

**ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH**

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*Wednesday Service*

*Advent Week 1*

December 1, 2021

11:00 a.m. Service

## Wednesday Service

December 1, 2021

11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

### THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Celebrant: Lord, open our lips,

**All: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Celebrant: O God, make speed to save us.

**All: O Lord, make haste to help us.**

**All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

Celebrant: Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. *Luke 21.28*

### CANTICLE 7 ADVENT

Celebrant: My soul waits for the Lord;

**People: in his word is my hope.**

Celebrant: My soul waits for the Lord;

**People: in his word is my hope.**

Celebrant: Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice.

**People: In his word is my hope.**

Celebrant: There is forgiveness with you; therefore, you shall be feared.

**People: In his word is my hope.**

Celebrant: My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning.

**People: In his word is my hope.**

Celebrant: O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy.

**People: In his word is my hope.**

Celebrant: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. My soul waits for the Lord;

**People: in his word is my hope.**

### THE PSALMS

#### Psalm 12

Celebrant: Help me, Lord, for there is no godly one left;

**People:**            **the faithful have vanished from among us.**

Celebrant:        Everyone speaks falsely with his neighbour;  
**People:**            **with a smooth tongue they speak from a double heart.**

Celebrant:        Oh, that the Lord would cut off all smooth tongues,  
**People:**            **and close the lips that utter proud boasts!**

Celebrant:        Those who say, "With our tongue will we prevail;  
**People:**            **our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"**

Celebrant:        "Because the needy are oppressed, and the poor cry out in misery,  
**People:**            **I will rise up, "says the Lord, "and give them the help they long for."**

Celebrant:        The words of the Lord are pure words,  
**People:**            **like silver refined from ore and purified seven times in the fire.**

Celebrant:        O Lord, watch over us  
**People:**            **and save us from this generation for ever.**

Celebrant:        The wicked prowl on every side, \*  
**People:**            **and that which is worthless is highly prized by everyone.**

**All:**                **Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.**

## **The Proclamation of the Word**

### **A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF PETER 3:1-10**

This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; in them I am trying to arouse your sincere intention by reminding you that you should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour spoken through your apostles. First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts and saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!' They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and destruction of the godless.

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

The word of the Lord.

**People:**            **Thanks be to God.**

## **THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING MATTHEW 21:23-32**

**People:        Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’ Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?’ And they argued with one another, ‘If we say, “From heaven”, he will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “Of human origin”, we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.’ So, they answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

The Gospel of Christ.

**People:        Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**SERMON:    Fr. Simon**

### **Scope for change**

How do we measure faith in the Christian community? We measure it by doing – by obedience, by following through on what we promise to do, by embodying our faith and by making tangible the values that we hold so dear. Otherwise, we are simply hypocrites.

In the Psalm set for today the Psalmist contrasts what the people utter in contrast to what they do. His complaint to God is that “the faithful have vanished from among us” and that “with a smooth tongue they speak from a double heart”. In this sense their true failing is that “needy are oppressed, and the poor cry out in misery” as a result of their unfaithfulness and hypocrisy.

That same sentiment is expressed in the parable that Jesus tells in today’s Gospel of the two brothers. The first brother is asked by his father to work in the vineyard. He is emphatic in his reply, “I will not”, but reconsiders and goes out to do as his father has asked him. The second son – who we assume is a caricature of the chief priests and elders that Jesus is being critical of in the interaction that proceeds the parable – when asked to go and work in the vineyard says yet but fails to follow through. Jesus then asks the question, “Which of the two did the will of his father?” There answer is plain, “The first”. Jesus then responds, “Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

While we may take this as a criticism of their hypocrisy we could also read it as an offer of grace – “You can change your mind and choose to walk in obedience if you so wish, but you need to recognise that you are no better than those who you have depicted as below you because of their disobedience.” As Peter reminds us, “The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.” Again, this is an invitation to grace and rescues us from two classic human – choosing not to follow but being given a chance to reconsider and choosing to follow but failing in the follow through.

As James (2:14-19) reminds us, “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill’, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So, faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder.”

Historically Advent was a penitent season because it asked us to “prepare our hearts for the Coming of the Lord”. We are reminded yet again that, where we have rebelled against God or failed to live out our promises to God, grace still abounds. That we too can come to a fresh understanding of our faith and renewed call to live out our vocation to live out the kingdom of God by ensuring that the needy are not oppressed and that the poor do not have to cry out in misery, that the naked are clothed and the hungry are fed. Amen

**All:                    Amen**

*(Time allowed for Silent Reflection.)*

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**Hear, O Israel**

**All:                    Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first and the great commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.**

## **INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS**

(In joyful expectation let us pray to our Saviour and Redeemer, saying, “Lord Jesus, come soon!”)

**Celebrant:            O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live.**

**People:                Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**Celebrant:            O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us.**

**People:                Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**Celebrant:            O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more.**

**People:**        **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Celebrant:    O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open: come and free the captives from prison.

**People:**        **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Celebrant:    O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness: come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

**People:**        **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Celebrant:    O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires: Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one: come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.

**People:**        **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Celebrant:    O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us, Lord our God.

**People:**        **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

**All:**            **Amen.**

#### **THE COLLECT OF THE DAY (Prayer of the Day)**

**All:**            Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility, that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Celebrant:    Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us,

**All:**            Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen

#### **DISMISSAL:**

Celebrant:    Let us bless the Lord.

**All:**            **Thanks be to God.**

#### **NOTICES:**

#### **THE BLESSING:**

Celebrant: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore  
**All: Amen.**

### **THE DISMISSAL:**

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

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### **Assisting today:**

Celebrant (online): The Rev. Canon Simon Bell  
Celebrant in person: The Rev. Susan Snelling  
Preacher: Fr. Simon  
Video: Fr. Simon/David Paradis

### **This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:**

Joyce Antony & Family; Sharron Snider; Darlene Rose & Family; Lisa Marie; Cheryl C.; Peter Hubbard; Mark Ralston; Kim Middaugh; Pam Rees; Farrell & Frances McGinnis; Sophia L.; Jackson; Sally Smith; John & Terry; Marilyn Lloyd; Theresa & Pete; Valerie; Stephen and Martin Bertelsen; Darlene Jessem; Doreen; Adesh; Brenda Jessem; Brenda & Brian; Derek; Jaxon Croft; Sean.

### **The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:**

Alvin Maynard; Dave Lawrence; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jim Tomkins; Sheila Green; Carrie Snow; Sheri Scott; Carl; Mark & Erin; Wally Raymond; Christine; Audrey Moody; Lynda Raye; Garn Mennell; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Michelle Sinclair and mom; Jane & Ron Lewis; Cecilia Mowat; Laura Johnston; Marilyn Foley; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Jen Galicinski; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Fr. Murray; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Bill & Cathy Gray; Wendy Goodyer; Donna Wilson; Gordon Kennedy; Paul & Rose McIntyre; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

### **In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:**

The Diocese Ife East (Nigeria)

### **In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:**

Philip Aziz HIV/AIDS Hospice – a FaithWorks ministry