



Worship resources

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Isaiah 40 : 1-11

Be ready, says the prophet, for God is coming soon to Israel, and the people must prepare to return from exile. Today's Gospel quotes these words, which became for Christians a prophecy of John the Baptist, proclaiming Jesus and preparing the way for his coming.

2 Peter 3 : 8-15a

Like the Jews during their exile, the early Christians wondered why the Lord did not deliver them from their suffering. But God's time is not like our time, and we are to be calm in our preparations for the coming 'Day of the Lord', so that we may be at peace.

Mark 1 : 1-8

Mark's Gospel begins with the mission of John the Baptist, preaching and baptising for repentance. As prophets had foretold, he is the sign of the coming of the one who is greater than he.

To view the readings:

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2040:%201-11%0Acw%20Psalm%2085:%201-2,%208-13%0A2%20Peter%203:%208-15a%0AMark%201:%201-8

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O Lord,
Raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us,
and with great might succour us;
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness,
we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us,

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thy bountiful grace and mercy
may speedily help and deliver us;
through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord,
to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit,
be honour and glory, world without end.

Almighty God,
Give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness,
and put upon us the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which thy Son Jesus Christ
came to visit us in great humility;
that in the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty
to judge both the quick and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who liveth and reigneth with thee
and the Holy Spirit, now and ever.

This collect is said after the Collect of the day until Christmas Eve.

Collect Two

Father in heaven,
who sent your Son to redeem the world
and will send him again to be our judge:
Give us grace so to imitate him
in the humility and purity of his first coming
that when he comes again,
we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

All needs and joys are known to God. Let us bring to God those known to us and ask guidance to be part of the growth of God's grace in the world, saying, "O branch of the root of Jesse", and responding "Graft us to yourself."

There are many who need to hear the proclamation of your good news. May all those set apart for ordained ministry and all who have been baptized in your name, daily confess our faith in word and deed.

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O branch of the root of Jesse,
Graft us to yourself.

We plead for the day when no one shall hurt or destroy on your holy mountain and ask your care for those who suffer injury and even death in our society at the hands of those who are stronger, especially for women. Strengthen us that we may work for their safety and the elimination of their fears.

O branch of the root of Jesse,
Graft us to yourself.

On this day when our Lutheran fellow Christians commemorate St. Nicholas, may each child be cherished among us and all Sunday Schools, nurseries and children's care centres be places of safety and security. That we may all, children, youth and adults, be nourished in our faith.

O branch of the root of Jesse,
Graft us to yourself.

There are those who are sick or grieve among us. O God, grant us all the sufficient grace and trust to which you invite us in our baptism.

O branch of the root of Jesse,
Graft us to yourself.

For our growth in faith and maturity through the daily work we perform, that each task may become a way of honoring your name and giving you glory.

O branch of the root of Jesse,
Graft us to yourself.

For the words of your prophets and those of John the Baptist, which call us to repentance and trust in you alone, that you are here to listen to our prayers, through Jesus who came on behalf of your truth. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

As we prepare for Jesus to come among us, let us offer prayers to God who feeds his flock like a shepherd.

For the peace of the world, and for our unity in Christ.

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Come, O Lord, and save us.

For *N* our bishop and all bishops, for the presbyters, for the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the church throughout the world and the faithful in every place.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the leaders of the nations and all in authority.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For justice, peace, and freedom among peoples of the earth.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For travelers, for the sick and the suffering, for the hungry and the oppressed, and for those in prison.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For the dying and the dead.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Come, O Lord, and save us.

Joining our voices with all the saints and angels of God, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

O Key of David, sceptre of the house of Israel, who opens and none can shut, who shuts and none can open, come and free the captives from prison, who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Glory to you for ever. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 3

Celebrant

In the hushed anticipation of your coming, bring your people your most gracious comfort and the strength to be heralds of glad tidings; that we might be ready for your coming, and eager to pray:

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Intercessor

O God, in days to come the mountain of your house will be established, and your joy shall reign. We pray for the church (especially...), that you might teach us your ways and that we might walk in your paths.

Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

Out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and you, O God, shall judge between the nations. We pray for our nation, and all nations, that your peace would be manifest in every corner of the earth.

Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

In your Kingdom, O Lord, wolves lie down with lambs and children play with serpents without fear. We pray for the sick, the suffering, and those in distress of any kind (especially...); that you would heal all injuries, comfort all grief, and settle all wrongs.

Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

In your Kingdom, O Lord, even the wilderness and dry land are glad and rejoice. We pray for those who rejoice this week as they celebrate their birthday (especially... and anniversaries...); that they might obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing might flee away.

Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

In the fulness of time, O God, you sent your son, to be born of our sister Mary. And his name was Emmanuel: God With Us. We thank you for your Presence with us, and we pray that you might be always present with those whom we love but see no longer.

