

Second Sunday in Advent

The Second Sunday in Advent, in most traditions, calls us to reflect on the prophetic voices that foretold the coming of Christ. Some will focus on the Word of God itself, remembering the place of the Scriptures in our life and belief. It is also known as the “candle of love” reminding us that Christ has brought us hope, love, joy and peace. The laws of the Old Testament were founded on the simple principle that we are called to love God with all of our being and love our neighbours as ourselves. We recognise of course that the message of the Old Testament prophets is the “Word of the Lord” and might remember that their message was one of Justice, often calling people to return to that Covenant of Love that was expressed in God’s laws of justice and righteousness. As we celebrate and look to Christ’s coming, we cannot escape the call for justice which underpins this.

ISAIAH 42:1-4

*‘Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.
He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged
‘til he establishes justice on earth.
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.’*

On this second Sunday in Advent, we light again the first candle of hope
In continued thankfulness for the people and the stories on which our faith is founded.
We re-affirm our identity as God’s people; celebrate anew salvation’s gift.
And in its light, turn our faces again to the ways of God’s coming Kingdom.

And to this flame we add another,
Remembering that in every generation
There have been those for whom it is not enough to simply receive of God’s riches
But find themselves compelled to make God’s message known.

Theirs were voices that echoed the eternal truths of God’s word,
Making them plain in the language and rooted in the everyday life
Of those whom God would call to listen and hear
Beckoning hearts and minds to re-embrace laws of love and justice.

We celebrate those words of promise
Which spoke of one whose coming would herald the dawn of eternal hope
Declaring justice and all that is right
For every place and people; on every island and shore.

We have seen his coming, and in it seen enough
To believe that one day his every word and promise will be fulfilled.
And in our living and speaking, to seek to shed the light of its truth
Into every corner of our dark world.

God's word has come to us; God's love has been outpoured, and love's message is clear
That those who love God are called to obey his timeless command
To love our neighbour as ourselves
And in seeking out our neighbours, consider no-one a stranger.

And from this foundation spring Divine decrees, echoed in the voice of every prophet,
To provide for the orphan, care for the outcast, give bread to the hungry and defend the helpless.
We speak of God's coming by challenging any statute or structure
That will not give enough to those whose hands remain empty.

This flame declares that God has provided for our Salvation
A truth we make known in many words and symbols
Not least when we loosen our grasp and turn from our longing for what is only material
So that all might have enough.

Righteous God

**We hear again the voice of your prophetic word
Declaring your coming
And proclaiming your Kingdom
Of light, love and justice.**

**As we embrace afresh the promises of your salvation
And find strength in the timeless truths of your word
Help us to also hear their challenge
And allow our lives to be tested
By the light of their truth.**

**As we seek the coming of your Kingdom
Make us restless for its ways
Tireless in our endeavours to work for its fulfilment
And faithful in our resolve to declare its message**

AMEN

