



**ST NINIAN'S UNITING
CHURCH
WEDNESDAY WORDS
4 December 2024
Scripture
Jeremiah 33:14-16**



Prayer

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Amen. (Psalm 25:1, 4-5)

Thanks & praise prayer points

- For the beginning of the season of Advent, and the hope we have as we look forward to Christmas.
- For family, friends, neighbours and people we meet through our day.
- For judges, lawyers, police officers and correctional services officers, who seek to ensure justice.
- For the summer sun that warms us and our hearts.

Forgiveness prayer points

- For not spending time quietly, listening for your voice.
- For angry thoughts or words against others, which have damaged peace.
- For not working to bring justice and peace to our world.

Words of Grace

God is the generous God of our salvation. God comes to bring justice, peace and righteousness to us and our world. May God, Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit fill our hearts and heal us this day. Amen

Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Reflection

We have a beautiful passage from Jeremiah today. It is a passage of hope and expectation, that a 'righteous Branch' will emerge, bringing justice, righteousness, and salvation.

It is worth taking the time to jump back and read the wider context this passage sits within. At the start of Chapter 32, Jeremiah has been imprisoned in the courtyard of King Zedekiah, and we know from the first verse of Chapter 33 he is still there. Jeremiah had been prophesying doom and disaster for Israel, and the arm of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem. Things were not looking good and King Zedekiah locks up Jeremiah, hoping to also shut him up.

Ironically, at this low point – for Jeremiah and the people of Israel, Jeremiah's prophecies lift. He is instructed by God to go to some land, at a time when making such a long term bus must have seemed pointless. It was a symbol that one day the people of Israel would be back.

And now in Chapter 33 Jeremiah shares this prophecy of hope. A prophecy of hope at a time of personal and communal suffering.

It is easy to look around our world today and despair. There is war in countless places – Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan, Congo. There are threats to democracy. There is famine and hardship. In Australia, more than one in ten persons live in poverty. There can be deep fault lines in families, making seasons like Christmas painful.

But it is in times of despair that we need hope.

As we begin the season of Advent and begin to prepare for Christmas, we know that 'Christmas cheer' itself won't cover up or overcome the troubles and tribulations of the world, our community, or our personal lives. No amount of tinsel, presents or stars on Christmas trees will overcome evil.

But it is our job as Christians to proclaim hope. As the reading reminds us, in the darkest hour, God has a word. God has a plan. God has a promise. And God's ways will not be defeated by evil.

The words of Jeremiah 33 have a should not be read in isolation. They have a context. And in some ways that context is the same context for us today.

Through Jeremiah, God promised the people of Israel in their darkest hour that 'a new branch of David' would emerge, bringing justice, righteousness, and salvation. In the context of Advent, we read this passage as pointing to the birth of Jesus Christ, who came to earth as a human to save us and bring eternal life. We believe that Jesus will bring a new world, and we strive to create the kingdom of heaven here in anticipation. We can speak this hope confidently, assured of God's faithfulness.

Advent is a season of hope. Not because of the trappings our community have built around Christmas, but because God through Jesus Christ is coming. The coming may appear small and gentle – like a new branch on a tree in spring. But coming it is nonetheless.

So take heart, and proclaim with joy, "Christ is coming, and will bring peace and righteousness to the world".

Intercessory Prayers

Lord the bringer of life and hope, be with us this day as we prepare of Christmas.

Be with our leaders in Government, given them wisdom and compassion as they govern.

Be with our leaders in the Church, ordained and lay. Support them at this busy time and bless their ministry.

We dedicate those activities being organised by our church at this time to you, and pray for those attending that they may be blessed.

Be with all those who work to bring justice and peace to the world. We give thanks for local community groups, international civil society groups and organisations, and individuals who speak truth and strive to end poverty, despair and conflict.

Be with those who hunger; give them food to eat.

Be with those who are cold; bring them warmth.

Be with those threatened by conflict; bring them peace.

Be with those seeking justice; may they receive justice.

Be with those who are sick or wounded; may they be healed.

Be with those who despair; bring them comfort.

We pray for our families. Bless them and keep them safe always.

We remember those families separated by conflict. Heal any wounds, and may all families which gather at this time engage with respect, love and peace.

We remember those families separated by distance. May they find ways to connect and share stories and joy.

Lord God, be with us at this time and always. May we give thanks for your promise of hope and comfort. May we proclaim the coming of the Christ child with confidence and joy.

This we pray in the name of God, Jesus and Spirit.

Amen.

Song: O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Veni, Vni, Emmanuel)

[O Come, O Come Emmanuel \(Advent Hymn\) - YouTube](#)



O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Adonai, Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.