

**ST. DAVID'S (SHERMAN'S) UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

December 5, 2021

8:30 AM & 10:30 AM

WORDS TO PONDER

"Preparation is the key to success in almost every endeavor"

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

LEADER: Long ago, God spoke to the people of Israel through the prophet Malachi.

PEOPLE: **Malachi told them to prepare for God to come and transform everything.**

LEADER: God also sent John the Baptist, to prepare the way.

PEOPLE: **We, too, wait for God's transformation.**

LEADER: We light this candle of peace, waiting for the Prince of Peace to be born among us.

(The candle is lit)

UNISON: **O God of peace, teach us Your way of shalom, so that wars will cease, arguments end, and hatred and fear give way to compassion and hope. Help us to prepare the way, as we wait for the coming of the Prince of Peace.**

OPENING HYMN: "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People"

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| 1. Comfort, comfort, O my people, | Speak unto Jerusalem |
| Speak of peace, now says our God; | Of the peace that waits for them; |
| Comfort those who sit in darkness, | Tell of all the sins I cover, |
| Mourning 'neath their sorrows' load. | And that warfare now is over. |

2. Hark, the voice of one who's crying
In the desert far and near,
Bidding all to full repentance
Since the kingdom now is here.

O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise to meet him
And the hills bow down to greet him.

UNISON PRAYER

O God, You cleanse our tarnished souls and purify our thoughts by the refining fire of judgment; we wait for the day of Your messengers coming, and give thanks for His righteousness by which we are saved from wrath. He walks with us in the valley. He levels the barriers we raise to evade His will. His paths are straight; we need only follow. We can endure the day of His coming, thanks to Your mercy; our prayers can be pleasing to You because of His sacrifice for us.

We intercede for those who are despairing. For them the valley seems endless, with no hope of escape. The walls of their own sense of inability close in upon them; they feel alone in their ordeal. Help us to speak the word of comfort and assurance, to offer the embrace of companionship and concern. Together may we smooth the rough places and fill the valleys, so that Your will for them may be fulfilled.

We pray on behalf of those encumbered with burdens too heavy to bear. Some of the weight is of their own choosing, some is not. May Christ, who bore our sins upon the cross, ease the burden of all who strain beneath the load. Yoke us with Him and with all who are heavy laden, so that together we may complete the tasks You have assigned to us.

HOLY SCRIPTURES: Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 1:68-79, Luke 3:1-6

MALACHI 3:1-4

¹ "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and

purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

LUKE 1:68–79

⁶⁸ "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.
⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn^[a] of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
⁷¹ salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—
⁷² to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace."

LUKE 3:1–6

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—² during the high-priesthood of

Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.

⁵Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.

⁶And all people will see God's salvation.”

CHILDREN'S STORYTIME

SERMON: “Getting Ready”

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN

UNISON BENEDICTION

O Holy One of Israel. Remember now Your ancient promise; make straight the paths that lead to You, and smooth the rough ways, that in our day we might bring forth Your compassion for all humanity. AMEN

CLOSING HYMN: "There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying"

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Artist The Schola Cantorum of St. Peter's in the Loop Album. Music For Advent II
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| <p>1. There's a voice in the wilderness
crying,
A call from the ways untrod:
Prepare in the desert a highway,
A highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted,
The lofty hills brought low;
Make straight all the crooked places
Where the Lord our God may go!</p> | <p>2. O Zion, bring good tidings;
Get up to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people
The coming of their King.
Like the flow'rs of the field they
perish;
Like grass their works decay.
The pow'r and pomp of nations
Shall pass like a dream away;</p> |
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- 3.** But the Word of our God endures!
The arm of the Lord is strong.
He stands in the midst of the nations,
And he shall right the wrong.
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,
The lambs shall gently hold,
To pastures of peace He'll lead them,
And bring them safe to his fold.