

# HAEBEA Home Worship

## *The Second Sunday of Advent*

6<sup>th</sup> December 2020 – Revd Debbie Hodgson



### Opening Prayer

If you are able light a candle. As you reflect on its light offer your prayer of thanks to God for the light of His love in your life and in the life of the world.

Give thanks for Jesus, the revelation of God's love, and for the Holy Spirit, who reminds us of His loving presence.

Feel God's love surrounding you as you come into His presence.

### Bible Readings – Isaiah 40: 1-11 & Mark 1:1-8

### Thoughts

Nowadays it seems that punctuation is a thing of the past, and therefore so often, is a sense of grammatical 'correctness'. It is not uncommon in our house to hear me complain about the sentence structure of a comment a TV presenter has just uttered. Of course, there are many times when perhaps it doesn't really matter, but other times when it will make for a completely different comment. And as for commas and apostrophes! One of my previous churches was St. Andrew's Church. In shortening it to fit on notice boards it simply read 'St. Andrews'. We had a few conversations about this. "How many St. Andrews are you talking about?" I would ask. "Please can I have an apostrophe." And because I had teased them, we would then have the daft debate as to where to put the apostrophe depending on how many St. Andrews we were talking about that the church belonged to. I'll leave you to reflect on that later.

You may now rightly be wondering what on earth has all this got to do with our readings for today. Mark quotes from Isaiah 40 at the outset of his gospel to give us a picture of John, and of Jesus. Mark is telling us that John the Baptist is the 'voice of one, in the desert' calling, telling the people that now is the time to prepare for the coming Messiah. After 400 years of waiting since the last words of the prophets "now is the time" says John. It is the time to get ready of the coming of the long-promised Messiah. And he begins to share what this preparing needs to look like.

The cry of Isaiah (40v3), has slightly different grammar to that of Mark. 'A voice of one calling: in the desert prepare the way for the Lord.' Isaiah is imploring his listeners to prepare a way in the desert. Mark is telling us that there is a voice in the desert telling us to prepare a way. Mark's quoting of Isaiah just subtly different to drive home John's identity and purpose. However, both are imploring their contemporaries that now is the time to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. We can see how both renditions of this cry are relevant to us today.

We too perhaps can see ourselves as ‘people of the desert’ when we reflect on the brokenness and longing of society and world. Our voice of hope, promise, and yes, cry for change needs to ring out in our world urging God’s people, and those who would listen and respond, to prepare a way for the coming of God’s hope in Christ, into this desert.

So, in summary. I am content, and challenged by Isaiah and Mark, as ‘one calling in the desert’, with a message to prepare a Way in that desert for the coming of our King of kings and Lord of Lords. What shall we cry? We could do worse than join with Isaiah.

And in case you are wondering; yes, I do often want to go around with a paint brush and add apostrophes to signs.

### Hymn On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvvEQkspJxY>

### Prayer

Loving God, as we look for your coming,  
we pray for the many refugees whose daily existence  
is one of desert life and hardship; devoid of hope and promise.  
We pray for all who feel disconnected from life,  
as if living a desert experience.

Help us, your people, to speak out with your words of light and life and hope  
to all and teach us to serve in your name, and to your glory. Amen.



### The Lord’s Prayer: Our Father ...

### Hymn

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
announces that the Lord is nigh;  
awake and hearken, for he brings  
glad tidings from the King of kings!
2. Then cleansed be every life from sin;  
make straight the way for God within,  
and let us all our hearts prepare  
for Christ to come and enter there.
3. For you are our salvation, Lord,  
our refuge, and our great reward;  
without your grace we waste away  
like flowers that wither and decay.
4. To heal the sick stretch out your hand,  
and bid the fallen sinner stand;  
shine forth, and let your light restore  
earth's own true loveliness once more.
5. To God the Son all glory be  
whose advent sets his people free,  
whom, with the Father, we adore,  
and Holy Spirit, evermore.

John Chandler (1806–1876)  
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