



**SEASON OF ADVENT
WEEK THREE
13 DECEMBER 2020**

*“...as a garden causes
what is sown in it
to spring up...”*

—from Isaiah 61:11

We are waiting for you
Knowing that you always abide
We are waking to your presence
And our hearts are open wide, open wide, open wide

Words and music by Christopher Grundy

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, whose shadowed presence
encompasses everything,
we hold tenderly the promises
this season renews in our hearts.
This year has unravelled much,
we have been tossed around
by waves of change and uncertainty.

***Rest us in your steadfast love.
Hold us with your gracious Spirit.
Come to us, Lord Jesus, in our waiting...***

Come, Lord Jesus,
and fulfill our expectations.
Renew our spirits
and give us a reason to rejoice
even as we wait in hope.

Amen.

“God of all people”

God of all places: present, unseen;
Voice in our silence, song in our midst.
We are your people, knowing, unsure.

Come, Lord Jesus come!

God of all dreaming, near and yet far.
Vision unheard of, wake us to rest.
We are your presence, sent forth afraid.

God of all people, dust and the clay.
Breath of a new wind, fire in our heart.
Light born of heaven, peace on the earth.

Words and music: David Haas

ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING WORD

Reading from the Prophet Isaiah 61:1–3, 11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me
to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD,
to display his glory.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes
what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause
righteousness and praise to spring up
before all the nations.

“They that sow in tears” (Psalm 126)

written and performed by Peter Simpson*

1
They that sow in tears
Will reap with songs of joy and happiness
He who goes out weeping, with seed to sow
Will return with songs of joy

2
For the Lord our God is wonderful
Our God has done great things
The whole world is waiting
with joy and praise
For the great Redeemer King

Refrain:
Restore our fortunes, O Lord
Restore our fortunes, O Lord
Like streams that flow
in the desert land
Restore our fortunes, O Lord
And bring your harvest home

3
The Lord God most high heals broken hearts
Restores our hopes and dreams
Mouths are filled with laughter
with songs of joy
When the captives are set free

* Released from his home in Sydney for the end of lockdown on 1 December 2020

The Gospel According to John 1:6–8, 19–28

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

May your word live in us
and bear much fruit to your glory.

Reflection on the Word and Silence

RESPONDING WITH OUR LIVES

Taize Chant

"Nothing can ever"

Nothing can ever come between us and the love of God,
the love of God, revealed to us in Christ Jesus.

Prayers of Intercession

Eternal Love with and for us, we hold in your light our desires for the world, those we love and ourselves. Sometimes our sorrow runs deep and even our tears cannot empty us of our suffering, yet we trust that you hear our prayers and are able to bring peace to our hearts. So, come to us now as we enter the unceasing prayer of Jesus with our silence and as we share with one another our hopes and longings...

RESPONSE: In your mercy, ***hear our prayer.***

(You are invited to offer your prayer(s), simply and in your own words.

This will be followed by the lighting of candles.)

The Disciple's Prayer

*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 forever. Amen.*

Song

“May our lives and our prayers be one”

Refrain:

May our lives and our prayers be one
as our hopes shape the roads we walk on.
And when our work and our dreaming's done
may our lives and our prayers be one.

Within the rhythm of our days
we take the time to muse and pray.
The fears we face, the tears we taste
we view in light of holy grace.

We name our deepest hopes and dreams
for those we love and all we need.
We picture how the world could be.
We live the change we want to see.

Words and music: Paul Somerville

Blessing

The seed of God is in us.
Pear seeds grow into pear trees.
Nut seeds grow into nut trees.
God seed grows into God.
—Meister Eckhart

God of all places: present, unseen;

Voice in our silence, song in our midst.

We are your people, knowing, unsure.

Come, Lord Jesus come!

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