

## Service for Week 9<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> December

2025 By Chaplain Andy

### **Opening Prayer**

Loving God, the great festival of Christmas is drawing nearer and we are busy preparing for it. Yet in all the bustle, we so easily forget what matters most- responding to the gift of your Son.

We thank you through Jesus for a new beginning rich in promise and filled with your love.

**Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven.....

**Amen**

### **Bible Reading Isaiah 9:6**

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

### **Second reading Isaiah 35:1-10**

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

Strengthen the feeble hands,  
steady the knees that give way;  
say to those with fearful hearts,  
"Be strong, do not fear;  
your God will come,

he will come with vengeance;  
with divine retribution  
he will come to save you."

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

And a highway will be there;  
it will be called the Way of Holiness.  
The unclean will not journey on it;  
it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;  
they will not be found there.  
But only the redeemed will walk there,  
and the ransomed of the LORD will return.

They will enter Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy will crown their heads.  
Gladness and joy will overtake them,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

**Holy words, Holy wisdom,  
Thanks be to God.**

### **Reflection**

In the Old Testament , we read the prophet Isaiah's message that God will send himself in the form of a Messiah to reconcile and bring people back to God. This appears in several places in Isaiah perhaps the most well known



being the verse 'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' A verse we will be saying or reading again as we celebrate Christ's birth this Christmas time.

Then Isaiah goes on to describe just how much the coming of Christ will change peoples understanding of God and the resulting change it will bring both to the world and to their lives. He expresses this in a most poetical way writing that all nature will rejoice and describes how even the most beautiful places in nature will become more fertile and abundant.

On a personal level Isaiah then describes how those that presently live in fear will be strengthened. 'Your God will come', 'Do not fear' he writes. Those who are oppressed will be helped and their oppressors brought to justice. Turning then his attention to the sick and the disabled and again poetically writes 'the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.' There follows Isaiah's description of 'the Way of Holiness.' This is a new direction in life, a new way of living that will come about through the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ.

This then is part of the vision that Isaiah had for how nature, how governments, how lives will be changed and transformed by a child to be born named Jesus. It is that vision, that appreciation and understanding of God and his purpose that we reflect on during this time of Advent.

If we have drifted away in our thinking, if we are not continuing to look forward in anticipation to celebrate the birth of Christ. Then Advent is a time to appreciate just what knowing God through Jesus Christ has brought to our world, and importantly brought to our lives.

Isaiah compares the feeling the people living then had when returning to Jerusalem after a time in exile to the feeling we have when renewing and returning to a close relationship with God. This Isaiah is saying is made possible through the coming of Jesus and will be like coming home.

I hope and pray that you will have that experience again this Christmas time and there will be singing and great joy.

**Amen**

### **Closing Prayer**

Open my heart to welcome the living Christ into my life, so I may rejoice in his love, not just at Christmas, but always.

**Amen**

Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett