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**Broomhill Hyndland  
Parish Church**

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*"Lighting the Way"*

for **Sunday 13 December 2020**

Dear Friends, welcome to the third Sunday in Advent.

For those who will be worshipping in Naseby, you will be led by our Session Clerk, Gordon MacCallum. As indicated last Sunday a positive case of Covid was recorded which has now isolated the family for 14 days. Gordon has kindly stepped up to the mark and will conduct the service today.

My thanks to Gordon for this. The Zoom service therefore returns to 7pm led by me, so please tune in. I would like to record my thanks to those who have phoned and emailed asking about shopping and how they could help at number 27. We appreciate the bread, the medicines etc. that have been dropped off, as well as the messages made in words and prayer.

Next Sunday is our Nativity service and the children and staff, as well as those in the 'communications department', have all worked hard, to not only show the children on the screen in a different way but also to stream the service.

Please note, if you are in attendance, that cameras will be in place to allow the streaming to take place.

As a family we hope to be soon allowed out once more, meanwhile I have arranged Stuart Murdoch to conduct worship for WD40 on the 16th in the Kingsborough Sanctuary.

On Christmas Eve, in the knowledge that our streaming is working, our service will take place at 7pm in Naseby then to be streamed later on Christmas Eve. After that the next service will be on Sunday 27th at 10.30am in Naseby.

As intimated last week by Zoom, many thanks to Amanda for providing a super Quiz Night of Trivia. Well done to the winners, 'Ever Hopeful' who may need to change their name now that they have tasted success. But maybe not... we live in hope, we are ever hopeful.

Every blessing, George

*For booking places at the Christmas services –*

*Monday 21st December for Christmas Eve 7.00pm*

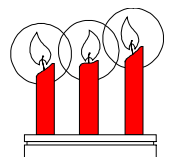
*Tuesday 22nd December for the 27th 10.30am*

*Tuesday 29th December for the 3rd January 2021 10.30am*

*The normal time of phoning – 10am to 3pm. **07851 591 503***

**Sunday 13 December - Third Sunday of Advent (Year B)**

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday, the readings for this Sunday are: Isaiah 61: 1- 4, 8-11; Psalm 126 or the Magnificat; 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24; John 1:6-8; 19-28



For those who miss the hymns I have added them in. Sunday's hymns are: 277 Hark the glad sound; The Advent journey; 125 Lord of all being throned afar; 348 Praise the One who breaks the darkness.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on John but please read and ponder the suggested Scripture and see how it connects and what it says to you.

**Rest in His arms ..... read, reflect, rejoice...**

### **CALL**

I am not the light.  
I have come to bear witness to the light.  
The true light that enlightens everyone is coming into the world.  
The light was in the beginning, in me.  
It grows; it comes into the world.  
May all that I do bear witness to the light that is you,  
the light that is in me.  
I am your witness, your word, your light.

### **OUR ADVENT CANDLE**

Take this light, let it shine:  
call of God, love divine,  
summons old Abram's line,  
hope for all the nations  
gift of God's salvation.

*Shine, O candles, shine,  
Burn with love divine,  
to the night,  
comes the light  
of the Father's glory.*

Take this flame, let it burn:  
prophets called: "From sin turn,  
come to God, evil spurn:  
God will love and pardon,  
bear away your burden."

Take this wick, let it glow  
for the one come to show  
way of God, Christ to know:  
baptise in the river,  
new life to deliver.

(Now, light your candle)

### **INTROIT**

Jesus bids us shine, with a pure clear light,  
like a little candle burning in the night.  
In this world is darkness; so let us shine,  
you in your small corner, and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, first of all for him,  
well he sees and knows it, if our light grows dim:  
He looks down from heaven to see us shine,  
you and your small corner, and I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine, then, for all around;  
many kinds of darkness in the world are found –  
sin, and want, and sorrow; so we must shine,  
you in your small corner, and I in mine.  
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## **PRAYER**

God of love,  
we come before you this day with praise and thanks:  
praise for all that your hands have made;  
praise for all you do in our daily lives; thanks for this day and each day.

