

## Reflection for Advent 3, Matthew 11. 2-11

Only one of Advent's interpretations is about preparing for the birth of Jesus at Christmas, but it's a good one. So I offer this poem as a prompt or a help for considering both the ordinariness of the context and background, and the extraordinariness of the event. Our Gospel reading today also offers a pointer to what the kingdom of heaven might mean.

I might well read this poem at our carol service on Sunday night.

### *This was the Moment*

#### *From BC:AD*

This was the moment when Before  
Turned into After, and the future's  
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.

This was the moment when nothing  
Happened. Only dull peace  
Sprawled boringly over the earth.

This was the moment when even energetic Romans  
Could find nothing better to do  
Than counting heads in remote provinces.

And this was the moment  
When a few farm workers and three  
Members of an obscure Persian sect  
Walked haphazard by starlight straight  
Into the kingdom of heaven.

*UA Fanthorpe (1929-2009)*

*Fr David*

**Sundays in Advent: 18th Dec**  
**Evening prayer at 5pm via Zoom.**

**Meeting ID:** 839 0283 2802

**Passcode:** 625990

**Telephone Numbers:**

0131 460 1196. 0203 481 5237. 0203 481 5240.

Web link via the website and email.

**NEXT SUNDAY 18.12.2022** Advent 4

**SERVICES:** 10.30am in Church  
5pm Evening Prayer via Zoom

**READINGS:** OT Isaiah 7: 10-16  
NT Romans 1: 1-7  
GOSPEL Matthew 1: 18-25



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# St Thomas, Exeter

## 11th December 2022

### **Advent 3**

**10.30am in Church**  
**5pm Carols in Church**

#### **Today**

**10.30am** Sung Eucharist.

*Hymns for today*

209 Hills of the north, rejoice.

196 Hark! A herald voice is calling.

219 How lovely on the mountains.

**5pm** Carols.

#### **Tuesday 13th December**

**7.30pm** House Group. 'A song of Peace'.  
See Ian for details.

#### **Wednesday 14th December**

**10am** Holy Communion (BCP)

#### **Thursday 15th December**

**9.30—11am** St Thomas Tots

**10.30am** Knit & Natter. See notices.

#### **Friday 16th December**

**9.30am** Morning Prayer.

**10am** Staff Meeting.



## Collect

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## Isaiah 35: 1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

## James 5: 7-10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

## Matthew 11: 2-11

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to Jesus, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.' As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

## Post Communion

We give you thanks, O Lord, for these heavenly gifts; kindle in us the fire of your Spirit that when your Christ comes again we may shine as lights before his face; who is alive and reigns now and for ever. **Amen**

## NOTICES

For our services in Church, **mask wearing** is not now compulsory but we would still advise it while infection numbers remain high.

**Knit and Natter.** There are changes to the dates for December and January. On Thursdays 22nd & 29th December and Thursday 5th January 2023 there are no meetings. Thursday 12th January 2023 onwards at 19 Maple Road as usual. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

**Community Larder** is receiving donations on Tuesdays from 10-11am. On Sundays there will also be an opportunity to bring donations to the 10.30 service.

**House Group** Weekly during Advent on Zoom. We are looking at the songs sung by Zechariah, the Angels, Mary and Simeon. New people are always welcome; see Ian for zoom details.

As the weather gets colder we will be making a decision about where our Sunday worship should be. Would you please let the clergy and churchwardens have your **thoughts about staying in Church or moving to the Hall.** Thanks to those who have already said something.

There will be a **Craft Hub on 17th December** between 10am to 12noon in the Hall.

In the interests of safety we suggest that people should **not work alone in the Church.**

Food Fight (Food for Sundays) are looking for donations of warm clothing, such as hats, gloves, jackets and socks. They are also happy to receive individual-serving bottles/tetra packs of water or juices. **Volunteers are outside Nat West bank on Sunday mornings from 11am-1pm** so any donations can be dropped off there.

