

Sunday Worship at Home 29th November 2020 Advent 1

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.

Invitation to confession:

Jesus says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand".

So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ,

confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Lord Jesus, you came to earth to tell us how much God loves us:

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Lord Jesus, you came to earth to teach us how to say sorry:

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came to earth so our sins could be forgiven:

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy

The Collect (Special Prayer for the day)

Almighty God,

as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness,

that we may be to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading: Mark 13: 24-end

"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^[a] 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,^[b] 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.

Reflection on the Gospel.

Our gospel begins with the disciples standing admiring the temple and the large stones, and they are impressed indeed; then Jesus tells them that changes are coming, the temple of their life is coming down. "In those days 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."! Words which take us into Advent, not just a new season in the church's year when we await the birth of Jesus, it is a reality of life. We all know about days of Advent, days when we are going through darkness in our lives and we are waiting for change. This year, above any recent years, has brought many days of darkness and days of change. People have been ill and many have died, and we have all lost what is comfortable and safe. The things which refreshed us, our family visits, our holidays and hobbies and our "taken for granted" way of life has been taken away by a global virus, and our lives have changed. As the year progressed, unbelievably quickly, it prompted questions. How do we find a way forward when the usual lights that illumine our paths no longer shine"? "Where do we go in times of darkness when we are feeling bereft and alone?"

In our weekly Psalm, Prayer and Praise service on Zoom we have been exploring the words of lament, joy and comfort to be found in the Psalms, many of which were written in such times of uncertainty as we are experiencing now, with the same questions being asked. From the time of Adam and Eve, humankind has assumed itself to be in control, to be capable of solving every problem, to fix things and escape the unknown and return to what used to be, but life's not like that. We can neither predict nor control anything, and a certain release of pressure comes from accepting that. Instead of falling into a black hole of despair in times of crisis, we should allow ourselves to be drawn into a closer relationship with God to acknowledge his presence to revitalise and save, he will never leave us alone in the darkness. It is too easy in such moments of darkness to think there is nothing worth waiting or watching for, so we settle into inertia, a form of sleep. But Jesus says "Be alert", Keep awake" and wait and trust for he will come. So think about **your** story of darkness and what you have experienced this year then sit quietly, because light will come in the joy of the birth of Jesus and the knowledge that God works best for those who watch, wait and listen for him. 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, pray and listen: Include the needs of the world and your family and community. | The work of the Government, and the health of the Queen. Those who suffer and find no consolation, the homeless and those who have lost their jobs, those grieving for their old way of life. Pray for comfort and peace for those who are ill or awaiting hospital appointments and operations, give thanks for all doctors, physicians and nurses and all whose work is to make us well in body and mind. Pray for the souls of those who have died, especially Sue Deacon, giving thanks for her faithful service to this benefice over many years.

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven.....

Amen

Blessing:

God our Father, help us this Advent to watch out for your Son so that when he comes at Christmas he may find us ready to welcome him, and the blessing of God the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you, and all those you love, today and always.

Amen

Reverend Irene