



Sunday 29 November 2020

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.
- To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 **Lo, he comes**

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

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

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

A voice cries out in the wilderness ‘Make straight the way of the Lord’.

So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and 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.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

It's usual to omit the Gloria during Advent.

The Collect for Advent Sunday

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.

All **Amen.**

First reading

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. *Isaiah 64:1–9*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter 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. *1 Corinthians 1:1–9*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus! ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

'Maranatha' is Aramaic for 'Come, Our Lord!'

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, '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.' *Mark 13:24-37*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

I suppose I should start the sermon this morning by wishing you all 'Happy New Year.' Today is Advent Sunday, the new year in the Church's calendar, it's the beginning of the Church year.

I do think that we neglect Advent. No sooner has Advent got under way than we're headlong into all those Christmas preparations And surely we are the poorer for not remembering Advent .You see Advent isn't Christmas, and nor is Advent all about preparing for Christmas. Advent is a time of waiting, a time of preparation for celebrating the coming of God into the world in human form in the person of Jesus his Son.

It's interesting that the Church year starts not on some great high point, or with some fervent celebration, but with a period of waiting and preparation, with a sense of emptiness and wondering. But I think it's right because if we don't go through this season of Advent waiting and watching and preparing then we don't really have anything to celebrate. There are many symbols of Advent. The Advent candles that we have in church are one. We lit the first one this morning and, in the coming Sundays up until Christmas we light an additional one until, on Christmas Day we light the white candle in the middle representing Christ, the Light of the World. Traditionally the candles have stood for the gradual revelation of the coming of Christ—the ancestors in the faith, the prophets who spoke the word of God, and John the Baptist who prepared the way, and Mary. As the candles are lit each week so the waiting progresses and the expectation grows.

Another sign of Advent is the Advent Calendar. When I was growing up we always had an Advent Calendar. It was always one of those that had really old fashioned pictures relating to the nativity, or to Christmas in general behind each door.

But Advent Calendars are about waiting in expectation of something happening, about expectation until we celebrate the birth of Jesus on 25 December.

But what about a jigsaw as a sign of Advent? I'm not sure it would ever catch on because it's not as colourful and exciting as the candles and the calendars. But a jigsaw is a sign of passing time. Maybe some of us here like to do jigsaw puzzles either on our own or with our children it's good to watch the picture emerge and develop as more pieces are placed in their right place.

And that's true of Advent. If we wait and watch patiently, then the picture of Jesus revealed to us during this time becomes clearer until we rejoice on Christmas Day.

But waiting isn't something of a virtue in society today. We don't wait. We live in an on-demand culture where everything has to be there when we want it. Today people cannot wait, we don't have patience. A jigsaw isn't finished on demand. It takes time, it takes patience. Advent isn't a one day wonder. Advent is all about waiting, about wondering, about preparing ourselves for the celebration of the coming of Christ. Too often we rush straight into Christmas from Advent Sunday.

So what is this Advent journey? What are the pieces of the jigsaw that we piece together during this season?

Today, Advent Sunday, we place the **first piece of the jigsaw** in place—that part that talks about the coming of Jesus at the end of time. The Gospel reading was all about signs of the end of the age and the day and the hour of the end and of the return of Jesus being unknown.

Mark likens it to the time where a man leaves his slaves in charge of his house. And commands them to keep watch and keep awake for he doesn't tell them when

he will return. That's how it will be with the end of time says Jesus. We do not know when or how, but we need to be ready.

Early Christians lived with the expectation the world would end at any time. They waited expectantly for Christ to return. They lived each day as it came. And today, we too don't know when the end of the world will come but we have a responsibility to live each day for God whilst waiting expectantly for the end to come. So the 1st part of the Advent jigsaw is the waiting for Christ to come and living each day for him where we are and in expectation of what will happen.

The **second piece of the jigsaw** is John the Baptist who, as an adult, lived a solitary life in the desert until he began to preach. Then he became like a prophet of the Old Testament as he confronted Jewish people with their need to repent.

John wore clothes made from camel hair and a leather belt and ate locusts and wild honey. But he drew crowds. John identified himself as the forerunner of the Messiah, of Jesus and announced that God's kingdom was near. His role was to point people on to Jesus.