God of all,  
we come before you this day with our questions and our fears.  
We come seeking guidance and comfort.  
We come seeking a glimpse of your vision.

God of forgiveness,  
we take this time to say sorry for words said out of turn,  
for actions done before thinking, for harmful thoughts and deeds.

God of light,  
a light which breaks through all forms of darkness,  
shine upon us this day, light our path this day,  
be our beacon, showing the way, this day and every day.  
Help us prepare for his coming.  
Like a room you fearlessly remodel and decorate with long, tiring effort,  
help us make our lives a new place for holiness to be born in us.

Let this wonder unfold within us.  
How will we live, knowing we are chosen  
to bear the divine presence into the world?  
Knowing we are to be the light for all mankind?  
A city on a hill?

Let the Coming One be known in you,  
in all that you do, and in all that you are.  
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,  
the power and the glory, for ever, AMEN

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

Let us turn to God's Word, found in the Gospel of John 1: 6-8,  
19-28.

'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'



## **MUSICAL INTERLUDE**

## **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Let our whole life be a witness to your light. Make it our reason for being. No  
guile in us. No dimness – not anymore. AMEN

## REFLECTION

There is, 'Britain's Got Talent', 'The Masked Singer', 'The X Factor', 'The Last Choir Standing' – all shows that produce singers of varying degrees but the one that intrigues me, is 'The Voice.'



The first televised auditions are blind auditions in which the four coaches, normally recording actors in their own right, listen to the participants with their chairs facing the other way from the stage. If a coach likes what they hear, they press a button and the chair rotates to signify their interest.

When John the Baptist is asked by priests and Levites, he answered who he was not.

'I am not Elijah', he said.

'I am not the Prophet,' he said.

'I am not the Messiah.'

'I am not 'the Voice'... I am the voice of someone shouting in the desert, make straight a path for the Lord to travel.'

I am not Jesus. We are not Jesus. We are not Saviours. We are not infallible. One of the biggest mistakes the Church has made is claiming identities, privileges, powers that didn't belong to us. When we make outlandish claims we hurt ourselves, those whom we are there to support and guide and the cause of Christianity.

We become stumbling blocks to the faith rather than stepping stones we are trying to share.

But look at John. If there is anything we can learn from this rather wild cousin of Jesus, his strange dress sense and his culinary choices, is the humility to realise that we are not Jesus and that we are not God. 'I am not ', he constantly repeats and reiterates and, like the TV programme, he encourages us to turn to the true voice that will come, if only we would listen.

John doesn't promise the world. He doesn't promise comfort. He doesn't even say, 'that's my cousin'. He asks people to listen and lays, in preparation, the path for he who is coming after to arrive.

It is probably appropriate that Gordon takes the service this morning as the Manse family are stuck in isolation. Whilst I have been trained to do this, that and the other and carry authority for whatever, the levelling of this is that I am not the Messiah.

I am not Jesus. Gordon and I, and you for that matter, all have the same purpose and that is to speak, teach, live and love in a way that directs people away from us to Jesus. We are not the voices... the Voice comes in a new way.

I still recall Gordon taking a Christmas service in the Naseby sanctuary and when a parishioner came in to the lights and laughter on Christmas Eve in preparation for the big day, looking up, and walking out 'because it's no' the minister'!!

God speaks through us all – whether gifted in the gab, or thoughtful in our response- think of the characteristics of the disciples – all not 'the voice' but encouraging others to turn, to turn away from the selfishness in our lives, to turn as the word repentance suggests, and put our life in order for the arrival of Christ.

