

Readings, Prayers & Hymns for Sunday 13/12/20

Isaiah 61 1-4, 8-11

61 1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,[a]

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,

3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,

the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his splendour.

4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.

8 "For I, the Lord, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
In my faithfulness I will reward my people
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

9 Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.

All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the Lord has blessed."

10 I delight greatly in the Lord;
my soul rejoices in my God.

For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,

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so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

1 Thessalonians 5 16-24

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

John 1 6-8, 19-28

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders[b] in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"[c]

24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26 "I baptize with[d] water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

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Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done;
On earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

Lord Jesus,
In the midst of a storm,
You said, 'Peace be still.'
Bid our anxious fears subside,
Sustain your church in faith, hope and love,
Bring our nation through this tumult,
Grant wisdom to those with heavy responsibilities,
And healing and hope to those who are infected.
Amen.

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- 1 Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.
- 2 He comes with succour speedy
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
were precious in his sight.
- 3 He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
and love, joy, hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth:
before him on the mountains,
shall peace the herald go,
and righteousness in fountains
from hill to valley flow.
- 4 Kings shall fall down before him,
and gold and incense bring;
and nations shall adore him,
his praise all people sing;
for he shall have dominion
o'er river, sea, and shore,
far as the eagle's pinion
or dove's light wing can soar.
- 5 O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest:
the tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever;
that name to us is Love.

Psalm 72

PHIL. JAMES MONTGOMERY (1771-1854)

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- 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
come then and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings from the King of kings.
- 2 Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
make straight the way for God within;
and in each heart prepare a home
where such a mighty guest may come.
- 3 For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without thy grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.
- 4 To heal the sick stretch out thy hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.
- 5 All praise, eternal Son, to thee
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Spirit blest, for evermore.

CHARLES COFFIN (1676-1749)
ET. JOHN CHANDLER (1806-76) alt. *

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- 1 As pants the hart for cooling streams
when heated in the chase,
so longs my soul, O God, for thee,
and thy refreshing grace.
- 2 For thee, my God, the living God,
my thirsty soul doth pine;
O when shall I behold thy face,
thou Majesty divine?
- 3 God of my strength, how long shall I,
like one forgotten, mourn—
forlorn, forsaken, and exposed
to my oppressor's scorn?
- 4 Why restless, why cast down, my soul?
Hope still, and thou shalt sing
the praise of him who is thy God,
thy health's eternal spring.

Psalm 42: 1, 2, 9, 11
para. N. TATE (1652–1715)
and N. BRADY (1659–1726) altd.

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear Desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a King;
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

CHARLES WESLEY (1707–88)