

# Sunday Worship at Home, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021, Second Sunday of Advent.



## Opening Prayers:

O Lord, open our lips, and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Reveal among us the light of your presence, that we may behold your power and glory.

**Amen.**

## A Prayer of Confession:

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

Come, let us return to the Lord and say.

**Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call. Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

## The Collect

Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God. **Amen**

## Readings: Malachi 3:1-3, Philippians 1:6, Luke 3:2-6 - The Refiner's Fire

*Malachi said:* <sup>1</sup>See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.

*St Paul wrote:* <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ

*And Luke wrote:* <sup>2</sup>The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; <sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

## **Reflection on the reading:**

As next week is the Sunday when we focus on John, and this Sunday we are focussing on the prophets I thought I would reflect on the words of the prophets Isaiah and Malachi, and the words of St Paul. Where Isaiah talks of preparing the way of the Lord in the wilderness by levelling the rough and uneven ground, Malachi instead talks of the refiners fire, a process of cleansing that will leave us like pure gold. Now, it is worth remembering that raw gold, as it comes out of the ground is takes the form of tiny nuggets or flakes of metal embedded in a large amount of worthless rock. Working in a gold mine does not mean you are digging pure gold out of the ground, you dig out gold ore, getting the gold out of the ore is not easy. it's hard work, both for the refiner and the metal being refined, and it's a long process. In the same way the treasure we have in Jesus Christ gets buried in the rubbish of the world around us, and we can find it hard to allow the Holy Spirit to be our refining fire. St Paul tells the Philippians in his letter that the one who began the good work in them will bring it completion on the day of the Jesus Christ, the day of the Lord's second coming. The same is true for us. But becoming more Christ-like is about more than just finding the gold within the dirt of our own lives, making ourselves pure, and about our own righteousness. If we are truly preparing the way of the Lord within our own hearts, this also means living out the way of the Lord in our daily lives in service to those around us. And we do this by always looking for way in we ourselves can give dignity to the poor, acceptance to the outcast and help to those in need. **Amen**

## **The Creed**

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.**  
**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**  
**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.**  
**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Be still and pray:** In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Particularly pray for: Areas of the world affected by War, natural disasters and man-made disasters, especially Afghanistan, La Palma, and the West and East Seaboards of America; for peace to prevail in areas of rising international tension especially between India and Pakistan, Poland and Belarus, Russia and Ukraine; for our own nation and other nations dealing with rising COVID infection rates and the new omicron variant; for healing and peace for those who are ill; and for the souls of those who have recently died, and comfort for those who are mourning their loss. ***Finish with The Lord's Prayer:***

## **Conclusion**

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you, this day and always. **Amen**

*Reverend Eddie*