

+WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



Preparing the way

Matthew 3:1–12, Isaiah 11:1–10, Romans 15:4–13

At the end of a school year, our minds rarely linger on what has been achieved. Instead, we rush ahead—planning children's new classes, staffing structures, curriculum changes, INSET days, and even preparing buildings for redevelopment.

We want to be ready for what's next. Yet, if we're honest, no matter how much we prepare, we're never fully ready.

This truth echoes in today's Gospel reading (Matthew 3:1–12). John the Baptist cries out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way for the Lord!" He gives every warning, every sign, yet when Jesus arrives, the world is still unprepared. Why? Because readiness is not just about plans—it's about the heart.

As Advent unfolds, we are invited to pause amid the busyness and prepare differently. Isaiah 11 paints a glorious picture of what is coming: a shoot from the stump of Jesse, a ruler of justice and peace. Romans 15 reminds us that this hope is for all people, bringing joy and unity through Christ.

So, how do we prepare? Not by frantic activity, but by opening ourselves anew - reading scripture, praying earnestly and making space for God's Spirit to work within us.

Advent is not about perfect readiness; it's about willing hearts. The King is coming. Let us be ready - not with polished plans, but with open lives eager to receive Him.

Iain Parks, Diocesan Director of Education