

Intercessions 18 December 2016

Reading 1: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

In Advent we recall and reflect on God's dramatic break into the world which brings a radically new reign of righteousness and peace.

Isaiah saw:

Streams of water and abundant blossom in the desert;
Strengthened limbs;
Sight restored to the blind;
Hearing restored to the deaf;
Straight highways of justice levelling out all the uneven places of injustice and suffering

The political context to Advent season may seem poignantly relevant this year as we wait for new political kingdoms around Europe and in the USA.

We'll use a Magnificat based prayer to help us prepare to not be narrowly political, but to bring God into our hearts and the world:

Our soul magnifies you, Lord, and our spirit rejoices in God our Saviour.
Thank you for looking on our humble estate.
Thank you for blessing us through the incarnation of Jesus.
You have done great things for us and holy is your name.
Your mercy has been poured out on us and to the next generations.
Show your strength in our lives and in the lives of those we love;
Scatter the proud; bring down the mighty from their thrones and exalt the humble;
Fill the hungry with good things, and turn the hearts of the rich to be generous and kind.
Come to the aid of all your servants, Lord, remember your great mercy
and speak as you spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

There is concern that the new political kingdoms will pay little or no heed to climate change and the harm that we are inflicting on the planet.

Paul wrote:

"In (Christ) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross." (Colossians 1:19-20)

Lord God our Creator, who has made planet earth to sustain a myriad of forms of life, give us courage, wisdom and perseverance to stand up publicly against all abuse of your earth for wrongful gain, exploitation for selfish greed and all casual indifference to the dangers now clearly visible. Make us responsible, caring guardians of our inheritance and give us wisdom to find the right means to protect it.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

How we treat the most vulnerable is how we treat Jesus. He will know how much we love him by how we respond - or don't respond to them. We pray for people who are standing up and defending those most at risk:

Lord, hear our prayers for Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo;

for people leaving everything behind to flee to safety,

for those who have lost loved ones,

for lives interrupted, educations stalled and families separated.

We thank you for the work of NGOs and peacemaking bridge builders,

for the hospitality of neighbours, the generosity of strangers,

for all those who give of themselves to help others,

for those who refuse to be silent in the face of injustice.

Lord, give the people of Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo hope,

for peace and justice to prevail,

for there to be new beginnings for all people living in those countries,

for freedom to replace fear and for there to be a better tomorrow.

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

Hear us as we pray for those who live with doubt, suffering, fear, sorrow; those for whom every day requires courage and sacrifice.

Within our community we prayer for

and ask for healing, protection and restoration.

We remember those who have died and their families and friends who mourn

We remember the anniversaries of

Lord, in your mercy Hear our prayer

During Advent, some of us have been using a small length of string with knots tied into it, each to represent a friend or family member, as a reminder to pray for those people every day. Let us use the prayer today for each other here in this congregation, and in the St Andrew's Centre in Junior Church, that we would know God's love:

May our eyes be open to the miracle of each moment and a warm embrace hold us this day.

May we have the courage to know and accept ourselves and others, and may beauty and friendship brighten our lives. May

the kindness of God the Father complete us;

the company of Christ the Son walk with us;

and the love of the Holy Spirit empower us today and always.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.