

Our Sunday Service Together

Advent Sunday, November 27th 2022



An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord.

Amen.

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalmody Psalm 122 *We say the psalm aloud*

I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'

And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem;

Jerusalem, built as a city that is at unity in itself.

Thither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as is decreed for Israel,

to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

For there are set the thrones of judgement, the thrones of the house of David.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you.

'Peace be within your walls and tranquillity within your palaces.'

For my kindred and companions' sake, I will pray that peace be with you.

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do you good.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Scripture Reading Isaiah 2.1-5

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

²In 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.

³Many 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.

⁴He 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.

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

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

'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.

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

'Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light', so we pray today in the collect.

The passage from Isaiah ends with an exhortation for the people of God to walk in the light.

Jesus talks of terrible days to come, as the epoch's and rulers of the world fall and the Son of Man is revealed. This revelation will be as wide and as shattering for the world as the great flood of Noah's time. Just as folks were not prepared for that calamity, and laughed at Noah's preparedness, so too folks will not be prepared for what will occur.

But are we ready, are we also prepared to face taunting and laughter as we prepare for what will come?

If St Paul gives to us anything in all of his writings it is a call to centre our lives on Christ, and all that he has brought into being, and to live our lives in the reality of that 'new age', that 'new dawn', the kingdom come – and yet still being brought to birth.

Like Isaiah, Paul constantly encourages the people of God to live in the reality that the light has dawned and, as people of that light, to begin living lives in tune with this new time and age. We are redeemed, he argues, so go now and live as those who are redeemed. As people of the light, stop doing the things of the night, of the darkness! He lists the many activities of the darkness, anger and malice, hatred, vices and abuse, racism, ageism and issues of gender.

Now is the time to be people of the kingdom come and still being birthed. Now is the time to be driven by love, peace, gentleness, patience, grace, mercy. Now is the time to be concerned for those who suffer because of the works of the night, to shine our light on these things, to give our hearts, minds, souls, and resources for that work – just as Jesus did!

Advent will see the lights go up to shine in the night of winter, almost like a cry from our society for the light to come, for someone to come save us all from the darkness. At Christmas we proclaim the light has come; but Jesus isn't just for Christmas, Jesus is for everyday of the year!

I have wondered about putting the lights on the front of the house this year, of putting the big star onto Ilchester church door. Would this be like saying at a time of difficult finances for very many, 'sod you Jack, we are alright'. But it isn't, it is more profound than that for we are saying the light has come to the darkness and the darkness shall never put it out – and we are witnesses to this.

So folks, I wonder if we will be able to shine some lights into the darkness during advent. But more, continue to bring the light of Jesus Christ into darkness of the world around for 365 days of the year; for we are people of the light, let's live in the light!

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers *We make our intercessions*

Watchful at all times, let us pray for strength to stand with confidence before our Maker and Redeemer.

Silence is kept.

Almighty God, as your blessed Son Jesus Christ first came to seek and to save the lost; so may he come again to find in us the completion of his redeeming work; for he is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. *Maranatha: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Come Lord, your wounded world is yearning for you to come again.

Come Lord, your weary world is crying out for you to lift us up out of our despair, our hunger, our thirst for something better, our need for the food that will last.

Come Lord, come again, we need to begin again. *Maranatha: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

God of hope, we cling to you, for your renewal of the face of the earth. Through the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus, we follow you on the path of dawn. Enlightened by your love and wisdom, help us to lead each other and all creatures back to your open arms. *Maranatha: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

God of Salvation, Wake us up Lord! The night is nearly over. May this Advent journey see our globalised world of inequality and exploitation transformed into your Kingdom of righteousness and mercy. May we see a transformed world, where peace is built on understanding not weapons, the poor are empowered to live their lives to the full, and your Creation is nurtured not abused.

Maranatha: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Maranatha! Open our eyes to the dignity of all people and our ears to the cries of the earth. *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Maranatha! Let us walk in solidarity with the poor and cleanse our world from oppression. *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Maranatha! Let us shout out for justice for all and renew our hope for change. *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

Maranatha! The Lord is coming, let us share the Good News! *Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*
And at the end

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. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen.