

## Saturday 12th December



The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way –  
“a voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

*[Mark 1: 1–4]*

These are words we often hear during Advent: the calling to make straight the paths in the wilderness. At the time these words were written by Isaiah, this is the preparation that would have been made for the king to arrive. A messenger would let the people know they were coming, then the people would get ready. They would tidy the area, put on their best clothes, prepare food and, most importantly, ensure the road was clear. This would mean clearing rubble to make the journey easier, straightening the road to make the journey quicker – anything to ensure the king arrived safely and on time.

Advent is the time we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus, *our* king. Usually we clean our homes, decorate our houses, get food prepared for the family, and often attend worship. Children put up stockings and get snacks ready for Santa and Rudolf.

But how else do we prepare for our king’s arrival? Do we clean our lives of things that distract us from God? Do we find ways to celebrate the coming of our king in sharing stories with others and spreading good cheer? This year we have decided to let everyone passing our church know we are thinking of them with banners wishing them a Merry Christmas and offering to pray for them; they don’t even need to come into the building or speak to us – they can drop us a message. We felt that this year especially people needed to hear the good news. How are you sharing the good news this Christmas season?

*Advent God*

*Thank you for bringing us joy and hope*

*As we prepare for your coming*

*Help us to share the good news with others*

*That they too may feel the joy of your presence*

*And know the hope from your coming among us*

*Amen*