

## **Sermon Advent One Hope St Luke's Modbury – Golden Grove**

In the name of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Good morning, St Luke's!

What a weekend it has been!

Yesterday, I had the immense privilege of being ordained at St Peter's Cathedral with Samuel, Thomas, and Beck.

I am truly humbled and grateful that God has provided such a blessing upon me, Deacon's serve, and that is what I will continue to do for the people of God.

This moment marks not just a milestone in my life, but the continuation of a journey shared with all of you.

You have supported me in ways that words cannot fully express.

Jeanne, my incredible wife, my family, mentors, colleagues at Yatala Labour Prison and Anglicare, and faith communities at St Peter's Cathedral, St Jude's Brighton, and here at St Luke's.

You have all walked alongside me, offering prayers, encouragement, and love. For this, I thank you.

As we enter the season of Advent, the first candle of the Advent wreath has been lit, a candle that is a symbol of hope.

It is a reminder that we are in a season of anticipation, waiting for God to fulfill promises through the coming of the Messiah.

Today, our Gospel reading introduces two figures who embody this hope: Simeon and Anna.

Their lives reveal what it means to live in hope, to wait faithfully, and to trust that God's salvation is on the way.

Simeon is described as "righteous and devout," a man who has been "looking forward to the consolation of Israel."

In his words and actions, we see the deep longing of a people waiting for God to intervene, to bring peace, and to fulfill the promises of old.

Simeon has lived his life clinging to the hope that he will see the Lord's Messiah before he dies.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, he enters the temple just as Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus to perform the customary rituals.

Imagine the scene for a minute:

Simeon takes the child into his arms and declares, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation."

This moment is amazing.

Simeon recognizes in this child the fulfillment of God's promises, not only for Israel but for all nations.

He proclaims that Jesus is "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to God's people Israel."

Simeon's hope is not passive; it is active, grounded in his faith in God's word and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

This hope enables him to see beyond the ordinary of a poor couple bringing their child to the temple and recognise the extra ordinary, that of God's salvation entering the world.

Alongside Simeon, we meet Anna, a prophet who has spent decades in the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer.

Anna at 84 years old and having been a widow for most of her life lived with steadfast devotion to God as a way of life in the temple.

She, too, recognises the significance of the child Jesus and begins to praise God, speaking about him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Anna's hope is communal. Her proclamation invites others to share in the joy and anticipation of what God is doing through this child.

Like Simeon, Anna's life demonstrates that hope is not just about waiting it is about living faithfully in the present, trusting that God's promises will be fulfilled.

As we have entered this Advent season at full steam ahead, Simeon and Anna remind us that hope is at the heart of our faith.

Advent is a time of waiting, but it is not passive waiting.

It is a time of preparation, anticipation, and active participation in the story of God's salvation.

This season calls us to reflect on the ways we, like Simeon and Anna, are called to live in hope.

Their stories challenge us to ask questions of ourselves:

Where do we place our hope?

What are we waiting for?

How do we live as people of hope in a world often marked by despair?

In today's world, the need for hope is as urgent as ever.

If you head down to the parklands near Ridgehaven Rise you will see the faces of those who are homeless, marginalized, struggling with poverty, mental health challenges, and addictions.

When I'm standing here, I feel as though I am preaching to the converted.

St Luke's very much goes a long way in fulfilling our Christlike mission to care for the most disadvantaged in society, and to be agents of God's hope and transformation.

My mother Lynne got me a good one the other day asking about what happened to Joseph.

I had no real answer only to make something up on the fly that the Gospel writers wanted to portray that mothers are more important than fathers.

That seemed to quell that question for now.

In the Gospel today we can see that Mary and Joseph's were not wealthy at all.

Their modest offering of two turtledoves is a reminder that Jesus entered the world not among the rich or powerful but among the humble and marginalized.

This is a profound message of hope that God's salvation comes to all, especially those who are often overlooked.

Through our various mission activities here we have the privilege of practically embodying this hope.

Whether it's feeding the homeless, supporting those in need, or simply being present for someone in their struggles, we are all called to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world.

Hope is not just something we hold onto; it is something we live out.

This is the kind of hope that Simeon and Anna lived.

It is a hope that recognises God's presence in the here and now, even as we wait for the fulfillment of all things.

It is a hope that calls us to act, to be signs of God's kingdom in the world.

I am being mildly selfish in that today; I can't help but reflect on the ordination vows I made yesterday and the new chapter that has begun in my life.

I am deeply struck by the parallels between this moment and the season of Advent.

Just as Advent marks a time of hope, expectation, and preparation, so too does my journey now as a Deacon, a calling to serve, proclaim, and embody Christ's love in the world.

Hope has been a guiding force in my life, sustaining me through challenges and leading me to this point.

As a Deacon for me hope remains central not just as an inward conviction, but as something to be shared: a light that brightens the lives of others.

I am reminded of the vows I made to proclaim the good news of God's love, to walk humbly with you,

to encourage the faithful, and to serve the sick, the needy, and the oppressed.

These commitments are not mine alone; they are an invitation for us all to live as bearers of hope.

As we have ignited the candle of hope this morning, let us remember that hope is not merely a feeling.

It is an act of trust in God's promises, a resolve to live faithfully in the present, and a shared call to participate in God's kingdom.

Together, we are called to proclaim the gospel, to seek justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly in God's presence.

May we, like Simeon and Anna, recognise God's presence in our midst and respond with joy and faith.

May we, as a community, bring hope to a world that so desperately needs it, serving others in Jesus' name reflecting this transformative love.

And as we journey through this Advent season, may we hold fast to the hope that God, Emmanuel, is with us and that God's promises are true.

Amen!