



Chet Valley Churches

The Messenger



Service of the Word

Second Sunday of Advent

5th December 2021

Welcome

We come together to worship and praise God,
to ask forgiveness of our sins and to hear the Good News of Jesus.

We have this Advent ring to remind us of the coming of Jesus,
the light of the world. Lord, let your light scatter the darkness.

And fill the world with your glory.

We light this candle to remind us of God's great promises,
foretold by the prophets. Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, just and true:
to you be praise and glory for ever!

Of old you spoke by the mouth of your prophets but in our days you speak
through your Son whom you have appointed the heir of all things. Grant
us, your people, to walk in his light that we may be found ready and
watching when he comes again in glory and judgement;
for you are our light and our salvation. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Faithful one, whose word is life, come with saving power to free our praise,
inspire our prayer and shape our lives for the kingdom of your Son, Jesus
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

🎵 **Hymn: Hark the Glad Sound**

**Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long!**

Let every heart prepare a throne, and every voice a song.

**He comes the prisoners to release, in Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.**

**He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of his grace, to bless the humbled poor.**

**Our glad Hosannas, Prince of Peace, thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring, with thy beloved name.**

🙏 **Prayers of Penitence**

Let us confess our sins, recognising and acknowledging those things which
separate us from God and each other:

God be gracious to us and bless us, and make your face shine upon us:



Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

May your ways be known on earth, your saving power among the nations:
Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of all people:
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins, and
assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus
Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: *Malachi 3:1-4*

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord
whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the
covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.
But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he
appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and
purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like
gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.
Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in
the days of old and as in former years.

For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

New Testament Reading: *Philippians 1:3-11*

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 defence 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 on 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.

For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

♪ **Hymn: On Jordan's Bank, the Baptist's Cry**

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

**Then cleansed be every Christian breast,
And furnished for so great a guest!
Yea, let us each our hearts 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.**



📖 **Gospel Reading: Luke 3:1-6**

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

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.”’

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

Talk [Rev David]

Don't shoot the messenger! Yet how often have they been despatched? Many years ago I read L P Hartley's novel "The Go-Between". The novel, written in 1953, and set in Norfolk, casts a critical eye over late Victorian society through the eyes of a naive teenager. Many may well have read it too or seen an adaptation of the book on screen or stage. Leo, whilst staying in Brandham Hall becomes the messenger between his upper class school friend's sister, Marian and Ted, the tenant farmer. The postman in their socially illicit relationship. Like many messengers Leo had no idea what the letters he delivered said.

The big difference between Leo then and the messengers we encounter in our readings today is that they did know what their message was and therefore were at pains to make it known. Nothing clandestine about them. The link between the reading in Malachi and Luke is quite clear.

The Malachi reading needs to be read in its context. There's an argument going on between the people and God. The people can't see beyond their noses. They wonder what it is that they have done to weary God. Malachi challenges them that they have called into question God's character and they in turn challenge God's interpretation of justice. It is in response to that statement that these words are uttered. A direct rebuttal and even a threat that there is going to come a time when God will send his Messenger and the people will live to regret their attitude.

The passage from Luke comes in as a direct connection. The Messenger has arrived—John, the Baptist. Yet Luke is at pains to point out that John is the Messenger not the message. The actual message of God to his people and to the world is Jesus. The Messenger knows the Message though. He is clear in its proclamation and as we discover is aware that his role is to bring the Message to the people. John was a voice, actually The Voice, crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

We know about John—he has a name. His proclamation is for a particular moment. Malachi's message could have been at any point in the people's

history. And the irony is that the name Malachi comes from the Hebrew for 'messenger', therefore we can't say with certainty if it was his actual name!

Today we have looked at two prophets—people who foretell but primarily forth-tell. On this second Sunday of Advent we remember them all. We have recorded names for the biblical prophets; yet many others also have been called to proclaim a message. Let us not forget that the role of the Prophet is to pass on a message—the prime message being Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the Message. As St John writes: 'The Word made flesh.' The prophets of today are called to share that Good News; to challenge the world and also to live in it, so that they—we—may practice what we preach.

Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**



♪ Hymn: Make Way, Make Way

**Make way, make way for Christ the King in splendour arrives.
Fling wide the gates and welcome him into your lives.**

Make way! (Make way!) Make way! (Make way!)

For the King of kings (For the King of kings). [Repeat]

And let his kingdom in.

**He comes the broken hearts to heal; the prisoners to free.
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance, the blind shall see.**

Make way...

**And those who mourn with heavy hearts, who weep and sigh,
With laughter, joy and royal crown he'll beautify.**

Make way...

**We call you now to worship him as Lord of all.
To have no gods before him; their thrones must fall!**

Make way...

Prayers of Intercession

In joyful expectation of his coming we pray to Jesus, saying,
Maranatha. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your Church as Lord and Judge. We pray for those who seek to follow and those who minister to them. Help us to live in the light of your coming and give us a longing for your kingdom.

Maranatha. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your world as King of the nations. We pray for those who are in positions of authority that they will be aware of the needs of those whom they serve. Before you rulers will stand in silence.

Maranatha. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your people with a message of victory and peace. We pray for those who are oppressed and the victims of conflicts. Give us the victory over death, temptation and evil.

Maranatha. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to us as Saviour and Comforter. We pray for those whom we know who are ill, or caring for those who are ill. Break into our lives, where we struggle with sickness and distress, and set us free to serve you for ever.

Maranatha. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to us from heaven, Lord Jesus, with power and great glory. Lift us up to meet you with all the saints and angels, to live with you for ever.

Maranatha. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

♪ Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**



**O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path of misery:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, O come, thou Lord of Might,
Who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe:
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Blessing & Dismissal

**The Lord bless us and keep us;
the Lord make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace.**

May the God of peace, make us perfect and holy, and keep us safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you, and those whom you love, now and always. **Amen.**

Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.