

# Sunday Message

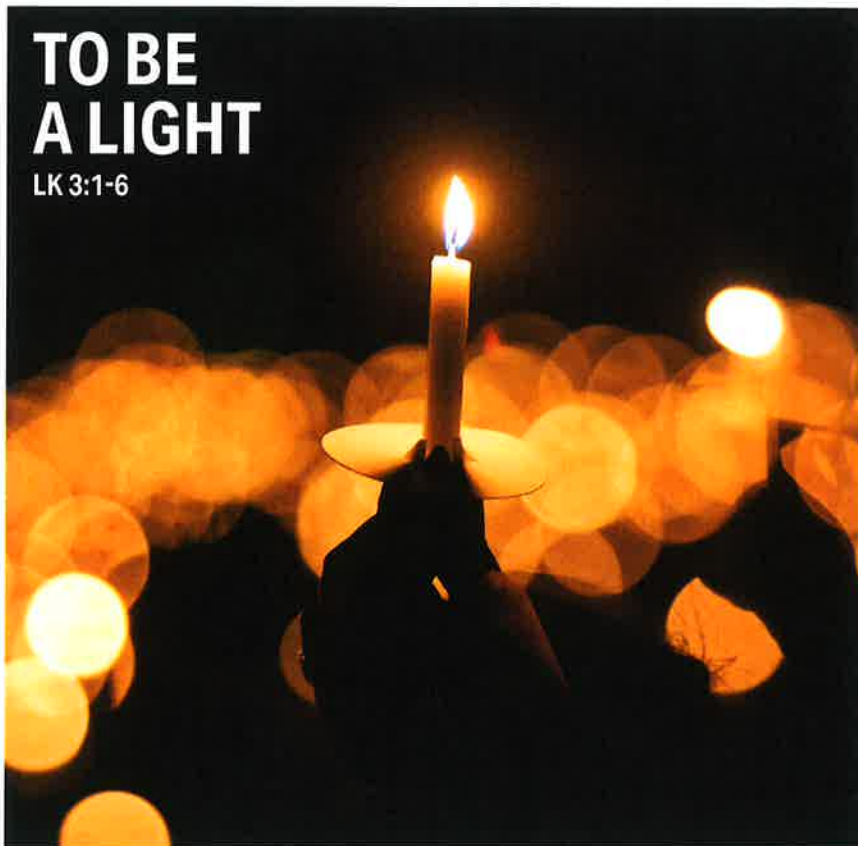
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year C • 8 December 2024 • Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 2

## TO BE A LIGHT

LK 3:1-6



John the Baptist is the last of the great prophets of the Bible, and he is the forerunner of Christ. A prophet isn't someone who sees into the future as if into a glass bowl. A prophet is one who reads the signs of the times and speaks with the voice of God.

John preached a message of repentance. He called for an end to division and conflict and for a time of peace and harmony. He pointed to the one who will bring this about - Jesus. Both the first reading and the Gospel speak about the coming of one with integrity who will bring peace to the nations. There is a sense of excitement in the book of Baruch - a time of joy is coming - and in the Gospel we are told to get ready, to prepare, because things are going to change. With the coming of Jesus nothing will ever be the same again. ■

### DO

Light a single match or candle. See the difference even one little light makes.



### PRAY

Pray that God's light will shine in you, so that all will know that hope has broken into our broken world and that darkness has been overcome.

### LEARN

The Christian is one who points towards Jesus

The Christian is called to be prophetic

To be people of the light is to let God's light shine in us and through us

### REFLECT

In 1989, newly elected U.S. president George H.W. Bush used an expression in his inaugural address that also describes the Christian calling. He spoke of a 'thousand points of light.' If you've ever been in a pitch-dark church or arena that is illumined by candles, you know the wonderfully soothing, intimate atmosphere that is created. The candlelight cuts through the darkness, smothering its power. The glow from even one candle punctuates the darkness, like a little flicker of defiant hope.

It is no coincidence that this time of year is dank, dreary and dull. We are in deep mid-winter. Darkness envelopes us. The nights seem endless; nature and the weather perpetually glum.

When we look at the world around us, it seems that darkness has also taken hold: the catastrophic impact of climate change; war in Ukraine and in the Middle East; more refugees than at any time since the end of the Second World War; the rise in racism and right-wing populism; the pressure on our hospitals and other public services; the many burdened by loneliness, depression, financial worries or physical illness.