Come Lord Jesus, **and hear our prayer.**

Intercessor

O Christ, hear our prayers; and when you come among us baptizing as with fire, may we, your Church, be ready to meet you and find our home in you. Come Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Lord,
here you have nourished us with the food of life.
Through our sharing in this holy sacrament
teach us to judge wisely earthly things

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and to yearn for things heavenly.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

God of timeless grace,
you fill us with joyful expectation.
Make us ready for the message that prepares the way,
that with uprightness of heart and holy joy
we may eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

God of hope,
you raised up John the baptizer
as a herald who calls us to conversion.
As we joyfully await the glorious coming of Christ,
we pray to you for the needs of the church and the world.
Hear our humble prayer
that we may serve you in holiness and faith
and give voice to your presence among us
until the day of the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

God of hope,
you call us from the exile of our sin
with the good news of restoration;
you build a highway through the wilderness;
you come to us and bring us home.
Comfort us with the expectation of your saving power,
made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES

Isaiah 40:1-11:

"Comfort, O comfort my people" - ah, what gorgeous words. This God is a God who longs to comfort us, even when we wander and stray. This text and our text from Mark both mention the wilderness, or desert. What happens in the Bible in the wilderness? Think Israelites. Think Jesus' temptation. Lots of deep spiritual transformation happens in the wilderness.

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Where's your wilderness? What's been a desert place in your life?
"Here is your God!" That's the good news that Isaiah cries in this text:
God is here, is present and real in your lives.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

"[God] will speak peace to his people." What does speaking peace sound like? How would you speak peace to someone?

"for those who fear [God]" - do you fear God? We're instructed over and over again in the scriptures not to be afraid. What does it mean, then, to fear God or to be God-fearing? I interpret it to mean we're to have an awe of God that is an awe we give *only* to God.

Some good imagery in v. 10: Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other." Great images. Love and faithfulness bound together. More intriguingly, to me, righteousness and peace bound together. If only!

2 Peter 3:8-15a:

The author here is writing in response to concerns, it seems, about the slowly-coming day of Christ's return. They are ready and waiting for Christ to come again. So where is he already? The author talks about how God's time and our time is different. This is always a good reminder!

"regard the patience of our Lord as salvation." The author argues that the longer it takes for Christ to return, the more chance people have of finding salvation - God, he argues, doesn't want anyone to perish, but wants all to come to repentance. I kind of like his way of looking at things!

Mark 1:1-8:

The opening of Mark's gospel wastes no time with those birth-of-Jesus stories we like to hear so much about this time of year. Mark gets to the point: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Sometimes I prefer Mark's method! He seems to be saying, "Let's get right to the good stuff."

Here's another wilderness passage - notice the similar language in this text and in Isaiah. John is for Jesus' time a modern-day Isaiah, announcing the same message: "God is here! Right here among you!"

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John sees himself as facilitating Jesus' ministry - preparing people for it. His role is so important, isn't it? Do you know of people who play this kind of supporting role in ministry today?

By Beth Quick

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

The Kingdom of God, Frederick Buechner

First class sermon on today's Gospel reading

<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-kingdom-god>

Making Straight the Way, the Rev. Dr. Russell Levenson, Jr., *Day 1*, 2011.

On today's Gospel reading

http://day1.org/3359-making_straight_the_way

Our Patience, God's Peace the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Carter, *Day 1*,

Working from the passage in Isaiah, we are pointed to the tension between patience and peace. Ots of event nuances in this sermon.

The peace of the Lord is described by this preacher as:

It was the dream of the prophets.

It was the hope of his parents.

It was the message of his preaching.

It was the legacy of his passover.

He continues by relating peace with patience and brings together elements from the three reading for today.

http://day1.org/1122-our_patience_gods_peace

The challenge of the wilderness - its harshness and beauty - is related to Advent. "Today the calm of our lives is startled by voices from the wilderness. With Isaiah we hear one crying out for the construction of a passable route through the desert; from another desert we hear John the Baptist's unsettling call to repentance."

"Advent is a time for serious road construction—and we all know the inconvenience that that entails. Isaiah is not describing minor repairs, such as filling in potholes or repairing curbs. He is calling for major reconfiguration of the terrain".

A short sermon, but it covers the ground.

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http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2635

Clear a path and make a straight road - scroll down for sermon

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-ad02sn.php>

CHILDREN

Worshipping with children

As always - lots of good ideas here for this Sunday. Good basis for talk on John the Baptist - scroll down!

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2011/07/year-b-second-sunday-of-advent-december.html>

A short interesting piece on St Nicholas whom Lutherans commemorate today. (See Prayers of the People 1 above). You could work in one of the legends about him - and use the hymn. Or save until closer to Christmas!

<http://www.liturgybytlw.com/AdvXmas/StNickSg.html>

The King Is Coming, Children's Time, in Sermons and Liturgies. Richard J. Fairchild. (Scroll down in liturgies to find Children's Time.)

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-ad02sn.php>