

**Sunday 28 November 2021**

# The First Sunday of Advent



Sermon © Rosie Kingham.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.
- 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 O come, O come Emmanuel** (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.**

When the Lord comes he will bring to light things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

Therefore, in the light of Christ,

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.

**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.**

### **The Collect for the First Sunday of Advent**

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 Jeremiah

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.' *Jeremiah 33:14-16*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. *1 Thessalonians 3:9-13*

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 Luke

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.' *Luke 21:25-36*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today is Advent Sunday, so let's think a bit about what Advent is for.

Advent, like Lent, is a time to pray and prepare, to get ready for a change that turns the world upside-down. Advent isn't as penitential as Lent, but there is still a sense of anticipation and laying new foundations before an event of great joy. So there are two main things to consider here—what does 'getting ready' mean and which event of great joy are we thinking about? Because it's easy to get pulled away.

We are bombarded from October onwards by adverts for the perfect Christmas present, or the perfect way to cook a turkey, or the ultimate festive dessert, or the best way to decorate our tree. Our children may be encouraged to write letters to Santa, and know all the names of his reindeer. We are shown images of happy families and roaring fires, and feel that our Christmas won't be as good because Auntie Flo always quarrels with Uncle Fred, and we can't afford the gas bill to make our house that warm. Our Christmas card list gets ever longer, or we feel guilty because we're not sending any this year to be environmentally friendly. We are made to feel that we will be inadequate if we don't have a particular gadget, or buy presents for our pets. They even have advent calendars for cats. The government has joined in the madness, too. Remember the call for HGV drivers to deliver stuff to save Christmas? Being responsible with testing and hygiene so we can have a 'normal' Christmas? Even in books, we get the same idea. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* begins 'Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents, grumbled Jo, lying on the rug'. Aaargh! Enough!

I actually find all this a distraction. I'm not a 'Bah, humbug' sort of person, and warmth, families, decorations, silly jumpers and songs, food and presents or cards

are all good things and I enjoy them. But I have to call them Xmas and think of them separately from Christmas, because then it's easier to understand what we, as Christians, are waiting for. Much of the 'Christmas' hype is geared towards the worship of the great idol Profit, and is therefore designed to make us want more and more material goods.

Now material goods are not of themselves bad, but seeking more and more is surely wrong if it takes us away from God. As Christians, it's up to us to put the Christ back in Christmas, to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light. In the Gospel, Jesus tells of all the dreadful things that will happen in the world He comes into, and we must be ready for His coming. And it is still a dark and unpleasant world for many, with oppression, violence, war, division, sickness ... But Jesus is the light in the darkness. This is the world God loves, and this is the world He came to and He will come to again, when we don't expect Him. And how will we recognise Him, if all we are concerned with is the trappings of Christmas?

This advent, whatever else we do, let us ask for that light to shine in our lives, bringing us closer to Christ and loving others more. Let us ask God to help us recognise what is Christlike and reject what is not, so we increase His kingdom on earth. As that light grows in us, may we make our corner of the world reflect that light, so when we rejoice that the Word is made flesh on Christmas morning, our hearts are ready to receive Him, whether in riches or in poverty. Then, when he comes again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal. 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**

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid  
we pray to Jesus.

Come to your Church as Lord and judge.

We pray for ...

Help us to live in the light of your coming and give us a longing for your kingdom.

Maranatha:

**All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your world as King of the nations.

We pray for ...

Before you rulers will stand in silence.

Maranatha:

**All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter.

We pray for ...

Break into our lives,

where we struggle with sickness and distress,

and set us free to serve you for ever.

Maranatha:

**All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to us as shepherd and guardian of our souls.

We remember ...

Give us with all the faithful departed a share in your victory over evil and death.

Maranatha:

**All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come from heaven, Lord Jesus, with power and great glory.

Lift us up to meet you,

that with all your saints and angels

we may live and reign with you in your new creation.

Maranatha:

**All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay;  
give new courage to your people,  
who trust in your love.

By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom  
on earth as in heaven,  
where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

Merciful Father,

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

## The peace

May the God of peace make you completely holy, ready for the coming of our Lord  
Jesus Christ

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 himself, the God of peace,  
make you perfect and holy,  
and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul and body,  
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
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.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.  
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.  
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.  
And so we gladly thank you,  
with saints and angels 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.**