

Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Metcalfe  
DECEMBER 10, 2023  
ADVENT 2  
Reverend Michael Fleming

Fr. Michael: As we journey through this season of Advent, we do so remembering that the path we walk to this our sacred space lies on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

People: **Together, let us walk together towards the light of reconciliation with trust and hope.**

Fr. Michael: Our time begins with the lighting of the second candle of Advent. In procession, we hear the prophetic voice say, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord".

Fr. Michael: Scripture says, "A voice cries out in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'" and we now light the candle of PEACE. We speak our hope in whispers; restore us again, O God of our salvation.

People: **O God, give us your peace.**

Fr. Michael: In anticipation, we prepare for your coming. Breathe new life into us again so that we may rejoice in you.

People: **O God, give us your peace.**

Fr. Michael: Amidst rising hope, we turn to you, O God: show us your steadfast love.

People: **O God, give us your peace.**

Fr. Michael: O Lord hear your words to us in our time and space: speak peace to your people.

People: **O God, give us your peace.**

Fr. Michael: Faithful God, prepare our hearts to receive your joy; may peace and justice kiss in our time. Faithful God, help us prepare our hearts and homes for the birth of Messiah. Show us how to make the path of our lives and the world peace-filled, so that we can joyfully receive our Saviour. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen and Amen.**

(Jerusalem Greer, Good News Gardens, The Episcopal Church of the United States 2023)

Fr. Michael: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: Sacred soil below us, sacred sky above us; sacred water beside us, sacred breathe within us; sacred Spirit before us, Creator God make us new. And now, as people called, and people gathered around sacred fire and sacred flame, we pray,

People: **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Together, three times we pray,

People: **Holy God, holy and mighty; holy Immortal One, have mercy on us.**

Fr. Michael: Almighty God, who sent your servant John the Baptizer to prepare your people to

welcome Messiah, inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth, to turn our disobedient hearts to you, that when Christ shall come again to be our judge, we may stand with confidence before his glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: Holy God of peace and joy; we rejoice in the reality of who you truly are. We live within the joy of your love for us. Our contentment comes and goes; our happiness ebbs and flows; our feelings depend upon our circumstances, our physical health, our brain chemistry. But our joy and sense of peace is deeply rooted in our identity as your beloved ones and for this we give you thanks and praise.

All: **Amen**

Reader: A reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (Isaiah 40:1-11)

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Shepherding God, guide us through this season of anticipation and hope. Comfort our troubled minds and strengthen our tired bodies. Restore the hope which this season offers so that we might lift up our voices with strength and joy! Straighten the crooked paths so that we might walk in your ways; level the rocky ground, so that we might prepare for your arrival in our world; in Jesus' name we pray.

All: **Amen**

Reader: Our psalm for this new day is Psalm 85

You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, you have restored the good fortune of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.

All: **Show us your mercy, O Lord.**

Reader: I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him. Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.

All: **Show us your mercy, O Lord.**

Reader: Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth

shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

All: **Show us your mercy, O Lord.**

Reader: The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness shall go before him, and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

All: **Show us your mercy, O Lord.**

Reader: A reading from the second letter of Peter to the Church (2 Peter 3: 8-15)

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: God of the covenant, through the prophets of old and those of today you call us to live up to the challenge of the gospel if we want to be your people. Stir us from our comfortable, self-satisfied ways; make us restless to hasten the coming of your Son and his kingdom; fill us with the fire of your Spirit to bring the warmth of the love and integrity of Jesus into this cold and hurting world. Give us the lasting peace of Jesus we pray.

All: **Amen** (Joanna Harader, Spacious Faith website)

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Blessed St. Mark (St. Mark 1:1-8)

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Fr. Michael: The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

This is the very Gospel of Christ.

People: **Thanks to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Homily

Fr. Michael: Faith means betting your life that something is true and faith is betting your life that there is Light in the dark of our darkness. As children of the light, we affirm,

**All: I believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Reader: Creator God, revealed to us in Jesus of Nazareth, present to us now through your Spirit; we hear your call to care for the lost, the last, the least, the lonely and the little, knowing that even through us your grace may touch lives.

People: **Hear our prayer and come to us soon!**

Reader: Loving God, friend of outcast and stranger, prejudiced in favour towards those whom others reject, we hear your call to care for those on the margins of this world. Aboriginal sisters and brothers lost on their own land, refugees seeking asylum and new hope, those excluded from our communities. May our ministries offer dignity and respect to each and every person and offer a place at the table for the stranger and the outcast. We pray for the Church, especially for our diocese and this week we especially commend before you Shane, our Bishop; Anne, our Metropolitan; Linda, our Primate; Our Community Ministries: Centre 105, Cornerstone Housing for Women, Ottawa Pastoral Counselling Centre, Refugee Ministry and Belong Ottawa: Centre 454; St Luke's Table; and The Well as well as St. John's Smiths Falls and The Reverend Dr. Thomas Brauer

People: **Hear our prayer and come to us soon!**

Reader: Gracious God, relating to us as a generous parent, offering yourself in love to every person; we hear your call to offer the hope of renewed relationships where trust and hope have been displaced by fear and jealousy, where family has become a place of abuse rather than nurture, where hurts both real and imagined remain unhealed and unforgiven. May our ministries offer your gifts of grace and reconciliation and hold out the hope for restored and renewed human relationships. We pray for ourselves here at Holy Trinity, remembering especially those who have asked us to hold them in prayer – Liesa, Marjorie, Beth, Randy, Howard, Irene, Richard, Deb, Leonard, Louise, Sarah, Jeanette, Cheryl, Zachariah and those who are known to you alone.

