

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Presence

Tuesday 5th December 2023



Photo by Darius Basbar on Unsplash

Scripture: Isaiah 11.1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him,
and his dwelling shall be glorious.

To reflect

A shoot from a tree stump, patterns in frost, the roar of a lion, light in the darkness. These are things we notice, either at first glance or listen, or perhaps by observing, hearing, seeking more closely or being more attune to the landscape, the soundscape, the Holy Spirit around us. In today's reading from Isaiah the Prophet speaks of knowing that something is different in the world by observing odd things, noticing the presence of foes being friends, the presence of things that would normally be dangerous not being so, not many people would encourage a child to put their hand in the home of poisonous snakes.

In Sunday's Gospel reading (Mark 13:24-37) the Disciples were told by Jesus to watch out for signs of his second coming. Do we see presence of God at work in the world around us in our daily lives, or do we need to practice that observing, listening, sensing this Season?

Today you're invited to take some time being aware of the Presence of God. You may have your own practices for doing this, but silence, stillness, being in nature, and scripture can be useful to do this. Take time basking in the presence of the loving God, God full of mercy, compassion and love. After some time in the presence of God you may wish to prayerfully reflect on where you see God's work present in the world around you, how might you use this Advent Season to notice God's presence more in the world around you?

To listen

Presence – Instrumental by draw close

You may wish to use this piece of music to accompany you as you reflect.

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1V6hU4x5HDoURk71ywY7Hw?si=bf1f5f32a5f84558>

Lion and the Lamb by Leeland, one version is by Ben Cantelon at Spring Harvest.

This song reflects the Isaiah 11 reading assigned for today.

<https://open.spotify.com/track/6ZmPh1ApWi16JEvA7EYCR5?si=0203c4129a814481>

The word for each day (3-25 December is taken from Advent Word 2023 #adventword).

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.