

Words of Light and Hope Sunday 10th December 2023

By Jane McLarty LLM

There are two themes that are traditionally associated with the second Sunday in Advent: the prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus' bible, who point forward to the coming of the Messiah; and peace. The two themes do not at first sight seem to be connected, since the Old Testament prophets did not on the whole live peaceful lives, or die quietly in their beds. But in their tumultuous times, the prophets looked ahead to the new world that God will one day bring about, a world where old enemies in nature (such as the lion and the lamb) will lie down quietly together in friendship. The coming of Jesus started off the growth of the Kingdom of God, which as Jesus himself said in one of his parables, at first grows quietly and unseen like a seed in the earth: but one day will come to full growth and ripeness and bear its fruit of a new heaven and new earth, God's kingdom of goodness and peace.

This sonnet by Malcolm Guite speaks of the longed for coming of Jesus with words from the prophets (eg 'root' Isaiah 11:1) and from the gospels. Some traditions associate faith or waiting with the second Sunday in Advent, and this poem speaks to our sense of expectancy as we look towards the coming of Christ.

Advent by Malcolm Guite

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us
O long-sought With-ness for a world without
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace
And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,
O tiny hope within our hopelessness
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.



Pew Notes

- 10th December— 4pm **Nativity Barn**, Thurning
- 10th December— 6:30pm **Candlelit Christmas Jazz**, St Mary's, Reepham (see poster for details)
- 14th December—7pm **Carol concert with Fakenham Brass Band**, St Mary's, Sparham
- 14th December—4:30pm **Community Christmas Show**, Gt Witchingham Village Hall
- 15th December—7pm Carol Concert, St Andrew's, Thurning

Services for next week: Sunday 17th December Third Sunday of Advent

10am	Café Church (Service begins at 10:30)	St Michael's, Reepham
10:30am	Carols and cake family service	At Andrew's, Attlebridge
10:30am	Holy Communion	St Margret's, Lyng
3pm	Carol Service	St Peter & St Paul's, Salle
6pm	Carol Service	St Mary's Reepham

The Rev'd. Helen Rengert, 01603 879275 revdhelenrwv@gmail.com

The Rev'd. Keith Rengert, 01603 879275 revdkeith@gmail.com (Sunday only)

The Rev'd. Judith Sweetman, 07484862962 (Friday to Sunday)
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Email parishofficerwv@gmail.com to submit articles or join the mailing list.

FACEBOOK: Reepham & Wensum Valley Events

WEBSITE: www.reepham-and-wensum-valley-team-churches.org.uk

Pew Notes are available to download from the RWV website and the E-newsletter

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please contact your Parish Safeguarding Officer.
Details in the church porch or on the RWV website.

Isaiah 40:1-11

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.

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13***Benedixisti, Domine***

1 You have been gracious to your land, O LORD, * you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
 2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people * and blotted out all their sins.
 8 I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.
 9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, * that his glory may dwell in our land.
 10 Mercy and truth have met together; * righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
 11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
 12 The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *and our land will yield its increase.
 13 Righteousness shall go before him, * and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

Mark 1:1-8

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."

