

A Service of Morning Worship for Advent Sunday, 29th November 2020

Welcome all are welcomed by the officiant. (...will lead us in our responses)

Opening Greeting and Gathering (Fr Ian)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

The Lighting of the First Advent Candle

O come, O come, Emanuel. **Come Lord Jesus.**

The Candle is lit

We dare to light a light of hope, despite the darkness of our world. In the face of cruelty and suffering, of oppression and inequality, we dare to hope!

In a world that sometimes seems hopeless, **we dare to hope!**

With the patriarchs of old, **we dare to hope!**

We light a candle in the darkness, **we dare to hope!**

O come. O come, Emmanuel. Come, Lord Jesus.



In today's readings: we are reminded to keep awake for Advent is a time for active expectancy and Jesus prompts all to look for the signs of his coming. One generation later, this is exactly what Paul's readers in Corinth are doing – waiting to for the revealing of Jesus. Isaiah reminds us through a familiar image that God is the potter, and we are the clay.

Sentence: St Luke writes: "Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." *Luke 21.28*

Call to Worship and Opening Prayers (Fr Ian)

Come! Share the joy of the Lord!
Delight in God's goodness!

Praise God who gives each person a special gift to be nurtured and shared.
Lord, we thank you for these gifts!

Come, let us worship God who entrusts us with so much.
Lord, make us worthy of your love and trust in us. Amen.

Opening Prayer (Bola)

Let us pray:
God of love and mercy, we thank you for your loving presence in our lives. You have formed us in your image, and you continue to transform us as we grow in faith. Break through the darkness in our lives and let the light of your love flood in, that we may become better disciples of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Silently and gently falling, and failing, changing, and resting, seeking you, Lord,
we watch, we wait, we dream, we pray:

for the earth to renew, for our hearts to soften, for your grace to cover us, for your justice to pour out, for time and space to listen, for courage to act

on the edge of Advent, we sit with you:

we pause, we hurt, we repent, we rage:

When will it be? Will it ever be? Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Creator God, all creation is your handiwork; your touch gives life to all that is. You who shape and form us by the breath of your Spirit and the touch of your grace, you alone are able to call forth from the depths of our being the beauty of your Spirit in us. May we in this celebration, surrender more deeply to your loving touch, as you fashion and form your heart's desire in us. This we pray in your Spirit. **Amen**

Prayers of Penitence and Absolution (Bola)

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts. In his light let us examine ourselves and call to mind our sins.

A moment of silence is kept.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all people.

Prayer of Confession

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins.

When we pay more attention to satisfying our own needs than seeking you and your will for our lives.

Father forgive us: save us and help us.

For the times when we are more interested in possessing the material things in life, rather than your spiritual gifts.

Father forgive us: save us and help us.

For those occasions when we fail you by what we do and think and say.

Father forgive us: save us and help us.

When we live our lives as if we are ashamed to belong to your Son.

Father forgive us: save us and help us.

The Absolution. (Fr Ian)

The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon and forgiveness of all your sins, time for amendment of life, and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Words of Assurance

In Christ we are made new. We are healed and forgiven, we are challenged and guided to become people who work for the good of all rather than those who would destroy and damage. For calling us to be your people,

Thanks be to God.

The Canticle: A Song of God's Chosen One (Isaiah 11.1,2,3b-4a,6,9) (Bola)

From the stump of a gnarled tree, **a new shoot will spring forth.**

From roots hidden deep in the ground, **a sapling will grow, again.**

The spirit of God will rest upon you, **the spirit of wisdom and understanding,**

You will judge the poor with justice and **defend the humble of the land with equity.**

Your mouth will be a rod to strike down the ruthless, **and with a word, you will devastate the wicked.**
Round your waist, you will wear the belt of justice; **and good faith will be the girdle around your body.**

Then the wolf will dwell with the sheep, **and the leopard will lie down with the kid;**
And the calf and the young lion will grow up together, **and a little child will lead them.**

The cow and the bear will feed, **and their young will lie down together,**
The lion will eat straw like cattle; **the infant will play over the hole of the cobra and the young child will dance over the viper's nest.**

They will not hurt or destroy in all your holy mountain, **for the earth will be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.

The Collect for the Second Sunday before Advent. (Fr Ian)

Let us pray:

O God of all the ages, whose word resounds amid the clamour of our violence, keep our households watchful, aware of the hour in which we live, and hasten the day when the sounds of war will be stilled forever, the powers of evil scattered, and the earth and its people gathered into one. We ask this through him whose coming is certain and whose day draws near, your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Isaiah 64:1-9 (*Isaiah the prophet pleads with God to intervene in Israel's history and save the nation from the coming doom.*)
(**Isobel Davies**)

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

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.

For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: 80: 1-8 & 18-20 (*Restore us O God of hosts; let your face shine that we may be saved.*) (**Isobel Davies**)

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.

Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?

Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.

You have brought a vine out of Egypt; you cast out the nations and planted it.

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.

Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; show the light of your countenance and we shall be saved.

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

I Corinthians 3: 1-9 (*Paul opens his letter to the Corinthians by praising the work of Christ among them*) (**Brian Forey**)

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

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.

For the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Hymn

1 You servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

2 God rules in the height, almighty to save;
though hid from our sight, his presence we have;
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

3 "Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!"
let all cry aloud, and honor the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

4 Then let us adore and give him his right:
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,
all honor and blessing with angels above
and thanks never ceasing for infinite love.

