

## **Second Sunday of Advent, December 8**

The Collect and Psalms will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer  
The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the New Revised Standard  
Version Bible Anglicized

**The Collect:** Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **Old Testament: Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4**

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. For God will give you evermore the name, 'Righteous Peace, Godly Glory'. Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look towards the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

### **Hear what the Lord is saying to God's people**

#### **Malachi 3:1-4**

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. 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; 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. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

### **Hear what the Lord is saying to God's people**

#### **Psalm: Canticle 4 The Song of Zechariah**

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; \*

he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior, \*

born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old,

that he would save us from our enemies, \*

from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers \*

and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, \*

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear, \*

holy and righteous in his sight

all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, \*

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation \*

by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God \*

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the

shadow of death, \*

and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

### **Epistle: Philippians 1:3-11**

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 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. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

### **Hear what the Lord is saying to God's people**

### **Gospel: Luke 3:1-6**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 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.

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; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

**On December 10 we celebrate the life of Karl Barth Pastor and Theologian,. Read from *A Great Cloud of witnesses*.**

Born at Basel, Switzerland, on May 10, 1886, Barth studied at several prestigious universities including Tübingen, Germany. After completing his studies, he served as pastor in two Swiss centers, Geneva and Safenwil. The events of the First World War led Barth to critically question the dominant theology of the day, which, in Barth's view, held a too easy peace between theology and culture. In his Commentary on Romans, published in 1918, Barth reasserted doctrines such as God's sovereignty and human sin, central ideas which he believed were excluded and overshadowed in theological discourse at that time.

With Hitler's rise to power, Barth joined the Confessing Church and was chiefly responsible for the writing of the Barmen Declaration (1934), one of its foundational documents. In it, Barth claimed that the Church's allegiance to God in Christ gave it the moral imperative to challenge the rule and violence of Hitler. Barth was himself ultimately forced to resign his professorship at Bonn due to his refusal to swear an oath to Hitler.

In 1932, Barth published the first volume of his thirteen-volume opus, the Church Dogmatics. Barth would work on the Dogmatics until his death in 1968. An exhaustive account of his theological themes and a daring reassessment of the entire Christian theological tradition, the Dogmatics gave new thought to some of the central themes first articulated in the Commentary on Romans. In the first volume, "The Doctrine of the Word of God," Barth laid out many of the theological notions which would comprise the heart of the entire work, including his understanding of God's Word as the definitive source of revelation, the Incarnation as the bridge between God's revelation and human sin, and the election of the creation as God's great end.

Karl Barth was one of the great thinkers of the twentieth century. Pope Pius XII regarded him as the most important theologian since Thomas Aquinas. This assessment speaks to the respect Barth received from both Protestant and Catholic theologians and to his influence within both theological communities.

**Let us pray:** Almighty God, source of justice beyond human knowledge: We thank you for inspiring Karl Barth to resist tyranny and exalt your saving grace, without which we cannot apprehend your will. Teach us, like him, to live by faith, and even in chaotic and perilous times to perceive the light of your eternal glory, Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, throughout all ages. **Amen.**