

Christ Church, Ipswich
Advent Sunday Family Worship
Sunday 30th November 2025
Led by Neil
Organ played by Stephen

Hello. I hope all is well.

This Advent Sunday, our readings will be Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14 and Matthew 24:36-44.

Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

Come, let us prepare to meet with God.

Let us prepare ourselves to help bring in God's kingdom.

Let us prepare to worship.

A prayer of approach as we light our first Advent candle

Living God, as we light the first Advent candle,
 and the first flicker of your coming is kindled in our hearts,
 may the flame of our desire for justice and peace
 burn brightly within us,
 releasing in our lives, our churches, and our world,
 the transforming power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

R&S 656 Lo! He comes with clouds descending

1 Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
 once for favoured sinners slain;
 thousand thousand saints attending
 swell the triumph of his train:
 Alleluia! (3 times)
 God appears on earth to reign.

2 Every eye shall now behold him
 robed in awesome majesty;
 we, who set at naught and sold him,
 crucified him on the tree:
 Lord, have mercy, (3 times)
 let us all thine Advent see.

3 Those dear tokens of his passion
 still his dazzling body bears,
 cause of endless exultation
 to his ransomed worshippers:
 Sing hosanna! (3 times)
 see the risen Lord appears!

4 Yea, Amen, let all adore thee,
 high on thine eternal throne:
 Saviour, take the power and glory,
 claim the kingdom for thine own;
 O come quickly, (3 times)
 Alleluia! Come, Lord, come!

Charles Wesley (1707-88) & John Cennick (1718-55)
 altd. Martin Madan (1726-90)*

A prayer of adoration

We praise you, living God, for these days of Advent, for the opportunity they offer to reflect on Scripture, and to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of your Son. As we set out on our journey, may we find a stillness that is your presence with us, leading us on to Bethlehem where our spirits can soar towards the light of your eternal love, revealed in the Christ Child. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Advent God, forgive us, we pray, when our preparations for the coming of your Son are superficial and we don't invest our whole selves into them prayerfully, practically or purposefully. May we not be left with regrets and 'if onlys', but adapt to the challenges of our lives and our world with the grace and agility of your Holy Spirit – in whose power we pray. **Amen.**

An assurance of forgiveness

God of all creation, though the nights are long, the sun still rises; though the mornings are dark, the birds still sing; though the world isn't ready, your Son still comes; though we don't listen or prepare or deserve, you still love and forgive and renew us – in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

We praise you, living God, for the words of Scripture that breathe life into our prayers, urgency into our complacency, energy to our discipleship, depth to our faith, and warn, challenge and equip us to prepare for Christmas more deeply, more fully, more honestly and more purposefully. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Family Time

BPW 149 There's a light upon the mountains

1 There's a light upon the mountains,
and the day is at the spring,
when our eyes shall see the beauty
and the glory of the King;
weary was our heart with waiting,
and the night-watch seemed so long,
but His triumph-day is breaking,
and we hail it with a song.

2 There's a hush of expectation,
and a quiet in the air;
and the breath of God is moving
in the fervent breath of prayer;
for the suffering, dying Jesus
is the Christ upon the throne,
and the travail of our spirits
is the travail of His own.

3 He is breaking down the barriers,
He is casting up the way;
He is calling for His angels
to build up the gates of day;
but His angels here are human,
not the shining hosts above,
For the drum-beats of His army
are the heart-beats of our love.

4 Hark! we hear a distant music,
and it comes with fuller swell;
it's the triumph song of Jesus,
of our King Immanuel;
Zion, go ye forth to meet Him,
and my soul, be swift to bring
all thy sweetest and thy dearest
for the triumph of our King.

Henry Burton (1840-1930)

The children go to Junior Church with our love and blessing

OT Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Future House of God

2 The word that Isaiah son of Amoz
saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In days to come

the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³ Many peoples shall come and say,
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
and their spears into pruning-hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

Judgement Pronounced on Arrogance

⁵ O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the Lord!

Epistle Reading Romans 13:11-14

¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; ¹³ let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

R&S 137 Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

2 He comes, the prisoners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

3 He comes, from ignorance and doubt
to clear the inward sight;
and on the darkness of the blind
to pour celestial light.

