

**LECTIONARY****The Collect for Today**

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING**ISAIAH 40:1-11**

“Comfort, O comfort my people,” says your God. “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!” See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Lector: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

People: Thanks be to God

PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

1 You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, * you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people * and blotted out all their sins.

8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, * for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *

that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together; *

righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *

and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, * and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him, *

and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

SECOND READING

2 PETER 3:8-15A

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire?

But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish.

Lector: **Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.**

People: **Thanks be to God**

Sequence Hymn: “*On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist Cry*” #76

Officiant: *The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.*

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ**



GOSPEL

MARK 1: 1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Officiant: *The Gospel of the Lord.*

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ**

Prayers of the People

Leader: Please respond to each of these prayers with the phrase:
Come Lord Jesus!

Let us pray for the worldwide Anglican Communion especially for
the Episcopal Church of Western North China;
We Pray... **Come Lord Jesus!**

We pray also for all in the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, especially
St. Alban's in Wickenburg; We pray. . . **Come Lord Jesus!**

We pray with fellow Christians everywhere that we share in pro-
claiming the coming of the Lord.

Saying together: **Come Lord Jesus!**

We pray with the people of our Nation for God's guidance and wis-
dom. Saying together: **Come Lord Jesus!**

We pray with the leaders of the world for peace and goodwill for
all. Saying together: **Come Lord Jesus!**

We pray with our local community for all those who are alone as we
wait for the coming of our Lord. .

Saying together: **Come Lord Jesus!**

We remember those who are sick, poor, needy or suffering,
(especially—)and any others whom we may now choose to men-
tion ,either aloud or silently in our hearts.

(Pause for people to mention names)

Saying together: **Come Lord Jesus!**

We remember those who have died, especially.....and any others we
may now mention.

(Pause for people to mention names) .

Saying together: **Come Lord Jesus!**

Prayers For the Parish

Teach us good lord, to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count
the cost; to fight and not heed the wounds; to work and not seek for rest;
to labor and not ask to any reward. Except that by knowing we do your
will, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **AMEN**

Transitioning New Life at St. Stephen's

Holy God, make us Holy. Revealing God, make us see. Sending God,
make us move. Loving God, make us Love. **AMEN**