

## **Second Sunday of Advent Dec. 10, 2017**

**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: Isaiah 40:1-11 read from the King James Version Bible**

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

### **The Word of the Lord**

**Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

1 You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, \* you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people \* and blotted out all their sins.

8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, \* for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, \* that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together; \* righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, \* and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, \* and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him, \* and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

**Epistle: 2 Peter 3:8-15a read from the Lexham English Bible**

Now, dear friends, do not let this one thing escape your notice, that one day with the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day. The Lord is not delaying the promise, as some consider slowness, but is being patient toward you, because he does not want any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will disappear with a rushing noise, and the celestial bodies will be destroyed by being burned up, and the earth and the deeds done on it will be disclosed. Because all these things are being destroyed in this way, what sort of people must you be in holy behavior and godliness, while waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by being burned up and the celestial bodies will melt as they are consumed by heat! But according to his promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness resides.

Therefore, dear friends, because you are waiting for these things, make every effort to be found at peace, spotless and unblemished in him. And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation,

**The Word of the Lord**

## **Gospel: Mark 1:1-8 read from the Message Bible**

The good news of Jesus Christ—the Message!—begins here, following to the letter the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Watch closely: I'm sending my preacher ahead of you; He'll make the road smooth for you.

Thunder in the desert! Prepare for God's arrival! Make the road smooth and straight!

John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins. People thronged to him from Judea and Jerusalem and, as they confessed their sins, were baptized by him in the Jordan River into a changed life. John wore a camel-hair habit, tied at the waist with a leather belt. He ate locusts and wild field honey.

As he preached he said, "The real action comes next: The star in this drama, to whom I'm a mere stagehand, will change your life. I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. His baptism—a holy baptism by the Holy Spirit—will change you from the inside out."

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

#### **Closing Prayer: On December 15th we remember John Horden missionary and first Anglican Bishop of Moosonee, Canada.**

Horden was born in Exeter, England, in 1828, he was apprenticed to the blacksmith's trade as a young boy and devoted his spare hours to self-education. He eventually qualified as a schoolteacher and attended the Vicar's Bible Class at St. Thomas, Exeter, where he was educated in the Bible and missionary work. Horden, along with some friends, volunteered his services to the Church Missionary Society, but was told to wait due to his young age.

On May 10th, 1851, he received a letter from Church Missionary Society, informing him that the bishop of Rupert's Land had made a request for a schoolmaster at Moose Factory, and that he had been appointed to fill the position. They also told him to prepare to leave within a month, and indicated that they desired he marry and take his wife out to assist him in his missionary work. Although he was less than enthused about the appointment, he immediately prepared for his new position. He contacted the woman of his choice, a young lady who

herself had missionary inclinations, and she agreed to marry him. On June 8th, 1851, they set sail for Canada. Horden spent much of his time on the trip by continuing his studies of the Greek Testament and beginning the study of the Cree language.

He went among the natives, writing down new words as he heard them and, after eight month's effort, was able to preach to the natives without an interpreter. He was ordained a priest during this period. Soon Horden had prepared a prayer book, a hymnal, and translations of the Gospels in the Cree language.

Then in 1865, Horden and his family, which now included five children that he and his wife had had in Canada, sailed back to England so that his children could be educated. Upon Horden's return to England, he found he was very well-known throughout the British Isles, and became a popular and sought-after speaker. In 1867, Horden returned with his wife to James' Bay.

In the autumn of 1872, Horden received a message to return to England to be consecrated as a bishop, and on December 15th, 1872, he and two others were ordained in a ceremony involving eight other bishops, including Bishop Anderson, who had first ordained Horden 20 years earlier.

He continued to serve as bishop of his huge territory, making pastoral visits to as many parts of his huge diocese as possible, despite his having a serious problem with rheumatism. In his later years, he also worked diligently to finish his translation of the Bible into the Cree language. Many congregations in the small towns and cities of the area trace their formation back to his inspiring work. Bishop Horden died in Moose Factory on January 12th, 1893.

**Let us pray:** Creator God, whose hands hold the storehouses of the snow and the gates of the sea, and from whose Word springs forth all that is: We bless your holy Name for the intrepid witness of your missionary John Horden, who followed your call to serve the Cree and Inuit nations of the North. In all the places we travel, may we, like him, proclaim your Good News and draw all into communion with you through your Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**