



# ADVENT SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER



We're again in lock down; churches have been told to close until 2 December. We understand that we'll be able to hold services again after that. So you'll need your worship space again today – but it may be the last time for those who are happy to come back to church! Find your Advent wreath or candles, your Bible and cross and use this service to focus your hearts and minds on God.



## INTRODUCTION

Happy New Year! Advent is the start of the church's year, beginning the cycle of praise and prayer again.

I love the Advent season. It always strikes the right note for me in contrast to the way this time of the year is presented in society at large. For in church we change all the hangings to purple, the colour of penitence. Like Lent give us space to prepare for Easter, Advent does the same for Christmas. As Jan says, we care greatly about getting everything ready in terms of food and decorations and presents. But do we prepare our hearts?

The Christmas message is so extraordinary that we poor humans can only bow down in awe. That's why we are so conscious of our shortcomings as we get ready. And that's why we keep a season of penitence, of Advent.

Our Advent devotions take four themes out of the Bible passages set. The four Sundays of Advent build up to the final, best theme of love for Christmas Day. Today we think about **faith**, and how that prepares us for the birth of the Christ child.

Much has been made of how different Christmas will be this year. But for us it is always different; our faith makes it so.

Happy preparations!

Revd Jan

## ADVENT SUNDAY

First, make your wreath!

There are different traditions about the wreath but the basis is a ring of evergreen with four or 5 candles placed inside. The four outer



candles can be all purple, or three purple and one pink, or all red. The middle candle is always white.

You can make yours however you like. Make sure they are secure and in a safe place, especially if children are involved!

### **Blessing the wreath**

Today say a prayer of blessing over your wreath:

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ.

He is the hope of all peoples,  
and the Saviour of every nation.

As we wait for his coming, bless this wreath,  
that it may be for us a sign of our faith, hope, peace and joy this Advent.

### **Lighting the candles**

Each candle stands for a different aspect of Advent and links with readings from the Bible. At the start of worship each Sunday in Advent light the candles, listen to words of scripture and pray for yourself and for all those you love.

A different family member can light the candle each week and lead the readings.

### **Reflection**

The Bible is full of reminders that God keeps **faith** with us even when the people are not faithful. 'Those who gladly do right' are those who remember him and strive to lead lives that are worthy of him. In troubled times it is often hard to do see the hand of God in the events of the world around us.

So today's prayer is for a strong sense of his presence and confidence in what he intends.

Today we light the first candle of the Advent wreath. This first candle is **FAITH**.

Light the first candle

### **Scripture** Isaiah 64. 4-5

From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.

### **Prayer:**

Eternal God, as we await the coming of our saviour, strengthen our faith in your goodness.

Help us to place our trust in you when we find it hard to see the future for our lives, for our community and for the world.

Through Jesus Christ, the ground and foundation of our faith. Amen.

### **PRAYERS OF PENITENCE**

When the Lord comes, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,

and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Therefore, in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.



**Almighty God our heavenly Father  
we have sinned against you and against our  
neighbour in thought word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness, through our  
own deliberate fault.**

**We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ who died for us, forgive us all that is  
past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your  
name. Amen**

May almighty God, who sent his son into the world to save sinners, bring us his  
pardon and peace, now and forever. **Amen**

### **GLORIA**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father,**

**Lord God Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world have mercy upon us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are Holy One,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen**



### **THE COLLECT**

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns,  
turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness,  
that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### **OLD TESTAMENT READING      ISAIAH 64 1-9**

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains  
would quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes  
water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations  
might tremble at your presence!

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the  
mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has  
perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait

for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.



This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

### **NEW TESTAMENT READING** 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

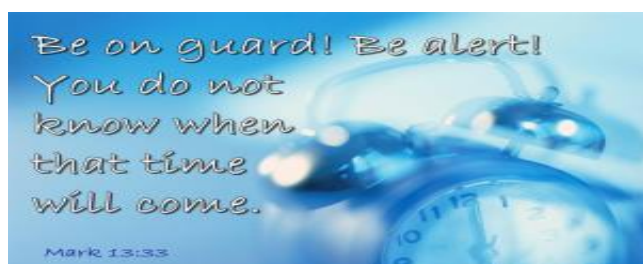
He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

### **GOSPEL READING**

Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark – **Glory to you O Lord**



‘But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels and gather

his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.



‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware; keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord – **Praise to you O Christ**

## REFLECTION

Advent is the start of the church’s year. We change into year B readings so the story of Jesus starts again from the beginning, this time as told in the Gospel of Mark.

Jo sent ideas to make your own advent wreath so I hope you managed to have a go at one.

We are at a time of preparation for Christmas which celebrates Jesus coming to us and the readings dwell once again, as a few weeks ago, that we should always be ready for God at all times in our lives.

At home we may be wondering how we can prepare for Christmas and many are putting up decorations early to give themselves something to look forward to. In the church though it’s not just about decorations but about preparing for God on earth, so like Lent it’s a time for reflection and thinking about what is to happen. We are missing our get together in the advent groups, which always help us focus on what it all means.

Today’s readings from Isaiah and Corinthians are very different, Isaiah asks God not to be angry with us and not to express his wrath, he makes the analogy that we are just the clay that the potter (God) has moulded and made. In the New Testament



reading, it is thanking God for Jesus who has strengthened us and enabled us to be ready for his kingdom. The gospel reading brings us not to the birth of Jesus just yet but all about being ready and preparation.

When we have someone special coming to the house we would shop and clean, make the house tidy and try to make a good impression and the same goes for Christmas at home. We would be shopping for far more food than we actually need, spend far too much money on presents and decorations, but it is what is expected and often we can't enjoy it if we are not proud of everything being perfect.

However, we must not lose sight of what advent is all about and take time to reflect and remember the true reason why we are celebrating Christmas, to prepare us spiritually for the new church year and to be thankful that Jesus came into our lives. Instead of being stressed about trying to do everything last minute be organised and be ready for God as well as the family Christmas.

Jan B

## THE CREED

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist? **I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again? **I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world? **I believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**This is my faith. I believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you *prefer here are some on today's theme.*



As we begin another church year let us give thanks to God that he has made us, that he loves us and that he comes to us.

O God our maker, you give us life, you give us love, you give us yourself. Help us to give our lives, our love and ourselves to you. Keep us alert and aware of your presence, that we may meet you each day and know that you come to us in grace and in love. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Lord as you come to your church help us to reveal your glory, we thank you for the grace and goodness revealed in Jesus Christ and that we are enriched in him. We remember churches that are struggling and our people who are unable to attend our churches, may we continue to see your love and help us here at St Maxentius and Turton Moorland team to continue to do your work and support us all. We pray for our clergy and lay ministry teams and hope that we can celebrate this Christmas season in your presence. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer.**

As we pray for your world, we thank you for the hope of a new vaccine and getting back to a new normal, may we not forget the goodness and kindness shown by one another through this period and as Jesus' coming may it be an advent of a better future. We pray for all involved in war or disasters or are going hungry or thirsty and pray for all the charity workers looking after them. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Lord let your presence be known in our homes and in our actions. May people be thankful for us and our care of all that is around us. We pray that you will show yourself to us through our loved ones and friends. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We remember all whose lives are darkened by pain and distress, all who are struggling with doubt and despair, all whose faith is shaken by what is happening around them. We pray for members of our community and friends who are ill at this time. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

God our Father, your grace has been given to us in the gift of eternal life and in your abiding presence. We pray for all who are departed from us, for friends and loved ones in the fullness of your eternal kingdom. We rejoice with them in the gift of life and your love. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Merciful Father **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. 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 forever. Amen.**

With love and compassion, **come, Lord Jesus.**  
With judgement and mercy, **come, Lord Jesus.**  
In power and glory, **come, Lord Jesus.**  
In wisdom and truth, **come, Lord Jesus.**



## **THE BLESSING**

May God the Father, judge all-merciful, make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.  
May God the Son, coming among us in power, reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith, joyful in hope and constant in love.

And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. Amen

As we await our coming Saviour, we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

