given. God, in your mercy, ***hear our prayer.***

For those at greatest risk among us: Let us pray for those lonely, rejected, or oppressed, for the sick and those who struggle to regain their strength, for those among us with the longest memories to link us to the past, and for the newborn, in whose baptism our baptism is again renewed. May all in any need receive God's mercy, remembering especially those for whom our prayers have been asked and those who are in our hearts...

[Prayers from the bidding book are read.

The people may add additional prayers silently or aloud.]

God, in your mercy, ***hear our prayer.***

Celebrant: *Lord, gather up our prayers with those of all your people in every place, and as you prepare the way, making every valley filled and every mountain brought low in blessing and adoration, guide us to Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Intercessions for the Christian People © 1990 Liturgical Press

Confession of Sin

Officiant *Let us confess our sins to God.*

All: ***God of all mercy,***
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
the evil done on our behalf,
and the good that we have left undone.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.

May the All-Compassionate God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

The Peace

Officiant The peace of Christ be always with you.
People *And also with you.*

The Lord's Prayer

Officiant *And as our Savior Christ teaches us, we now pray:*

All *Eternal Spirit,
Life-Giver, Pain-Bearer, Love Maker,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The Hallowing of your Name echo through the universe!
The Way of your Justice be followed by the people of the world!
Your Heavenly Will be done by all created beings!
Your Commonwealth of Peace and Freedom sustain our
 hope and come on earth!
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
 now and forever. Amen.*

New Zealand Prayer Book

The General Thanksgiving

Officiant *All-compassionate God, Father of all mercies,
we your humble servants give you thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages.*

All *Amen.*

[We pause for a moment of silence before joining in our final prayer]

Officiant Let us pray together:

All *Father-Mother God,
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.*

Church of Ireland

The Blessing

Officiant **M**ay the God who brings heaven close to earth
give truth to our judgment and flame to our longing
that our hearts might be ready to be born again in love;
and may the blessing of God, Creator, Word, and Spirit be among us
and remain with us always. *Amen.*

Prayers for an Inclusive Church © 2009 Steven Shakespeare

Announcements

The Dismissal.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Let us go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!