



*St* HELEN'S CHURCH  
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

---

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Second Sunday of Advent

## **The Prophets**

Today we recall the Old Testament prophets. The Creed tells us that God 'has spoken through' them. What is it that God has said?

People who study the Bible in modern times have seen the prophets as important because of their message of *judgement*. The prophetic movement started with Amos in the eighth century BC and continued through Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah down to the great Exile of the Jews to Babylonia (roughly modern Iraq) in the sixth. From around 550 BC other prophets, such as Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah, began to predict better times, but still concentrated on God's concern for contemporary behaviour and contemporary politics. It's this social and political focus in prophecy that has spoken most to the church for the last century and more. A preacher or leader who's 'prophetic' is one who challenges us—a critic of the state of the world or of the church, with a vision of how God wants things to improve.

Early Christians knew that the prophets had been social critics. But what interested them more was this: the prophets had foreseen events that for them still lay in the future, but in the experience of the disciples of Jesus were happening *now*. As St Paul put it, in today's reading from his letter to the Christians in Rome, 'Whatever was written in former days was written for *our* instruction'. The message of *blessing beyond judgement* recorded in Scripture (meaning what we call the Old Testament) was coming true today. Jesus was the embodiment of the hope the prophets had been inspired by. So their words had a meaning deeper than they knew themselves. Soon Jesus' followers came to believe that *all* the books of Scripture were prophetic in this sense.

It's because of that belief we still read so many texts from the Old Testament in Advent. For Christians the old words form new patterns in the mind, and speak—beyond anything the original speakers or writers could consciously have imagined—of God's revelation of his nature, and his plans for the salvation of the human race, in Jesus Christ.

**John Barton**

**WELCOME** to St Helen's this Sunday. 8.00 am *Holy Communion*. 10.30 am *Sung Eucharist*. 10.30 am services at St Helen's can be accessed on Zoom from 10.15 am on: Meeting ID: 865 5159 6523; Passcode: 626891.

### **FOR TODAY'S 10.30 AM SERVICE**

**Readings:** Isaiah 11.1-10; Matthew 3.1-12

**Service Setting:** Foster, Missa rorate coeli desuper

### **Hymns:**

Introit: Archer, Advent wreath prayer, Advent 2.

Processional: 26 Hark a thrilling voice is sounding

Gradual: 34 On Jordan's Bank

Offertory: 591 The kingdom of God is justice and joy

Anthem: Temperley, arr. People look East

Post Communion: 234 Sing we the praises of the great forerunner

### **Collect:**

O Lord, raise up, we pray your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **THE COMING WEEK AT ST HELEN'S**

**ON WEEKDAYS** 9.10 am *Morning Prayer*.

**ON MONDAY** 9.30 am *Baby and Toddler Group* in the Parish Centre Hall. 10.00 am *Manor Prep School Reader's Rehearsal* in the church. 6.30 pm *Abingdon Prep School Carol Service*. 7.00 pm *Circle Dancing* in the Parish Centre Hall.

**ON TUESDAY** 10.00 am *Portrait Class* in the Parish Centre Lounge.

**ON WEDNESDAY** 10.30 am *Holy Communion*.

**ON THURSDAY** 6.00 pm *Manor Prep School Christmas Service*. 6.15 pm *Life Drawing Class* in the Parish Centre Hall.

**ON FRIDAY** 11.30 am *Abingdon School Carol Service*.

**ON SATURDAY** 4.00 pm *Abingdon and District Music Society Christmas Concert*.

**ON SUNDAY** 8.00 am *Holy Communion*. 10.30 am *Sung Eucharist*. 5.30 pm *Taizé Prayer*.

### **PROGRAMMES, EVENTS & NOTICES**

**The Scouts will be serving refreshments** in the Parish Centre Hall following the 10.30 am service today, Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December.

**The Abingdon District and Musical Society's annual festive family concert** will be held on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 4 pm at St Helen's. Bring the whole family for an afternoon of festive music, carol singing and Christmas treats! Music includes The Nutcracker and Wallace and Gromit! Tickets available on the door or via

[www.wegottickets.com/ADMS](http://www.wegottickets.com/ADMS).

**West Porch Nativity.** We plan to have the crib set up in the West Porch of St Helen's from 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> Dec between 11.00 am and 3.00 pm, and possibly also the morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec. We hope that enough people will offer to give an hour or more to sit with the crib, welcome passers by and invite them to Christmas (or other) services. A rota to sign up will be put up in church by Sun 14<sup>th</sup> Dec. Please sign up to help with this outreach and welcome.

**Envelopes for the Christmas poinsettia/flowers of remembrance** can be found on the welcome desk.

**The December edition of the Parish Magazine** (the 60th on-line edition!) will be available to download from [https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_window.php](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_window.php) by Sunday 7th December. Lots of reasons why you should!

**Advent and Christmastide Services.** Leaflets giving details can be found in St Helen's Church. Please take for friends and neighbours.

**Rota for Readers and Intercessors.** As we enter Advent—the beginning of a new church year—we're looking for new volunteers to join the team to read lessons or lead the prayers at St Helen's. If you feel called to this ministry, please let us know, Susan ([susanworthington40@gmail.com](mailto:susanworthington40@gmail.com)) or Alexandra ([alexandra.green.sthelen@gmail.com](mailto:alexandra.green.sthelen@gmail.com)).

**The Parish Office** will close at 1 pm on Christmas Eve and will re-open at 10 am on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January.

**The 10.30 am service will be streamed as normal on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December** but we are unable to 'zoom' on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December. Nor will we zoom the morning service on Christmas Day. We will, though, stream the Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols at 5.30 pm on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December for those that can't be there in person.

**For your thoughts and prayers:**

- For all who challenge injustice and oppression and those who speak the truth and counter disinformation
- For the victims of injustice and oppression
- For those who feel powerless or without a voice in society
- For all who care for those in need

Please pray for the residents of Napier Court, Nash Drive, Neave Close and New Street.

Intercessory prayer requests to [clairembolton@googlemail.com](mailto:clairembolton@googlemail.com).

**For health, consolation & wellbeing:** Sarah Stevens, Katie Stuart, Alli, David, Anne Smithson, Loelia Lyon, Vanessa Madden.

**Next week's readings:** Isaiah 35.1-10; James 5.7-10; Matthew 11.2-11

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Team Rector             | The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown<br>jennifer.brown@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk |
| Team Vicar              | Vacant  |
| Associate Priest        | The Revd Dr A. K. M. Adam (AKMA)<br>akma@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk     |
| Wardens                 | Ms Margaret Horton and Mr David Pope                                  |
| Director of Music       | Dr Peter Foster   |
| Assistant Organist      | Mr Andrew Shouler   |
| Parish Administrator    | Mrs Jackie Cunningham   |
| Caretaker               | Mr Robin Day  |
| Parish Safeguarding     | Mrs Pat Hudson<br>safeguarding@abingdonparish.org.uk                  |
| St Helen's Safeguarding | Mr Emmanuel Chukwuma  |

The Parish Office is open Monday – Thursday, 10.00 am to 1.00 pm (closed on Fridays).

Phone: 01235 520144. Checked on Fridays, morning and afternoon.

E-mail: [administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk](mailto:administrator@sthelens-abingdon.org.uk); Website: [abingdonparish.org.uk/StH](http://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH)

**A copy of this Newsletter is posted regularly on our website.**