And in Advent, John points us to Jesus, he reveals a little more of the story as we prepare for his coming. The waiting reveals that not only is Christ coming again, but that he is the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

The **third piece of the Advent jigsaw** adds more clarity to the message. Here John the Baptist points to a fuller picture of who Jesus is. Yes he is coming again, yes he is the Messiah but he also performs great deeds. In prison John the Baptist agonises over whether Jesus really is the one sent from God. He is reassured after he sends some friends to Jesus to find out more information. On their return they tell John that through this man Jesus the blind can see, the lame walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear. Yes, the person that John the Baptist was pointing people to really is the Messiah. So the waiting of Advent reveals a little more about the person and purpose of Jesus, the one we wait to welcome.

The **fourth part of the jigsaw** comes on the Sunday before Christmas when our thoughts turn to Mary and Joseph. Both Mary and Joseph have to wait and wonder. They both receive a message from an angel that something wonderful, extraordinary is about to happen. But they have to wait, ponder, live with eager anticipation. What is happening is a scandal. These two people, unmarried are expecting a baby born a king. But for them no stately home, just an ordinary stable in Bethlehem where the Saviour of the World is to be born.

So Advent is an invitation to wait and wonder, to watch and ponder as the truth about the incarnation (God coming to earth) is unveiled. As we journey through Advent the picture of this Jesus becomes clearer. He is no ordinary baby, despite the surroundings of his birth.

This Jesus we wait for is the one who will come again to redeem the world and bring in the new heaven and the new earth at some time in the future, a time unknown to us. This Jesus is the one who was promised from ages ago and to whom John the Baptist points and where his identity is confirmed in his actions – healing and loving, caring and sharing. And this Jesus we wait for is a king born in a stable, God himself come to earth for us.

The candles, the advent calendars, the jigsaw, all invite us to wait, to wonder, to look for Christ. He was born in an obscure stable in Bethlehem. He will come again with great glory when this world ends. He is now hidden but can be found by those who wait and watch and wonder. May we wait in expectation and find Jesus this Christmas. Amen.

The Creed

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

All We 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?

All We 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?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

Everlasting God, as we come before you at the start of the Season of Advent we ask you to prepare us for the coming, of your son Jesus Christ and to hear us when we pray in faith for the needs of the Church and the world and to thank you for your goodness.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Mighty God, we pray for your church today, gathering worldwide in churches and cathedrals, to praise you and to hear your holy word. Give us a sense of expectation as we come and inspiration as we go. We pray for your blessing on all those who lead, preach and teach and we pray especially for our own clergy here in Clarksfield and Waterhead as they seek to do your will and guide us through our spiritual and worldly journey through Advent, until the day when we celebrate together the birth of your Son on Christmas Day.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Creator God, drive away despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice and truth, and restore our passion for what is good and right. Establish your just and gentle rule throughout the world especially where there is conflict; where peace seems so far away and so many have lost everything, even the faint hope of a peaceful future. Govern the hearts and minds of all world leaders and those in authority that they may act justly, honestly and according to your will especially at this time of the global pandemic.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Father God, we pray for those amongst our families, friends and neighbours who will only see in Advent a hectic and worrying run-up to the excesses of a secular Christmas. Help us as we try to set an example of a true spirit of preparation for that incredibly precious gift of the Christ-child. May they see in our Services our Carols and Christingles, whether in church or online, the true meaning of Christmas and experience your love for them through the giving of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Merciful God, we pray for those for whom this day will be long and painful, for those in hospital or ill at home, those struggling with despair or depression and for all

who care for them. Comfort and heal all who suffer, especially at this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. *(add names of those requesting prayer)*.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Loving God, we pray for those who have recently died and for those for whom this day will be their last. Be near to all who mourn and comfort them with the knowledge that in the coming of your son Jesus the gates of heaven will be opened wide for all who accept him as Lord and Saviour. *(add names of the recently departed or on the anniversary list)*

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Advent Lord, as we move into the new liturgical year, draw near to us, strengthen our faith, deepen our love for you and for our neighbours and open our eyes to the wonder of your creation, so that when our Saviour comes he may find our hearts ready to receive him.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

In the tender mercy 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.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Maranatha

*(please click on this link to hear the hymn)
'Maranatha' is Aramaic for 'Come, Our Lord!'*

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

All Amen

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

All Amen

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

All Amen

And the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Come thou long-expected Jesus ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.

For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,
he fulfilled the plan you formed long ago
and opened for us the way of salvation.

Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,
we now watch for the day
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.

And so we join our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven
to proclaim your glory, for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

O Lord our God,
make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;
that, when he shall appear,
he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service
and joyful in his praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.