

Sunday Worship at Home, 28th November 2021, First Sunday of Advent.



Opening Prayers:

O Lord, open our lips, and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Reveal among us the light of your presence, that we may behold your power and glory.

Amen.

A Prayer of Confession:

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

Come, let us return to the Lord and say.

Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call.

Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early.

Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us;

in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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. **Amen**

Reading: Luke 21:25-36 - The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁵ '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. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ 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.'

Reflection on the reading:

In case you hadn't noticed yet, Christmas is coming. The signs are all around us. The contents of supermarket shelves and the background music that is being played have all changed, and slowly but surely more and more houses are being decorated and lit up like, well, Christmas trees! There are signs in church as well. The colour has been changed to purple, and Advent candles are now being lit. But although the season of Advent immediately precedes the Christmas season, it is not Christ's first coming at Christmas that Advent is looking forward to but his second coming, when he will return in glory.

I remember seeing a wonderful coaster on the desk of a Catholic hospital chaplain, It featured the image of Christ coming in the clouds, with caption "JESUS IS COMING.... LOOK BUSY!" But behind this joke lies a serious question. If Jesus were to arrive this week, on Tuesday morning or Thursday evening, what would he find you doing? Would it be what you would want him find you doing? Or might it even be what you wouldn't want him to find you doing?

Jesus tells us that there will be signs that he is coming again but also that we are not to try to work out from them when he will come. Instead, we are to always be ready and waiting, and to live every day as though today will be the day. So I encourage you to use this season of Advent as a time of preparation, not only for celebrating Jesus's first coming when he came as a child and grew up to be to be our saviour, but also as a time of preparation for the day when Christ will come again, arriving on the clouds, in power and great glory. **Amen**

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

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

Be still and pray: In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Particularly pray for: Areas of the world affected by War, natural disasters and man-made disasters, especially Afghanistan, La Palma, and the West and East Seaboards of America; for peace to prevail in areas of rising international tension especially between India and Pakistan, Poland and Belarus, Russia and Ukraine; for our own nation and other nations dealing with rising COVID infection rates and the new omicron variant; for healing and peace for those who are ill; and for the souls of those who have recently died, and comfort for those who are mourning their loss. ***Finish with The Lord's Prayer:***

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you, this day and always. **Amen**

Reverend Eddie