

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent

**Like the sun in the morning sky,  
the Saviour of the world will dawn;  
like rain upon the meadows,  
the Christ will come down upon us.**

These words are given for us in *Common Worship Daily Prayer* to use as part of our morning prayer between now and Christmas Eve. They evoke that hushed expectation before sunrise which will be heralded by a glorious chorus of birdsong - nature's angels - or that energising sweet morning shower that revitalises the ground in spring.

This prayer makes a suitable preface to the Song of Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, in which he proclaims that God's promise will be fulfilled. The song, which is in one of today's Gospel readings, concludes with the words:

*In the tender compassion of our God,  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.*  
(Luke 1, 79-80)

This is the message of hope that we can share with those who feel that they live in the shadow of death, and for whom spiritual darkness is constantly weighing down through illness, pain, loneliness or grief. Let us invite them into the light of Christ's presence this Christmas, and bring them his joy and peace.

Simon Thorn