EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of West Texas*

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Songs of Advent

2026 Advent Devotional

2nd WEEK OF ADVENT

Tom Curry

READ

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,

and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

LISTEN

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord by Stephen Schwartz from the Musical "Godspell"

Youtube link

Spotify link

REFLECT

It is not uncommon during this time of year to see people displaying signs and bumper stickers displaying the phrase "Jesus is the Reason for the Season." And we know that the reason behind this slogan is to remind people that Christmas, and the weeks afterwards, have been set aside by the church for thousands of years to commemorate Christ's birth, which is the dawn of the new covenant God is making with his people. However, if the season of advent had a catchy slogan it would likely be something to the effect, "John the Baptist is the Reason for the Advent Season," because John's whole mission was to prepare, or make ready.

As we know, the birth of Christ is no small event. Because it was something so important, the birth of Christ was something that the Scriptures have prefigured for at least a thousand years before it happened. Jesus is God incarnate, who entered creation to, "To proclaim liberty to the captives and to bind up the brokenhearted" (Isaiah 61:1-3) Jesus took on flesh to redeem all flesh from sin, suffering, and death. In other words, Christmas, or Christ being born into the world, is the beginning of one of the most important acts in salvation history. God became one of us so that we may be united to God.

The scripture readings for this second Sunday of Advent understand the importance of Christmas and remind us that to receive the long-awaited Christ, we must be prepared. And as I read the readings for this second Sunday of Advent, all I could think of was the opening song to the musical Godspell, where the character playing John the Baptist began the entire musical by singing, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." In fact, the Old Testament reading and the Gospel for today highlight the ministry of John the Baptist, which was dedicated to making straight the path for the Lord (Mark 1:3).

This second Sunday of Advent, our readings emphasize the importance of preparing for the arrival of Christ at Christmas, because it marks the beginning of the redemption of the world from sin, suffering, and death. John the Baptist's ministry marked by his message of "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord," is the reason for the season of Advent. Let us all use this time of the season of Advent to prepare ourselves for what it means to know that Christ is in our midst. So when we awaken on Christmas morning, we will have prepared a strait path for the Lord to enter our hearts and redeem us from sin, suffering, and the sting of death.

WONDER

1. What does John the Baptist's ministry teach me today?
2. What are some ways that I can "Prepare the Way of the Lord" during this Advent season?
3. How can I inspire others during this Advent season to prepare the way of the Lord for their lives?

PRAY

Lord God, Creator and Redeemer of all. We thank you for the gift of your son our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born into the world to save it from sin and suffering. I ask that you help me to be reminded what the gift of Christ's presence is for me and for all of creation. During this season of Advent help me to prepare myself to receive this gift of *Christ in Our Midst;* so that when I welcome the newborn Christ in my heart, I will be able to carry his presence and blessing to all I encounter. Amen.