4 He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the wounded soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

5 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with thy beloved name.

Philip Doddridge (1702-51) altd.*

Gospel Reading Matthew 24:36-44

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³⁶ 'But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Reflection

A moment for reflection

R&S 138 Come, thou long-expected Jesus

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear Desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver;
born a child, and yet a King;
born to reign in us for ever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Our prayers of intercession

On this Advent Sunday, we come. We come with many different emotions. We come with awareness that Christmas is approaching. For some that will be a time of great joy, for others a time of stress and busyness. We come to you knowing that the world is full of tinsel, glitter and mindless music played on a loop, but we yearn to see your face in the midst of all the preparations. We want to look to the future because you have gone ahead into it for us. We may not wish it could be Christmas every day, but we do recognise that the real truth of Christmas is with us every day: that God came into the world to redeem us. So, however we feel today, help us to find you, not in the razzmatazz, but in the quietness of the stable.

Be awake, be ready, be prepared:

our king is coming at an unexpected hour.

Lord, we know how much preparation we need to do before Christmas. There will be cards to write, presents to buy, food to purchase, invitations to be made. We are so aware that all this 'stuff' sometimes gets in the way. We are also aware that, for so many this year, their normal Christmas will be affected by the cost of living. Help us all to see that the truth of Christmas is not related to things and wealth but the poverty of God in the manger.

Be awake, be ready, be prepared:

our king is coming at an unexpected hour.

At this Advent time, in all that we do, help us to keep our eyes and ears open to see You among us. We pray that we will find you in the face of friend and stranger. That we will worship you in among all the fun and family time. We pray that we will be your compassionate hands and feet and lips to those around us who are hurting, afraid, homeless, lonely and overwhelmed. O come, O come Emmanuel and make us fit to serve you.

Be awake, be ready, be prepared:

our king is coming at an unexpected hour.

Lord, we bring to you all those we know who are in need this Advent Sunday.

A moment of quiet.

Lord, please be present, be Emmanuel, to all these dear people who are on our hearts today. Give all diligence in the working, patience in the waiting, courage in the unfamiliar situations, your loving presence at the ends and the beginnings. Help everyone to be alert to your presence in every situation they face. And help us all to keep our eyes firmly fixed on you, whatever we are experiencing in the weeks to come.

Be awake, be ready, be prepared:

our king is coming at an unexpected hour.

Lord, Emmanuel, we know we can only be fully prepared for life if we are fully focussed on you. Keep us from distractions, we pray. Help us to find creative ways to learn more about you and deepen our relationship with you even within the old, familiar stories. Help us also to be prepared to step away from the familiar into new things... following where you lead as you challenge us to become closer to you.

Be awake, be ready, be prepared:

our king is coming at an unexpected hour.

Lord, prepare our hearts. Help our eyes to be open to see you. Teach us to be ready for everything you ask of us this week. Give us eyes and ears to see where your kingdom is coming around us and to join you as you work in our world.

Be awake, be ready, be prepared:

our king is coming at an unexpected hour.

**Lord, come to our hearts, our homes, our world
and help us to be ready to find you. Amen**

R&S 601 Christ is the world's true light

1 Christ is the world's true light,
its captain of salvation,
the daystar clear and bright
and joy of every nation;
new life, new hope awakes,
where'er we own his sway:
freedom her bondage breaks,
and night is turned to day.

2 In Christ all races meet,
their ancient feuds forgetting,
the whole round world complete,
from sunrise to its setting:
when Christ is throned as Lord,
all shall forsake their fear,
to ploughshare beat the sword,
to pruning-hook the spear.

3 One Lord, in one great name
unite us all who own thee;
cast out our pride and shame
that hinder to enthrone thee;
the world has waited long,
has travailed long in pain;
to heal its ancient wrong,
come, Prince of Peace, and reign.

G. W. Briggs (1875-1959) altd.*
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from *Enlarged Songs of Praise*

A sending out prayer

Lord, we pray that in all our preparations
for the coming week and for Christmas,
we may find time to spend time with you.
Help us to be prayerful, watchful,
and full of hope for your coming. **Amen.**

The Blessing

And may the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be upon us and those we love, this day and always. **Amen.**

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**