Worship@Home

7th December 2025
Second Sunday in Advent
Led by Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Holy God, the greatest gift giver of all times, you are not the 'stocking filler' or little extra, you are the greatest and best gift that can be given. Holy God, you call us to be the gift of God to neighbours and strangers. You call us to be life giving to all those we encounter. You call us to be a blessing to the Church and the world. May we sort the wheat from the chaff in our lives. May we not be just little stocking filler extras but full to overflowing with your love. May we truly seek to be the holy gift you call us to be. Gift-giving God, **may Advent be for us a time of giving and receiving. Amen.**

Methodist 'Gifted' Resources 2025:
https://shorturl.at/mq1Cv

StF 182 – On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

https://youtu.be/8POKmbK5lF4?si=4iwiQLh_ZBikaKdy

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings from the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every life from sin;
make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

For you are our salvation, Lord,
our refuge, and our great reward;
without your grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out your hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let your light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.

To God the Son all glory be
whose advent sets his people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

John Chandler (1806-1876)

Please read:

Matthew 3:1-12
https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=441183569

Time to Reflect

As we enter the Second Sunday of Advent, the world outside may be accelerating into a frenzy of festive busyness. Yet, the Gospel passage this Sunday, Matthew 3:1–12, serves as a radical intervention. It pulls us away and invites us instead into the stark, truth-telling landscape of the wilderness alongside John the Baptist. John appears in sharp, almost uncomfortable contrast to our Christmas preparations. Clothed simply in camel hair, nourished by locusts and wild honey, he cuts through all

superficiality: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” This is the fundamental posture of Advent. Our preparation is for a transformation of the human heart that comes with Jesus. It is a call to clear away the inner clutter and incline ourselves toward something deeper, more honest, and more whole.

John will not settle for superficial faith or mere religious respectability. Confronting the religious elite he issues a powerful theological challenge. Many believed their covenant relationship with God was secured merely by their physical descent from Abraham. John smashes this complacency. Lineage is not enough. Belonging to a tradition, or being a descendant of God's promise, means little without the evidence of a transformed life. What matters, he insists, is a life that actively bears “fruit worthy of repentance.” The prophetic voice of John forces us to confront the hypocrisy in our own comfortable expectations. We must ask ourselves: are our commitments visible in our actions, or are they mere declarations of inherited faith?

This concept of *metanoia* (repentance, meaning a change of mind and direction) is our Advent reorientation. It is an active, ongoing process; turning away from habits, fears, pride, or indifference that distract, diminish, and oppress us, and a turning toward active love, justice, and integrity that builds up God's kingdom amongst us. This fruit of repentance is never just internal; it is visible justice in our relationships and in the world. John's message is timeless: God is less interested in our respectability and more concerned with the inner quality of our character and outward working our compassion, as we follow Jesus.

This is where the ‘gifted’ metaphor of the “Orange in the Stocking” resonates. The orange, a simple, heartfelt, and humble gift, carries deep, nourishing meaning. In the same way, the fruit of our lives may be small, persistent acts of love, generosity, patience, or kindness. These quiet yet radical acts are exactly what mark a people ready for the coming reign of God. We are called to embody the kingdom in these everyday choices. John's words carry a challenging urgency, culminating in the vivid image of the winnowing-fork: the separation of valuable wheat from worthless chaff. The one who is coming “will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire.” This is a profound, purifying, transformative process that sorts and refines.

In this Advent season, the invitation is to an honest self-examination: what is the chaff in

our lives? What habits, fears, pride, or indifference are crowding out the good fruit? John's call is to actively let go of the chaff. We do this not out of guilt or fear of judgment, but out of profound hope; hope that the coming Christ will transform us. This transformation is not just personal, it is communal and cosmic; a profound reimagining of the world and our place within it. To truly prepare for Christmas means opening ourselves to God's grace. It means asking to see our own failings clearly, not to despair, but to embrace the transformative power that opens a straight path for the Lord to dwell among us.

As we move towards Christmas, let us hear the cry of John the Baptist. Our greatest preparation is not in decorating or purchasing, but in living humble, real, nourishing lives; offering gifts of compassion to the weary, justice to the excluded, kindness to the lonely, and hope to the hurting hearts around us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:
The needs of the world…
The Church and its calling…
Loved ones going through difficult times…
For peace, justice, and reconciliation…
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven…

StF 182 –Into the darkness of this world

https://youtu.be/xh89fzSEXbE?si=cliH9EKd8KHJz8Fm

Into the darkness of this world,
into the shadows of the night;
into this loveless place you came,
lightened our burdens, eased our pain, and made these hearts your home. Into the darkness once again, O come, Lord Jesus, come.

Come with your Love to make us whole, come with your light to Lead us on, driving the darkness far from our souls: O come, Lord Jesus, come.

Into the longing of our souls,
into these heavy hearts of stone,
shine on us now your piercing light,
order our lives and souls aright,
by grace and love unknown,
until in you our hearts unite,
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

O Holy Child, Emmanuel,
hope of the ages, God with us,
visit again this broken place,
till all the earth declares your praise
and your great mercies own.
Now let your love be born in us,
o come, Lord Jesus, come.

Come in your glory,
take your place,

Jesus, the Name above all names,
we long to see you face to face,
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

Maggi Dawn (b. 1959)
Words & Music © 1993 Thankyou Music Ltd. CCLI Song Number: 1044277

Final Prayer

As we watch and wait in Advent, help us to heed the voice of John the Baptist in the wilderness. Grant us the courage to repent, to prepare the inner way, and to honestly examine the fruit of our lives. Teach us to let go of the distractions, fears, and indifference that diminish us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and fire, that we may be purified and renewed. Shape our lives into simple, living gifts; small, real, and nourishing, carrying hope, kindness, and love into our homes, our communities, and our world. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**