

**Advent 2017**

**Week Two**

**Wednesday, December 13**

***Repent!***

**Prayers for candle-lighting**

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying;

for he is speaking peace to his faithful people who turn their hearts to him;

*[Light the candle]*

*The grass withers, the flower fades;*

*but the word of our Lord God will stand forever.*

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying;

for he is speaking peace to his faithful people who turn their hearts to him.

**Mark 1:1-4**

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.

Mark begins his gospel with familiar words from the prophet Isaiah. Mark's good news of Jesus Christ rests firmly on the foundation of Isaiah's word of hope. God's promise to lead the people out of exile is trustworthy and is now coming to pass yet again. Just as God delivered the Israelites from their bondage to slavery in Egypt, and just as God returned the exiles in Babylon to their homes in Jerusalem, God is now preparing to deliver the people of the first century from the power of the spiritual forces that bind them, including the oppressive power of Roman occupation. God desires freedom rather than slavery for everyone.

According to Mark, however, there is one crucial, preliminary step the people must take. They must "repent" and be forgiven of their sins. The word "repent" literally means "turn back." The people must turn away from their participation in powers of injustice and turn back to God.

Advent is the season when we prepare ourselves again for the coming of Christ. It is the season when we turn away from our old patterns and behaviors shaped by the world's standards, and turn back again to the ways of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

### **For Reflection**

In what areas of your life do you need to turn in a new direction toward God in Christ?  
How do the patterns of Jesus Christ show you the way forward in these areas of your life?