

## A Short Act of Worship Sunday 13 December

A voice cries out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'  
Let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.

*Please take a few moments of quiet to reflect on the week that has passed and on what lies ahead.*

In the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,  
to give light to those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

*John the Baptist, by his preaching and by water poured, brought to those who heard his teaching news of hope restored: 'Keep your vision strong and steady, and be ready for the Lord.'*

*God's Word:*

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.  
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.  
*(Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8 - end)*

*Take a few moments of silence to think about these words*

*You may like to spend a few minutes in silence, or slowly read (maybe sing) this hymn:*

People look east to see at last hopes fulfilled from ages past;  
now in the promise of the morning, see a brighter day is dawning,  
rich with the visions long foretold, prophets' dreams from days of old.

God reaffirms the gracious call: words of welcome meant for all;  
comfort enough for all our sorrows; justice shaping new tomorrows.  
Mercy bears fruit in lives restored, freed to praise and serve the Lord.

Now, with the coming of the light, darkest fears are put to flight;  
see how the clouds of gloom are clearing, blown aside by hope's appearing.  
Jesus, the Light of all our days, comes and sets our hearts ablaze.

