

Gospel Reading: [Luke.3:7-18](#) *One who came to be baptised*

John spoke of judgement. The way he talked - shouted! - he made us all feel that God was going to come down on us in real judgement. Just because we were Jews wouldn't save us, he said - I thought we were in trouble; I went forward to see if I could be baptised, I half-expected to be sent packing. I know we haven't got things right, I know we've paid lip-service to religion, ignored God except for the Sabbath and stuff - but he baptised us! And it wasn't just a ritual: there was a light in his eyes, a look on his face - I felt welcomed, embraced, loved. It wasn't just me: there were tax-collectors who we knew were ripping everyone off, and soldiers, the ones who'd enjoyed being in charge and milking it for all they could get - he did us all, baptised us, celebrated God's love for all of us! He talked about Messiah, coming to sort us all out - this was just the start, the promise of new life in a new world. It was a good beginning!

Pause for thought – what is the challenge in Jesus's economics for you today?

Prayer:

As tinsel sparkles in Christmas lights

May our lives shine with kindness

As candles light up churches and homes

May our lives shine with gentleness

As stars glitter in the dark winter skies

May our lives shine with hope

As the sun lights up the short winter days

With Jesus may we light up the world with love.

Hymn: StF 566 / H&P 705 **Take my life, and let it be**

Blessing

ADVENT WORSHIP AT HOME
week 3 12 December 2021



Generous Love

We gather in the company of our incarnate God...

Isaiah 12: 2-6;

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted" (verse 3)

Hymn: StF 181 / H&P 79 **Of the Father's love begotten**

Reading: [2 Corinthians 8: 1-9;](#)

"as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints"

Today's passages from Corinthians and Luke challenge us to consider our generosity and motivations.

Prayers:

Gracious God, we praise you for your covenant love which speaks of faithfulness, patience and forgiveness that we do not deserve. May our hearts sing with thanksgiving for your blessing on our lives through all our years and days during which we have wandered away, defied your guidance, ignored your calling to follow Jesus; and yet they have been lit up with your gentle presence during every moment. We pray that as we wait to celebrate the birth of Jesus now, we will respond to you wholeheartedly and welcome him again into our now and into our future, filling us with love.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: StF 205 / H&P 108 **It came upon the midnight clear**

This is a season of hope,
Advent, the coming of God
in Jesus – Immanuel, God with us.

Jesus became poor
that we might be rich.
Today the poorest of the poor
live in the
developing world;
simply to
survive another day
is all their hope.
But during the pandemic
pictures of those
living in poverty here
have been shocking.
And ever more pressure
is being brought to bear
on their fragile resources.

The prophetic voice
of Marcus Rashford
has recalled us
and our government
to the extent of child poverty.
Like biblical prophets,
he questions those in
authority with power
to change things,
and holds them to account.

There are others,
who remind us of prophets
who used actions
along with words to

reveal the will
and love of God.
In food banks everywhere,
thousands of volunteers meet many
more thousands of people
who need the free food
for themselves and
their children.
Food bank staff
hold the line for them
in both tangible
and intangible ways,
listening to their heartbreak,
their guilt, to their hope
of something different.

Isaiah used a picture
still symbolising hope
in the developing world –
a well, which can mean the
difference between life and death.
God wants all to draw water
from the riches
of his grace,
fresh, running,
living water.

This is a season of hope;
and also repentance.
We must answer
hard questions,
as John's listeners did.
Are we generous as
God is generous
to all whom he embraces

in covenant love?
*'He became poor that we may be rich,
loving the world and leaving his throne;
King of all kings, and Lord of all lords,
flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone.'*
StF 344 John Bell

Maranatha,
come, Lord Jesus,
Life for all the world.

Pause to pray for those in poverty and
deprivation.

Hymn-Prayer: StF 706 **Longing for
Light, we wait in darkness**

**Maranatha,
come Lord Jesus,
Life for all the world.**