

A reading from Isaiah chapter 40 verses 1-5 and 9-11. You can find this reading on page 599 of your pew Bible.

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
 and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
 that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand,
 double for all her sins.

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
 make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
 and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
 and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
 and all flesh shall see it together,
 for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Go on up to a high mountain,
 O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
 O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
 “Behold your God!”

Behold, the Lord God comes with might,
 and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
 and his recompense before him.
He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
 he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
 and gently lead those that are with young.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please join me in praying Psalm 85.

Leader: Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.

**People: Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.**

Leader: Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

**People: Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.**

Leader: Yes, the Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

**People: Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as
it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Leader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Mark.**

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,

the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.