On days when the news is filled with grim tidings, it can seem as if we're stuck in deep mid-winter, as if the darkness will engulf us... and then Advent comes along.

Advent is the great season of light. In this dreary mid-winter, Advent reminds us that darkness doesn't have the last word, because into the darkness a light has come - Jesus, God-with-us, light of the world. Advent reminds us that God has heard the cry of God's people and responded by sending his Son as one like us to give us life. Our Christian hope is rooted in the knowledge that God has come among us, is with us now, and will come again at the appointed time. Hope has taken shape in Jesus, our point of light. As his followers, we are people who walk in the light. ■

### SAY

"What marvels the Lord has worked for me. Indeed, I am glad."

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**O people of Sion, behold,  
the Lord will come to save the nations,  
and the Lord will make the glory of his voice  
heard  
in the joy of your heart.**

**COLLECT**

Almighty and merciful God,  
may no earthly undertaking hinder those  
who set out in haste to meet your Son,  
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom  
gain us admittance to his company.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

**FIRST READING**

Bar 5:1-9

A reading from the prophet Baruch  
Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and  
distress,  
put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever,  
wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around  
you,  
put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on  
your head:  
since God means to show your splendour to  
every nation under heaven,  
since the name God gives you for ever will be,  
'Peace through integrity, and honour through  
devotedness.'  
Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights  
and turn your eyes to the east:  
see your sons reassembled from west and east  
at the command of the Holy One, jubilant that  
God has remembered them.  
Though they left you on foot,  
with enemies for an escort,  
now God brings them back to you  
like royal princes carried back in glory.  
For God has decreed the flattening  
of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills,  
the filling of the valleys to make the ground level  
so that Israel can walk in safety under the glory  
of God.  
And the forests and every fragrant tree will  
provide shade  
for Israel at the command of God;  
for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his  
glory  
with his mercy and integrity for escort.  
The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

Ps 125 (126)

Response:

**What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed  
we were glad.**

- 1 When the Lord delivered Zion from  
bondage,  
it seemed like a dream.  
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
on our lips there were songs. **(R.)**
- 2 The heathens themselves said: 'What  
marvels  
the Lord worked for them!'  
What marvels the Lord worked for us!  
Indeed we were glad. **(R.)**
- 3 Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage  
as streams in dry land.  
Those who are sowing in tears  
will sing when they reap. **(R.)**

- 4 They go out, they go out, full of tears  
carrying seed for the sowing:  
they come back, they come back, full of  
song,  
carrying their sheaves. **(R.)**

**SECOND READING**

Phil 1:3-6, 8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Philippians

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy,  
remembering how you have helped to spread  
the Good News from the day you first heard  
it right up to the present. I am quite certain  
that the One who began this good work in  
you will see that it is finished when the Day of  
Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I  
miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves  
you. My prayer is that your love for each other  
may increase more and more and never stop  
improving your knowledge and deepening your  
perception so that you can always recognise  
what is best. This will help you to become  
pure and blameless, and prepare you for the  
Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect  
goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us  
for the glory and praise of God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight, and all mankind shall  
see the salvation of God. Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL**

Lk 3:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Luke

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign,  
when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea,  
Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip  
tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis,  
Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the  
pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word  
of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the  
wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan  
district proclaiming a baptism of repentance  
for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the  
book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness;  
Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths  
straight.

Every valley will be filled in, every mountain  
and hill be laid low, winding ways will be  
straightened and rough roads made smooth.  
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

**I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,**

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under**

**Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,**

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.**

**I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and  
offerings,  
and, since we have no merits to plead our cause,  
come, we pray, to our rescue  
with the protection of your mercy.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights,  
and behold the joy which comes to you from  
God.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment,  
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,  
that, through our partaking in this mystery,  
you may teach us to judge wisely the things of  
earth  
and hold firm to the things of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Which Mary? A woman "blessed because she  
believed," always and everywhere in God's  
words, or a "plaster statue" from whom we beg  
favours at little cost? The Virgin Mary of the  
Gospel, venerated by the Church at prayer, or a  
Mary of our own making, one who restrains the  
arm of a vengeful God, one sweeter than Jesus  
the ruthless judge, one more merciful than the  
Lamb slain for us?

*Pope Francis*