



Weekly devotions, prayers and news
Second Sunday of Advent
4 December 2022

Advent is a season of sharp contrast. As we begin the mad rush to get all our Christmas preparations in place, we also try to remember the invitation to wait quietly for Christ's return. In Sunday's reading from Isaiah, the contrast between the vision of peace and harmony in the whole of God's creation and the reality of life could not be starker, not only for Isaiah, prophesying during a time of devastation and desolation for the people of Israel, but for us all today. His vision of a tiny shoot springing up from the stump of Jesse, signalling new life, would change everything and bring justice, righteousness and shalom to the whole of creation, in a way far beyond human imagining. Isaiah's vision is a picture of the future that God has planned for his creation, bringing a message of hope that, in God's time, all will be well. A hope which will only be realised if we chose to respond, by the way we treat one another and by our interaction with the world around us. As heirs of the root of Jesse, we are called to be signs to the world today; a people set apart to live as Isaiah envisioned and revealed to us in the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Jane & Brian

Church website: www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

Second Sunday of Advent (4th December 2022)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

Readers: Gerry Larner & Anthony Van der Willigen

9.45 Family Eucharist *(in church & online)*

Readers: Kate Berry & Isobel Simmonds; Intercessor: Isobel Simmonds

Hymns: 37, 46, 45, 42, 41

11.15 Family Praise

Services during the week:

Wednesday: 10.30 Holy Communion (C. Worship) *(in the Committee Room, The old School)*

Readings: Isaiah 40: 25-end; Matthew 11: 28-end

Thursday: 9.00 Holy Communion (Iona/Celtic) *(in the Committee Room, The Old School)*

Readings: Isaiah 41: 13-20; Matthew 11: 11-15

Friday: 11.00 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) *Readings: Second Sunday of Advent*

(in the Committee Room, The Old School)

Next Sunday: Third Sunday of Advent (11th December 2022)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

9.45 Family Eucharist *(in church & online)*

6.00 CTF Carol Service

For services live on Zoom: Click the blue link on the front page of the church website

The Collect for Second Sunday of Advent

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 hindered 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. **Amen.**

The Post Communion Prayer:

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.**

Isaiah 11: 1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Romans 15: 4-13

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name'; and again he says, 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people'; and again, 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him'; and again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3: 1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."' Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

A thought:

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance." Matthew 3:7-8

This was both an intense and yet very life changing encounter. It was intense in that John the Baptist, who had become quite popular and respected and was considered a great prophet, spoke harshly toward the Pharisees and Sadducees. "You brood of vipers!" he says. This was not the way the Pharisees and Sadducees were normally spoken to.

John speaks this way because it was the truth. These religious leaders were not leading anyone closer to God. One only needs to ponder all that Jesus would eventually say to the Pharisees and Sadducees to understand what kind of people these religious leaders had become.

They needed to be humbled. And there is nothing more humbling than sincerely repenting of one's sins in a public way. Notice that John does not dismiss the leaders outright. Rather, he requires of them "evidence" of their repentance.

Why? Because of the spiritual damage these men did to the people of Israel on account of their pride, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, love of public honours, condemnation of others, etc. They had so distorted the faith and through repentance then some good fruits would flow from their lives as a sign that they had changed. Though this is a tall order for the Pharisees and Sadducees, it's the way to holiness for them.

A prayer for this time of Vacancy:

Send us your Holy Spirit at this time of change and uncertainty, to fill us with vision, energy and faithfulness in prayer that we may be true to our calling to bring new life to our community; and guide with your heavenly wisdom those who are to choose a new priest for this Benefice, so that the one whom we receive may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people, ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith, and to lead us by example, in loving obedience to your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Please remember those for whom we pray:

Immediate need: John Bernardi (priest), Paul Simpson, Martin Packham, Val Thompson, Becky Parker, George Snashall, Eileen Macdougall, Eileen Caple, Karen Leese, Hilary Turner-King

Long Term Need: Young Georgia, Joshua and Reggie, Wendy, Ann Went, Julie Sadler, Wendy Hibling, Yvonne Godsmark, Carla Spear, Pam Sagar, Eileen Knight, Maureen Griffiths, Carol Cox, Liz Graydon

Those in Care Homes: Jean Simmons, Mary Watts, Ruth Baker,, Rosemary Pardey, Janet Card

Please remember the recently departed and their families: Ralph Wilkins, Jane White, Catherine Harris, Jill Rockey

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember: 4th Susan Jones, Jack Vass, 5th Athalie Nye, Joan Pyle, Leonora Mcguire, 6th Lady Marie Loder, Winifred Wiseman, 7th George Smith, Frank James, Jean Notrums, 8th Eleanor Flux-Dundas, Victor Newnham, Honor Griffin, 9th Michael Batterbee, James Platt, 10th Gladys Debrates, Robert Tidmarsh