

Worship @ Home, 11th December, 2022 with Revd Francis M'ltiiri.

Call to Worship:

When God reigns, ***there is room for all of nature***

The third candle of advent is pink, symbolizing joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus. ***There is room for all of nature.***

Let's us Pray

When God reigns

there is room for all of nature

Loving God, with you there is always room for everyone. When we do not see as you do, forgive us. When we judge unfairly, remind us of your forgiving grace that always goes before us, and follows behind us. **Amen.**

Hymn: STF 125: Praise & thanksgiving father, we offer.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjRf3_QZQWE&t=34s

1 Praise and thanksgiving, Father, we offer, for all things living, you have made good: harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard, hay from the mown fields, blossom, and wood.

2 Lord, bless the labour we bring to serve you, that with our neighbour we may be fed. Sowing or tilling, we would work with you, harvesting, milling for daily bread.

3 Father, providing food for your children, your Wisdom's guiding teaches us to share, one with another, so that, rejoicing sister and brother may know your care.

Read from your Bible:

Matthew 11: 2-11 and Isaiah 35: 1-10

Time to reflect:

Matthew 11 opens with Jesus traveling from village to village preaching in Galilee and doing virtuous deeds to men. John sends a message to Jesus through his own disciples, to ask him, if he is the "one who is to come." This is because John expected Jesus to immediately bring an earthly and pronouncement of immediate judgement to the evil doers.

John was so anxious to why Jesus had made his return as dramatic as he had been anticipating. Rather than offering a straightforward response, Jesus's reply to John was neither a yes, nor a no. Similarly, he did not in any way proclaim himself publicly as the Messiah. Instead, he proclaims the Kingdom of God by referencing the prophecies of Isaiah, that when the Messiah comes, he will heal the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf, as well as raise the dead and preach good news to the poor.

Precisely, the entry of the Messiah intrudes into the history of the world and especially into the lives of those who believe in God. In this regard then, we seek to proclaim that God is on the reign gathering his redeemed to offer them a moment of joy. Prophet Isaiah describes the joy of the redeemed at the return of the Messiah in Chapter 35: 1-2.

“The desert and the parched land will be glad.

The wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon.

They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God.

How have you prepared for the advent this year? Will you make a room for the king? Will you be prepared to be the bringer of his kingdom, messenger of his salt and light, bringing out your flavours and your colours in our world?

For John the Baptist, he has been faithful to his call, and his message. He did prepare the way of the Lord; He was a good and faithful messenger. And he became a witness of the one he has been preparing the way for. For John, ‘let me decrease’, that ‘he may increase’. Do you have the humility that allows you to become God's vessel of honour?

Isaiah 35:10 provides the climax of the joy on the return and reign of the Messiah:

“and those the Lord has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing. Everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away”.

Take a time to sit quietly

Today's prayers have been adopted from *Reverend Sally Coleman*, (MCB)

Let us Pray,

Loving God this world is yours, and while at times our prayers seem inadequate, we know that you long to hear and to answer them.

So, we pray. We pray for this world, for justice, mercy and truth in the nations, and the right use of power by those charged with it.

We pray for the governments of this and other lands, may they always value people before profit and power. We pray for our land in these difficult days, for those who serve in foodbanks, and in clothing banks. We pray for those who make a way of welcome for the outcast and the refugee.

We pray for those struggling with decisions about heating and eating, and we look for your justice in our communities. Show us where we can be bringers of justice. We pray that your church might be a bringer of your kingdom, messengers of your salt and light, bringing out your flavours and your colours in your world.

We do also pray for ourselves, that we might be your vessels, instruments of your peace, joy, justice, truth, and most of all agents of love.

May your reign and that of your kingdom make us create a room for the nature and everything that you have entrusted in us to safeguard, your people. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer, Our Father

Hymn: For the beauty of the earth (you tube version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh4WlpxxUMo>

1. For the beauty of the earth. For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth. Over and around us lies.

Refrain

Lord of all, to Thee we raise, this our hymn of grateful praise.

2. for the beauty of each hour, of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, Sun and moon, and stars of light.

Refrain

3. for the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony; Linking sense to sound and sight.

Refrain

4. For the joy of human love, Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above, For all gentle thoughts and mild.

Refrain

5. For thyself best gift divine. To our world so freely giv'n
For the great, great love of thine, Peace on earth and joy in heav'n

Refrain

Benediction and Blessing:

Go now, in peace to prepare the way for the Lord.

Wait patiently for the Lord.

Do not grumble against one another but encourage one another. Be strong and do not fear. God come quickly to save your people; May Christ Jesus give you everlasting joy and gladness. And may the Holy Spirit strengthen your hearts and ways.

When God reigns - ***there is room for all of everyone***

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Grace.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and evermore.

Amen