

7. Closing Prayer

Living flame of love,
so touch our hearts with your bright fire,
that we whose faith is sometimes weak, even
chilly, may burn with your passion.

Warm the globe with your love,
reflecting your care for all of your creation.

May your gentle whisper
break through the clamour of this world
and into our small corner.

Bring us back to the place
when our love was fresh
not embarrassed to speak
of you or thank you.

May the hope we treasure
be the song we sing
and the melody of our lives.

Chris Polhill (adapted)

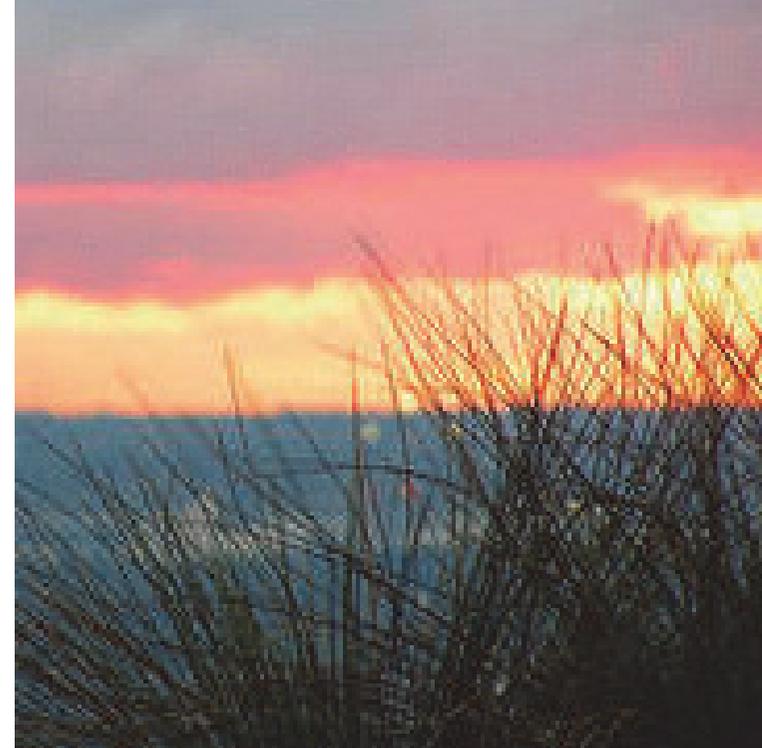
*The mountains may depart,
the hills be shaken
but my love for you will never leave you.*

Isaiah 54:10



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Making Space for Grace
Second Sunday of Advent 2018



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1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Prodigal God,
You set before us not merely sufficient,
but plenty.
You do not wish for us
deprivation or a meagre ration
but the glorious excess of life itself;
Fill us, then, with such sweet hunger
that we shall not rest
until we sit down with the oppressed
to share and savour the bread of liberation.

God of hope, who brought love into this world, be the love that lives within us.
God of hope, who brought peace into this world, be the peace that rests between us.
God of hope, the rock we stand on, be the centre and focus of our lives always and particularly at this Advent time.

Julie Greenan and anon

2. Gospel Text: Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod Tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip Tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
Make straight paths for him.
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall be made straight,
the rough ways smooth.
And all people will see God’s salvation.”

3. Quiet moment

People can read over the text for themselves and pick out words or short phrases that strike them and say them out loud. When everyone has had a chance to say their word or phrase, they can then reflect silently for a moment or two and then briefly say why such a word/phrase struck them – in relation to themselves or their community or the world

4. Reflection questions for Luke 3:1-6

1. There are unclaimed spaces near you. What would you like to do with them?
2. ‘Like people dreaming’ (Psalm 146: 1) – what would fill you with joy if it came to pass? Can you do anything to make it happen?
3. What do you want to adjust in your own life?

5. Prayers

Mentioning the people and situations we want to pray for.

6. Background Notes for Luke 3:1-6

Luke places John the Baptist on a wide political stage of imperial Rome, top Jewish rulers and the Jewish high priestly families. His coming out of the wilderness is in total contrast to their panoply of power. A form of baptism had been used with gentiles converting to the Jewish faith but here John is putting Jewish people in the same category – as needing conversion, a radical change of values and lifestyle.

The quote from Isaiah 40:3-5 underlines the need for uprooting, levelling, straightening, smoothing out and strengthening infrastructure. But this has to happen in people’s hearts. They need to let God hold sway. Accepting to be baptised would be a way of showing that they are ready to begin changing.