Please remember that John is a strong character. He does speak with authority. Many have flocked to be baptised by him, such are his words and his voice but he knows where his authority comes from. He does not like religious power or

political power: he has problems with institutions and structures that hold that power and so he preaches in the wilderness far from the prestige of Jerusalem. We have, over a good number of Sundays, pointed to the fact that Jesus could be found in the periphery. We have read and know the stories that Jesus spends his time with those excluded, with people who have no power and have no voice.

I think of all these singing programmes, all these potential stars grasping for the limelight, the fame, the fortune, the record deal ...

... and then I think of cousin John...

... in a world that promises accolades and awards, loves the rave reviews...

we have John who points away from himself and recognises that the one who comes after: he is not fit enough to tie his bootlaces. John baptises with water but Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit. We have to be witnesses to other than ourselves.

It never has been about you and me but about Jesus.

It should never be about what we want but what Jesus wants. As we head towards Christmas and 2021 our job is to prepare a road for that child/man. Of course our voices are important, especially for those in the world who believe they are not heard, as the picture at the beginning of the reflection suggests, 'find your voice.'

There are many who need to be heard – especially, like John, those who face institutions that ignore the cries but we need to also find our voice to spread the wonderful message of the joy of Christ being born in the world. Christmas has often been about 'what I want' – but it should be pointing away from you and me.

All our work should be doing the same: preparing the road for Christ to travel. Like the old car bumper sign written to those who drive too close 'Don't follow me – follow Jesus.'

We are nearly there as regards Christmas and I remember a favourite film of mine, 'The Bishop's Wife', starring Cary Grant, Loretta Young and David Niven. At the end of the film (spoiler alert) the Bishop starts his sermon about the gifts people receive; - 'Tonight I want to tell you about an empty stocking. Once upon a midnight clear, there was a child's cry. A blazing star hung over and wise men came with birthday gifts. We haven't forgotten that night down the centuries: we celebrate with stars on Christmas trees, the sound of bells and with gifts. But especially with gifts. You give me a book. I give you a tie... We forget nobody, adult or child. All stockings are filled... except one. And we have even forgotten to hang it up. The stocking is for the child in the manger. It's his birthday we are celebrating...'

It's Jesus' birthday we are celebrating but it has become about us.

I am not Elijah.

I am not the Messiah.

I am 'a' voice in the wilderness.... listen to that voice (press the button and turn around to face your Saviour)

John said, 'I am not the light, I come to bear witness to the light.'

May this always be true, through the darkness of winter as well as the joy of Spring. AMEN

## **PRAYER**

Your voice, Lord God, is the voice crying out for justice;  
the voice aching for wholeness;  
the voice ranging ahead of us, inviting us to stand fast for justice,  
caressing our vulnerability, tempting us to become whole.

In stillness, let us seek to become the open voice of God.

(Silence )

We pray: with people who only hear tormenting voices  
raging inside their heads, self-destructive voices,  
oppressive voices, saying, 'You're not good', 'You're wicked,' 'You're no one.'

For people whose voices boom so loudly  
they imagine they speak with the voice of God;  
for multi-national corporations, dictators and bullies;  
politicians lost in their own self-importance;  
countries who imagine they have a special calling from God.

We pray with those voices that don't seem to count;  
whose mouths move, but no one listens;  
whose voices can't penetrate the plate glass of our indifference;  
and for ourselves who are assaulted by a Babel of voices telling us,  
'You need this', 'You want that', 'Buy this product: you'll be more popular,  
you'll be more beautiful.'

In silence... we strain to hear the voice of you Lord God.

(Silence )

Out of the troubles of silence gather us, voice of God, agitate us, excite us,  
startle us with your unexpected presence.

AMEN

(a prayer by Rachel Mann, p197 Candles and Conifers by Ruth Burgess ) adapted

## **ANTICIPATION**

HY 277 Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes

## **BENEDICTION**

God of Love, guide us to the stables of our world,  
where the lonely and longing gather.

Lead us to the mangers of our time,  
where hope and renewal are born again.

Make us heralds of your love and joy.

Go in Peace...

and May the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with us all.

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