



Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Are you preparing the way of the Lord?

Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Are you preparing the way of the Lord?

Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Are you preparing the way of the Lord?

Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Are you preparing the way of the Lord?

Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Are you preparing the way of the Lord?

Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Are you preparing the way of the Lord?

Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.



Are you preparing the way of the Lord?

Main Verse:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way -
a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him"
(Mark 1:2-3)

We continue on our Advent journey today, a journey of expectation as we await the arrival of our Saviour King. Advent is also a time for reflection, a time of preparation, a time for fasting and a time to work on a spiritual spring clean, or summer clean as we are in December, a bit of a tidy up of our spiritual lives as we anticipate the coming of Jesus into the world, human and yet divine in nature.

Mark opens the Gospel with reference to the reading from Isaiah, with the coming of a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, John the Baptist. The five verses dealing with the appearance and message of John are in strict continuity with the preceding quotation attributed to Isaiah.

John's preaching in the wilderness is the voice Isaiah spoke of as 'crying out' in the wilderness. The baptism of repentance he is proclaiming and the large-scale response it attracts constitute the 'way' prepared for the Lord. The way is not a physical way as in making the path smooth across the desert regions. It is a way made straight in human hearts, the act of repentance and conversion that makes them receptive to the message and ministry of the Lord.

All the people from the whole Judea countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to John and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. The description of John's attire and diet seem odd, it evokes the description of the prophet Elijah, way back in Kings in the Old Testament, when the ailing King Ahaziah enquires about the type of man his messengers had met on the road, a hairy man with a leather belt about his waist. So the figure of John the Baptist bears a resemblance to Elijah, and John is indeed cast in the role of the returning Elijah who is expected to return before "the Day of the Lord" as forerunner of the Messiah.

John points to the stronger one who is to come after him. John makes clear his inferiority to this person with a striking image. In his culture students may carry their teacher's sandals as a mark of respect, however to bend down and untie them was only performed by slaves.

Yet, John does not see himself worthy of even this relationship with the one to whom he is proclaiming. John draws a contrast between himself and the coming one in terms of baptism. The baptism he proclaims and performs is a physical act, immersion in water, enacting an interior

attitude of repentance and change of heart. It is a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, this prepares recipients for the divine forgiveness that the coming 'Stronger one' will baptise with the Holy Spirit and brings about total renewal. This is something to be achieved by divine power in the Messianic age.

So, as we are gathered here today, blessed and forgiven by God, and renewed every day by His amazing grace, our hearts are truly prepared for His coming. Both the celebration of Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day and his coming again, we know not when.

Stay alert, draw close to Jesus every day, for he is our Saviour and redeemer. He is our best friend and close companion on the way. Especially when our journey is through troubled times and joyous times. He is always with us, right beside us and as close as our heartbeat.

The Advent candle that we lit today was the Peace candle, the peace that Jesus gives us is not only a freedom from violence, war and oppression, it is a peace that transcends our understanding, what does that mean ??

According to Scripture, the peace of God "which transcends all understanding", is the harmony and calmness of body, mind and spirit trusting in the power and Grace of God. The preceding verses in Philippians say to us,

"do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:13)

Now repeat after me please, "do not be anxious about anything !!!"

How difficult is that? To let go of our worries and problems, no one is exempt, everyone has a story to tell. The secret is firstly always to be thankful, open prayer with a thankfulness for the blessings we have, talk to Jesus as though he is a close and much loved and trusted friend, because that is what he is, and that is what he longs us to be, a close and trusted friend. He is as well as our Saviour, King and Lord of all, everything we need rolled into one.

How privileged are we to have immediate access to this amazing God.

I find that when I have a busy few days or issues that are bothering me, my first instinct is to sort things out for myself, which usually caused more anxiety. I have to force myself to STOP and spend time with Jesus, and not just shoot off a prayer request, but actually stop, breathe consciously and calm my thoughts. It is time well spent, especially the silent bit, stop thinking!! And wait on God, you will not necessarily hear a booming voice from heaven, but you may hear a thought or message that just floats into your head, something that you didn't think, it just appears.

We may hear nothing at all, just breathe in the Spirit of God and breathe out the evil, anxiety, fear, all those things that separate us from God and from each other. Peace is knowing that the Lord of the universe is by your side and resting in that. It's not just knowing, but it is also living it out. Peace is sitting in comfort and knowing that God is next to your side no matter what.

Let's do it, make yourself comfortable, uncross your legs, especially the girls, it's not good for your hips!! Close your eyes and be conscious of your breathing. Try and stop thinking, breathe in the Spirit of God, he is right here in this place we are surrounded, feel it, breathe in the Spirit, breathe out all anxious thoughts and fears.

In with the Spirit out with the evil, repeat and repeat! Relax your shoulder muscles, relax any muscles that are tense. In with the Spirit and out with the evil.

Imagine the Holy Spirit flowing through you, calming and healing, gently restoring your thoughts to rest in him.....etc. Slowly stir yourself, open your eyes and continue with conscious breathing.

I once heard someone say that Advent is a bit like playing hide and seek with Jesus. Remember when we played hide and seek as children, after everyone ran away to hide the one seeking would say, coming ready or not. God calls to us that he is coming, whether we are ready or not, and he will never give up the search, even though there are plenty of hiding places for us as we approach the Christmas season, in this contemporary culture. And in the crazy shopping and consumerism encouraged by the constant cry of how many days there are until Christmas.

The Advent liturgy is full of shouting, and it needs to be so it can be heard over the noise of our secular world, it is a time of great celebration as well look forward to the coming of Christ, the coming of the Son of Man.....

Our Advent clock is also an alarm that the church sets to wake us up to a continuing coming of Christ in our daily lives, to a greater awareness of the divine presence and a deeper knowledge of the divine love.

Christ is still being born, not in his own human flesh but in our hearts if we offer Him the hospitality of our discipleship. Ours is the dignity and challenge to accept the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the most intimate depths of our lives, and then bear him to others.
Amen.