

Theme

This is the first Sunday of Advent, and the first Sunday of the church's year.

At Advent we remember that our Lord Jesus will come again and we look to be ready to welcome him. We also remind ourselves that Christ has come and is present with us. It is all too easy to become preoccupied with our day to day existence and lose our spiritual awareness. Advent is a good time to resolve to awaken our spiritual sight and to become conscious of God's presence. Wake up and watch, for it is in the darkest night that the light shines most brightly.

The reading from Isaiah today longs for God to come down to earth. We can all echo this longing, and we seek an assurance of God's presence in our world and in our lives. Our minds are filled with all manner of worries of the damage done by the Covid crisis but each Sunday we will be lighting candles that remind us that we live in times of darkness in which the light of Christ is present with us.

The reading from the Gospel of Mark encourages us to 'watch and pray.' Prayer is not meant to remove us from the chaos but rather equip us to be better able to serve in it.

Worship in Song - Harry

How lovely on the mountains
Are the feet of Him
Who brings good news good news
Announcing peace
Proclaiming news of happiness
Our God reigns our God reigns

Our God reigns our God reigns
Our God reigns our God reigns

You watchmen lift your voices joyfully as one
Shout for your King your King
See eye to eye the Lord restoring Zion
Your God reigns your God reigns

Waste places of Jerusalem
Break forth with joy
We are redeemed redeemed
The Lord has saved and comforted His people
Your God reigns your God reigns

Ends of the earth
See the salvation of your God
Jesus is Lord is Lord
Before the nations He has bared His holy arm
Your God reigns your God reigns

Advent Video for children

Sentences of Scripture

Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him. *Revelation 1:7*

You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. *Matthew 24:44*

Opening Prayer

Let us prepare our hearts as we await the coming of our Lord. Let us watch for the one who heard our cries and shouldered the suffering of our world. Let us anticipate the coming of Christ's eternal world with wholeness, reconciliation and blessing. Let us wait in expectation for the day when God's glory is revealed in all its fullness. **Amen.**

Lighting the first Advent Candle

A Prayer of Confession

O God, you search us out and know us,
and all that we are is open to you.
We confess that we have sinned:
In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we scoff at those who await your return,
and live as though you were never here:

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we long for your coming to change the
world, and yet are unwilling to change even
our own hearts:

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we do not make straight paths for
justice, nor offer a welcome when you come as
a stranger:

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we dismiss prophets and angels and
refuse to nourish your seed within us:

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we reduce our preparation for your
coming to reckless expense and trivialities:

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

Assurance of Pardon

May God our Father forgive us our sins, and
bring us to the eternal joy of his kingdom
where dust and ashes have no dominion.

Amen.

Worship in Song - video

Lift up your eyes and look for him,
Jesus, the coming saviour-king;
born to redeem the world from sin,
bringing his peace to all.

Now if you walk in darkest night,
look for his dawn that's breaking bright;
nothing shall ever stop this light
bringing new hope to all.

Oh lift up your eyes see the King!
Worship the saviour, come praise him,
Jesus the Lord of all.

Oh once in a manger he lay;
now lifted high he is reigning,
Jesus the Lord of all.

Soon you will see him come again,
not as the child of Bethlehem,
but the returning King to reign;
glorious Lord of all.

Lift up your eyes and look for him,
Jesus, the coming saviour-king;
now in your heart make room for him;
worship him, Lord of all.

Come worship him,
come bow down before him,
come praise him, Lord of all.

Bible Readings - on video

Isaiah 64:1-9 (p623) - *Bill Barrow*

Mark 13.24-37 (p831) - *Sandra Barrow*

Worship in song - Harry

Lo He comes with clouds descending
Once for favoured sinners slain
Thousand thousand saints attending
Hail the King who comes again
Hallelujah (*three times*)
God appears on earth to reign

Every eye shall now behold Him
Robed in awesome majesty
Those who mocked despised and sold Him
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree
Deeply mourning (*three times*)
Shall the true Messiah see

Those deep wounds of cross and passion
Still His dazzling body bears
Cause of endless exultation
To His ransomed worshippers
With what wonder (*three times*)
We shall see those glorious scars

Now redemption long expected
See with solemn joy appear
Saints whose faith this world rejected
Meet their Saviour in the air
Hallelujah (*three times*)
See the day of God appear

Yes amen let all adore You
High on Your eternal throne
Saviour take the power and glory
Claim the kingdom for Your own
Come Lord Jesus (*three times*)
Everlasting God come down

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Special Prayer for Today

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Intercessions - on video

Gwen Carlisle & Mags Southern

Worship in song - Harry

Lord Jesus Christ
You have come to us
You are one with us Mary's Son
Cleansing our souls from all their sin
Pouring Your love and goodness in
Jesus our love for You we sing
Living Lord

Lord Jesus Christ now and every day
Teach us how to pray Son of God
You have commanded us to do
This in remembrance Lord of You
Into our lives Your power breaks through
Living Lord

Lord Jesus Christ You have come to us
Born as one of us Mary's Son
Led out to die on Calvary
Risen from death to set us free
Living Lord Jesus help us see
You are Lord

Lord Jesus Christ I would come to You
Live my life for You Son of God
All Your commands I know are true
Your many gifts will make me new
Into my life Your power breaks through
Living Lord

Sermon - Paul

Worship in song - Harry

Love divine all loves excelling
Joy of heaven to earth come down
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling
All Thy faithful mercies crown
Jesus Thou art all compassion
Pure unbounded love Thou art
Visit us with Thy salvation
Enter every trembling heart

Breathe O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast
Let us all in Thee inherit
Let us find Thy promised rest
Take away the love of sinning
Alpha and Omega be
End of faith as its beginning
Set our hearts at liberty

Come Almighty to deliver
Let us all Thy grace receive
Suddenly return and never
Never more Thy temples leave
Thee we would be always blessing
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing
Glory in Thy perfect love

Finish then Thy new creation
Pure and spotless let us be
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee
Changed from glory into glory
Till in heaven we take our place
Till we cast our crowns before Thee
Lost in wonder love and praise

Blessing

Now go out into the world in peace. Keep alert, for we do not know the hour when we will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. Be faithful in service and persistent in prayer; be Advent people, loving and serving the Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.