People: **Hear our prayer and come to us soon!**

Reader: Living God, known to us in the dance of the Spirit community which we called the Blessed Trinity, mediated to us through the fellowship of all God's children; we hear your call to offer new communities of meaning and hope to those living in isolation and emptiness, to those whose lives lack purpose or direction, to those seeking a safe place to nurture their Spirit-journey. May our ministries offer deep and committed friendship and a way to find connectedness with those who travel with them through this life.

People: **Hear our prayer and come to us soon!**

Reader: God of all names, whose presence lives in those whom you call by name and whose presence goes before us into the lives of those to whom we are called to minister; we hear your call to serve in a variety of places and in a variety of ways. Help us to discern, affirm and commit ourselves to the journey and may we find renewed depth in our relationship with you; may we be

confirmed in our ministries, may we hear our individual call to giftedness and service so that we may continue to be a part of a healthy and life-affirming community of faith.

People: **Hear our prayer and come to us soon! Amen.** (Rob from Rob's Prayers at the Uniting Church SA website)

Fr. Michael: When we remember all the mistakes we have made, all the careless words we have spoken, all the contempt we have shown to those around us, we have trouble looking God in the eye. But God gazes at us with mercy, love and peace, waiting and willing to forgive us, even as we hesitate to speak from the brokenness of our hearts.

People: **Again we must confess, Master of the universe our struggles to be faithful disciples. Entrusted with all your gifts, we become fearful once again of abusing them, missing the chance to be a blessing to others. Invited to dance in the light of your love, we stand against the wall once again. Called to be emptied for those who struggle with life, we will ourselves to be comforters to others, with no scorn and judgment for the poor choices they make. Have mercy, journeying God, have mercy on us; open our eyes to the grace and peace of your kingdom at work among us so that we might discover that your day of hope, peace and grace has already come in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Fr. Michael: This is the good news: God intends us to live life, to embrace hope, to receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thanks be to God that we are forgiven in the power of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: And the peace of the Living Lord Jesus be always with you.

People: **And also with yourself.**

Fr. Michael: God our strength, we are nothing without you. Receive all that we offer you this day as you sustain us with your mercy; in the name of Jesus we pray.

All: **Amen.**

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Fr. Michael: We give you thanks and praise, almighty God, for the gift of a world full of wonder, and for our life which comes from you. By your power you sustain the universe.

All: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Fr. Michael: You created us to love you with all our heart, and to love each other as ourselves, but we rebel against you by the evil that we do. In Jesus, your Son, you bring healing to our world and gather us into one great family. Therefore, with all who serve you on earth and in heaven, we praise your wonderful name, as we sing

All: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Fr. Michael: We give you thanks and praise, loving Father, because in sending Jesus, your Son, to

us you showed us how much you love us. He cares for the poor and the hungry. He suffers with the sick and the rejected. Betrayed and forsaken, he did not strike back but overcame hatred with love. On the cross he defeated the power of sin and death. By raising him from the dead you show us the power of your love to bring new life to all your people. People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Fr. Michael: On the night before he gave up his life for us, Jesus, at supper with his friends, took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which is given for you." After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which is shed for you and for many, so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me."

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Fr. Michael: Gracious God, with this bread and wine we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus, and we offer ourselves to you in him. Send your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts, that we may know the presence of Jesus in the breaking of bread, and share in the life of the family of your children.

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Fr. Michael: Father, you call us to be your servants; fill us with the courage and love of Jesus, that all the world may gather in joy at the table of your kingdom. We sing your praise, almighty Father, through Jesus, our Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

People: **Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Remembering that we have been so blessed when Jesus gifted this to his Church, we pray,

People: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: God of promise, you prepare a banquet for us in your kingdom.

People: **Happy are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.**

WE SHARE THE GIFTS OF GOD WITH ONE ANOTHER

Fr. Michael: The gifts of God for all the children of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Fr. Michael: Faithful God, we thank you for feeding us with this heavenly banquet. Help us always to hear the prophets' call to turn our hearts to you; we ask this in the name of Jesus.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: God has called us to this place of Holy Trinity where we hear stories which show us what the kingdom is like; God summons us to this place of Holy Trinity, where we can learn how to serve our God without reservation or hesitation; God sends us from this place of Holy Trinity to tell others of God's hopes and dreams so they too can choose as we have to follow the Lord.

All: **Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: In this moment of worship, we have embraced your presence and we offer you our love; in this moment of prayer, we have proclaimed your purposes for the world and we offer you ourselves and our resources; in this moment of giving, we hear your call to service again and we offer you ourselves. Use us Lord – all that we have and all that we are so we may touch the world with the message of the manger: God is love, God is with us, God will never leave us. So, may the peace of God which passes all our understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God. And the blessing of God: Father, Son and Spirit, be with you and among us this week and always.

All: **Amen**

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