



Sunday 15th December 2024 — Advent 3

WORSHIP TODAY

9:00am St Peter, Bromyard Holy Communion
 10:30am St Peter, Bromyard Morning Worship
 6:30pm St Peter & St Paul, Stoke Lacy Carol Service

TODAY'S READINGS – Advent 3

Morning: Zephaniah 3.14-20; Isaiah 12.2-6*;
 Philippians 4.4-7; Luke 3.7-18
Evening: Psalms 75 [76]; Isaiah 40.1-11; Luke 1.1-25

COLLECT FOR ADVENT 3

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.

REFLECTION FOR ADVENT 3

*“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,
 to give his people the knowledge of salvation
 through the forgiveness of their sins” (Luke 1:76-77).*

These words are taken from the song of Zechariah (“the Benedictus”), which Zechariah sang following the naming of his son. That son was John the Baptist, and these words are the only lines about him in that song, even though Zechariah is singing in joy over him.

The rest of the song is about God’s faithfulness to His promises in rescuing His people. It’s a beautiful song well worth reading. Zechariah’s joy is focused on what God is doing: God’s sent John the Baptist as a forerunner that prepares the way for Jesus. And, when we look at the Old Testament context of ‘preparing the way of the Lord’ (from Isaiah 40:3-5), it means God is coming. Here, God arrives in Jesus.

That’s why the focus isn’t on John the Baptist. How many Christmas cards feature John? How many Christmas carols? The focus is on Jesus.

But how did ‘preparing the way for the Lord’ go? John the Baptist ended up dressed in camel hair, eating insects, living in a desert, and standing apart from the world. He had a ministry of calling people to repentance, saying hard truths about turning from ungodly living to putting God first in all things. He spent much of his ministry imprisoned by Herod Antipas, speaking truth to power. And the only person he ministered to for any length of time (Herod again) ended up cutting his head off. His job was to prepare the way for Jesus – but Jesus was rejected by His own people and crucified on a cross.

These things seem like failures. John the Baptist didn’t have a great time of things. And yet Jesus says that among human beings there has arisen nobody greater than John the Baptist (Matt 11.11) – he’s greater than Abraham, Moses and David. John’s role as a herald of Jesus’ arrival and coming kingdom is crucial – and yet Jesus then says that the lesser ones in His Kingdom are greater than John. This isn’t making a statement about John’s salvation, but pointing out our privilege living in this era of what God is doing, which John was helping to prepare. We are God’s children, with hitherto undreamed of access to and intimacy with God as our Father.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus’ first coming. In a sense, we are the forerunners of Jesus’ second coming. Are we able to stand apart from the world and speak the gospel with winsome love and grace? Are we willing to sacrifice our comfort for Jesus’ kingdom and Jesus’ glory? Are we willing to experience rejection from those who oppose God, whether from within or outside the church? Are we willing to decrease, so that Jesus might increase?

Rev David

Sunday 22nd December 2024 - Advent 4

10:30am	St Peter, Bromyard	Holy Communion
3:00pm	Moreton Jeffries	Carol Service
	Brockhampton Chapel	Carol Service
5:00pm	St Peter, Bromyard	Carol Service

READINGS – Advent 4

Morning: Micah 5.2-5a; Psalm 80.1-8; Hebrews 10.5-10; Luke 1.39-45 [46-55]
Evening: Psalms 123 [131]; Isaiah 10.33 - 11.10; Matthew 1.18-25

PARENTS & TODDLERS

We have an opportunity to start a Parents & Toddlers group in the New Year. If you would be interested in helping with this, please chat to Rev Phil or Rev David.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK

We are looking to provide regular activities for children joining us at St Peter's. If you would be interested in helping with this, please talk to Rev Phil or Rev David. Volunteer's will need to do safeguarding training and have a DBS check.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

In the run up to Christmas we have a number of services planned.

Saturday 14th December	4:00pm	St Peter, Bromyard	Bromyard Choral Society Concert
Sunday 15th December	6:30pm	St Peter & St Paul, Stoke Lacy	Carol Service
Tuesday 17th December	11:00am	Highwell House Care Home	Carol Service *
	2:00pm	Whitegates Care Home	Carol Service *
Wednesday 18th December	9:30am	St Peter, Bromyard	QE Yrs 7&8 Christmas Service
	7:00pm	Woodland Drive, Stoke Lacy	Carol Singing
Thursday 19th December	2:00pm	St Peter, Bromyard	St Peter's School Christmas Service
Friday 20th December	11:00am	Froome Bank Care Home	Carol Service *
Sunday 22nd December	3:00pm	Brockhampton Chapel	Carol Service
	3:00pm	Moreton Jeffries	Carol Service
	5:00pm	St Peter, Bromyard	Carol Service

* It would be lovely to have a group of church members joining us at our Care Homes

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Our Christmas services for this year will be:

Tuesday 24th December	11:30pm	St Peter, Bromyard	Midnight Communion
Wednesday 25th December	9:00am	Brockhampton Chapel	Christmas Communion
	10:00am	St Peter & St Paul, Stoke Lacy	Christmas Communion
	10:30am	St Peter, Bromyard	Christmas Communion

BROMYARD FOODBANK

Items urgently needed this week:

Food for diabetics, savoury biscuits, tinned meats, dried dog & cat food, tinned fruit, jam & spreads, pasta, tinned tomatoes, UHT milk, cereal, coffee, tinned big soup

Foodbank are always willing to welcome potential new volunteers. Please contact Emma Stapley or Rev Phil for more information.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Margaret Hamilton-Herbert, Iain Elliott, Alan Seabrook, Peter Cliff

Recently bereaved: the families of John Allan, Michael Farrell, Hilda Evans, Gillian Haines, Mary Caiger, Sylvia Darby, Philip Hodgeson, Phillip 'Rupert' Morris, Carolyn Cooper, Derek Hiles, Jeremy Holden, Alex Hoyle, Brenda 'Topsy' Bradford, Netti Evans, Claire Hollis, Peder Nielson, Revd Michael Smith

CONTACTS

Revd Philip Miller - Vicar (rest day—Monday)
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Revd David Hall - Curate (rest day-Friday)
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The Parish Office is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9:30am-12noon 01885 483749 admin@stpetersbromyard.org.uk

Parish website: <https://stpetersbromyard.org.uk/>

Find us on:

