

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
December 5, 2021 The Second Sunday of Advent  
“At Home Worship”

*“I bring you good news of great joy for all the people”* Luke 2.10

**Call to Worship**

*A voice cries out in the wilderness:*

**“Prepare the way of the Lord!”**

*A challenge is uttered from on high:*

**“Make God’s paths straight.”**

*For every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain will be made low.*

**Every crooked path will be made straight, and every rough way will be made smooth. And all will see the salvation of our God.**

**Opening Prayer** God of love and renewal, enter the wilderness of our lives, we pray, and call us prepare once more for the coming of your Son. Fill the valleys of our insecurities with hope, and bring low the mountains of our pride. Make straight paths before us, and guide our feet in the ways of peace and joy as our Advent journey continues. Amen.

**Scripture Reading** *“Comfort, comfort, my people, says your God.”* Read Isaiah 40.1-11

**Prayer of Confession** Holy One, by the tender mercy of your grace, you shine the light of your love into the shadow of our lives, that those who sit in darkness may find peace and hope. Shine your light on us, O God, for we have heard your call to prepare the way of the Lord. Come to us like a refiner’s fire and a fuller’s soap, that we may be purified in body and soul, and made ready to make your paths straight. Amen.

**Time of Silent Confession** *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts that we may know the comfort and peace of forgiveness.*

**Words of Assurance** In Christ, God brings light to our darkness, and life to all who sit in the shadow of death. In Christ, all who seek the Lord find joy anew. Thanks be to our God.

**Scripture Reading** *“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.”* Read Philippians 1.3-11

**Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer** *We come to worship with many concerns upon our hearts but also joys in our lives. You are invited to share them with God in this time of silence.*

**An Advent Prayer** (insert) and **The Lord’s Prayer**

**Scripture Reading** *“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”* Read Luke 3.1-6

**Meditation** If we want to communicate a message in this twenty-first century, we have all kinds of modes at our disposal: Face Book, Twitter, Instagram, an email, a text, and even the “old-fashioned” methods of radio and television. Oh, the choices we have! When God wanted to communicate a message – a very important message about a coming Messiah – God chose a prophet, a prophet who used his human voice to proclaim God’s promise: *“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* We know all about making preparations. We just did so for the Thanksgiving meal we enjoyed; the turkey, potatoes, squash, and pie didn’t just appear on our tables. Lots of work and preparation had to happen before we gave thanks and took pleasure in our abundance.

Now, in this Advent season, God calls us to prepare as well – but not in the ways that society tells us, however. God isn’t

asking us to prepare by shopping, wrapping, and cooking. Instead, God is asking us, in the first words of this week's reading from Isaiah, to take comfort. What a breath of fresh air that message is in these busy December days – made even more stressful in these challenging years. In the midst of the hustle and bustle, just stop and think: God's message for us – spoken in a human voice that can convey compassion – is for us to be comforted.

When John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, went out into the wilderness to call people to repentance, he used his human voice to echo the words of Isaiah, asking his listeners to prepare the way, to be baptized, and to repent of their sinfulness. John offered them words of comfort as well, reminding them that one even greater than he was coming to offer them salvation. This one was not coming to punish, but to bid us peace, not coming to judge, but to save us. That's good news, comforting news as we wait for the One who is the very embodiment of God's message of love.

As I write this meditation, Christmas music is playing and Andy Williams is reminding us that this is "the most wonderful time of the year." And it really is! But not all because of the gifts, the presents, the beautiful decorations. They are special, to be sure, but what is even more important for our lives is the promise of the One who comes. So, let us quiet our hearts and listen for the voice of the prophet who bids us prepare for "*then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.*" Amen!

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion** (insert)

**Words of Benediction** Our journey to Bethlehem continues in this holy season of Advent, and soon God's glory will be fully revealed. We watch, we wait, and we anticipate Christ's coming into our lives. May the light of God's glory shine brightly in your lives. We go forth into the world of God's creation as bearers of joy, proclaiming the coming of Jesus Christ. We go with God's blessing in this holy season.



## *The Second Sunday of Advent*

Lisbon United Methodist Church  
welcomes, nurtures, and serves  
all people  
with the love of Christ.