Mark 13: 33-37 (*The Son of Man will come, so keep awake.*)

Gospel Acclamation: (Fr Ian)

Alleluia, alleluia. Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and show us your saving help. **Alleluia.**

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

Jesus said to his disciples, '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.**

A sermon follows. **(Fr Ian)**

The Creed (Fr Ian)

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father.
God from God,
Light from light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Intercessions and Lord's Prayer (Nora Ananides)

Officiant: (Fr Ian) In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us bring our prayers and intercessions to the Father.

Come Lord, be known in your church, for without you we have no message, no power. Set the heart of your church on your redeeming presence. Hear us as we pray for our parish giving thanks for all who contribute to ministry, either lay or ordained, in this place. Let our Advent prayer be that you would fill this parish with your presence and that we may be found proclaiming your word and your peace to all whom we meet.

Tear open the heavens and come down, O Lord. **Make known your name.**

Lord Christ, we look to your coming, again. Come among the nations with your love and judgement. Keep those in government alert to your justice and peace. We uphold before you countries and nations where war and violence and injustice prevail. We pray for the country of Ethiopia asking for a restoration of peace, justice and reconciliation. Strengthen and encourage those who work for peace. We pray for all emergency workers who watch and wait while we sleep – strengthen all who work in the dark hours of the night.

Tear open the heavens and come down, O Lord. **Make known your name.**

Lord Christ, we look to your coming, again. Come among our homes and communities with mercy and love. Mould us as a potter shapes clay that our lives, and our homes, may reflect your glory and that we may rejoice in each other's presence. We remember those who will only see in Advent a hectic and worrying preparation for the excesses of a secular Christmas. We bring before you those who will find this season difficult remembering young people: those currently struggling to find employment, battling mental health issues and all who are worried about their future.

Tear open the heavens and come down, O Lord. **Make known your name.**

Lord Christ, we look to your coming, again. Come among all who are ill and those weighed down by troubles with your mercy and love. We pray for those that are lonely. Encourage us to show love and compassion to people in our community who are isolated and suffering with loneliness. As Christians, remind us that we are called by Jesus to care for one another. We remember friends and loved ones in their troubles. Grant healing and time for lives to be changed and grant that all may be thankful for your love. Strengthen and hold us and all for whom we pray, in the palm of your hand.

Tear open the heavens and come down, O Lord. **Make known your name.**

Lord Christ, we look to your coming, again. Come among us at the hour of our death as the good shepherd and guardian of our souls. We remember all who have died and have gone before us. Grant us, with them, a share in your victory over death and evil. Turn our tears into dancing and allow us to rejoice in the fullness of your presence and glory.

Tear open the heavens and come down, O Lord. **Make known your name.**

As we uphold ourselves to you, give us ears to hear, O loving God, and eyes to watch, that we may know your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ.

Lord of the Church, **hear our prayer, and make us one in heart and mind to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.**

Introduction to the Lord's prayer (Nora Ananides)

We are the work of God's hands. We are the clay; God is the potter. Let us pray as our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Introduction to the Peace (Fr Ian)

Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.
The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**
We offer one another a sign of peace.

Canticle: The Song of Zechariah (ELLC translation) Benedictus Domine (Luke 1: 68-79)

Blessèd are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free.
You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of your servant, David.

Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us,
To show mercy to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant.

This was the oath you swore to our father, Abraham, to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship you without fear, holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,
To give God's people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

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,

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Final Prayers

O Holy God, since ancient times your splendour has filled the world.
We praise the wonder of your being, O wonderful potter of reality!

Loving Christ our Saviour, we remember your redeeming presence, even as we wait.
Christ our Saviour, we long for your return.

Empowering Holy Spirit, we pray to know your continuing presence as we leave this time of worship.
Give us thankful hearts and minds for all your gifts to us and your people.

Lord Jesus Christ we await your coming. We wait filled with hope, knowing your light will shine in the darkness.
We wait anticipating your peace, believing that one day it will fill our world.
We wait embracing your love, may we reach out to share it with our neighbours.
We wait with joy, stirring us up in expectation of your birth.
Lord we wait, come soon, and fill us with your life. **Amen.**

Closing Prayers (... and)

Prayer of Commitment (inspired by Matthew 13: 33)
'Keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come.' Mark 13:33

God our rock and our salvation so much of faith is waiting like a pregnant woman waiting in hope like a people under siege, holding out till relief comes like the soul lost in the darkness, unable to see even a glimmer of light yet stumbling through the night because somewhere out ahead, day will surely break. God be with us in our waiting.

Living God, keep us alert with an active faith.

When our faith grows weary, strengthen us when our faith grows fearful, give us courage; when our faith grows despairing, give us witnesses and when the faith of others falters, may we be a light in their darkness.

O God who loves us, as we go forth from this time; we offer this day, this week, into your keeping: our plans into your providence, our concerns into your love, our words into your silence, our activity into your stillness. Look upon us in your steadfast love and grant us your saving health, so that we may be instruments of your healing for others, and all may grow into wholeness in your praise. **Amen.**

The Dismissal and Blessing (Fr Ian)

The Lord is here. **His Spirit is with us.**

Go now, in the knowledge that you are strengthened by the testimony of Christ. Remain watchful and wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Continue to do right and remember God in your ways.

May you be strengthened in the knowledge and love of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

May you wait with unwavering hope for the Lord's return in glory. **Amen.**

May the Lord keep your steadfast and without blame until the last day. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

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

“Advent is a season of hope. It would be hard to exaggerate the value of hope. It is said that while there is life, there is hope. This has an even deeper meaning in reverse: while there is hope there is life. As long as there is hope, no situation is impossible. It is the task of Christians to keep hope alive in the world. Advent summons us to wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. In the final analysis, he is our hope.”
Source: *New Sunday & Holy Day Liturgies* by Flor McCarthy SDB.