

Hymn: StF 182 / H&P 84 **On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry**

Gospel Reading: [Luke 3:1-6](#) *John the Baptist*

I had to speak out. It felt as if the words came bubbling up from inside, I couldn't keep them in, no matter who didn't like it. We were under the thumb of the tetrarchs, and they were under the thumb of Rome, and this holy land of God's people was a long way from being holy. The rich and powerful had it all their own way, the rest of us managed as best we could in some sort of pecking order: those on the bottom of the heap were squashed. This isn't what God wants for his people! The poorest shouldn't feel they have a mountain to climb to make ends meet, paying even more in taxes for the folk at the top who have more than they can know what to do with. The prophets used to talk about 'justice and righteousness' - we need to hear that even more now! Things need to be evened out, so that everyone has what God wants for them: life together, in all its fullness. I had to speak out. God's promises needed to be heard again.

Pause for thought – what needs to be evened out in your community or the wider world today? Who is speaking out? What are you called to do?

Prayer

God of infinite skies and intricate flowers

Thank you for drawing close in a baby

God of universes and galaxies

Thank you for coming to share our world

God of the furthest reaches of light and dark

Thank you for Jesus, Light of the World, who dwells with and within us

Hymn: StF 696 / H&P402 **For the healing of the nations**

Blessing

Series created by Jean Hudson, John Boyd, Tony Buglass & Tricia Mitchell

ADVENT WORSHIP AT HOME:
week 2 5 December 2021



Prophetic Voices

We gather in the company of our incarnate God...

Malachi 3: 1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. (v1)

Hymn: StF 172 / H&P 237 **Hills of the North rejoice**

Prayer

Holy God, we thank you for these Advent days of repentance, preparation, anticipation. Yes, we need to realise that your work in us is incomplete, that we are still being shaped by your Spirit to become ever more like Jesus, that we don't get everything right. But you are a God of grace and forgiveness. You have chosen to make your dwelling with us because you love us and you will never leave us and for all these things we give you thanks. So may we be ready to welcome Jesus once more into our lives and our world and be filled with hope. **Amen.**

Prophetic voices:

Malachi is one of the later prophets of Israel looking for God's deliverance. John the Baptist issues powerful calls to turn around. The prophets are noted for their challenging observations and their call to action. Who is God speaking out through today?

Hymn: StF 178 / H&P 83 **Long ago, prophets knew**

Reading: [Philippians 1: 3-11](#)

This is a season of hope,
Advent, the coming of God
in Jesus – Immanuel, God with us.

The world is not
an easy place
for a child born now,
a world of pandemic ill-health,
and climate change.
The future is very uncertain.
Yet this is the world
we and God inhabit,
the world into which
we welcome Jesus,
even as we go through the fire
of overwhelming anxiety.

In biblical times of crisis
God was heard
through the prophets,
not so much foretelling the future,
as telling God's people
how to live in the present
and be prepared for the future.
In our crisis
God has provided
prophets for us.
Old, young, royal, anonymous
it doesn't matter, as long as
they speak to us
of both danger and
of hope and possibility –
Sir David Attenborough,
Greta Thunberg,
Prince William,

the 750 candidates for
the first Earthshot Prize,
global project to
restore nature,
revive oceans,
build a waste-free world,
clean the air,
fix the climate.
All the candidates
are signs of hope,
gift of the God of all hope.

We are going through the fire,
as Malachi described,
but we do need to change
for the world to be healthy,
just, safe for all living beings
and God is changing us...

...so that we grow in love,
as Paul says,
able to work in harmony
to ensure the church
is ready to meet the challenges
these days are bringing.

John the Baptist,
like all prophets
addressed contemporary
matters affecting
people's lives and their
relationship with God.
So it is with our prophets
who speak with clarity and integrity,
imparting unwelcome knowledge

but offering hope
for all living beings
sharing the planet,
embraced by God's covenant love.

Maranatha,
come, Lord Jesus,
Hope for all the world.

Pause to pray for those in despair.

Hymn-Prayer: StF 718 **We lay our
broken world in sorrow at your feet**

**Maranatha,
come Lord Jesus,
Hope for all the world.**