

twelvebaskets



ADVENT 1C

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Advent 1 - Year C
27th November 2022



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

165 STF – Advent candles tell their story OR

176 STF – Like a candle flame, flickering small in our darkness

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

169 STF – Come, thou long-expected Jesus OR

528 STF – Pray without ceasing, pray

Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

Hymn:

170 STF – Darkness like a shroud covers the earth OR

483 STF – We are marching in the light of God

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

732 STF – Day of judgment! Day of wonder! OR

780 STF – Stay with me, remain here with me

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

706 STF – Longing for light, we wait in darkness (“Christ, be our light!”) OR

377 STF – Down the mountain the river flows

Blessing

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Call to worship

This Sunday of waiting, this Sunday of beginnings
We are waiting Lord,
Beginning again our journey with you.
We are seeking Lord,
Wanting to know more of you.
Come amongst us, by your Spirit
Amen.¹

Hymn:

165 STF – Advent candles tell their story OR
176 STF – Like a candle flame, flickering small in our darkness

Opening Prayers

Loving God,

As we prepare for this time of advent, prepare us for worship this morning. As we look ahead to your arrival, remind us that we will still encounter you today, in this place. As we anticipate your birth, may we anticipate the signs of new life breaking in all around us.

Thank you that whether this is the first, or the hundredth time we have experienced advent, that it will hold freshness for us. Thank you that the story of your birth is not just a pleasant tale, but a transformative event in human history where everything is turned on its head. Thank you that you invite us to be a part of this ongoing story.

Lord we come before you acknowledging that we have not lived up to the values that you show us in advent.

We have chosen power when you would choose humility, we have distanced ourselves from others where you would pitch your tent amongst us, we have we have idolised status where you would give yourself none.

We take a moment now to bring to mind any other ways we have fallen short of God's vision for us and the world.

We bring these things to you, Father, in total knowledge of our endless need for forgiveness, and your endless willingness to provide it.

Amen.²

We say together the Lord's Prayer

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by All We Can

All Age Talk

[Wear a Santa hat, tinsel scarf, etc. Be very Christmassy!]

It's the final countdown friends! There is only 685-ish hours left until Christmas!

[If there is some confusion in the congregation]

Ah...We're in November. But today is the first Sunday in Advent, so we can get excited for Christmas now, yes? Advent means "the coming of" which is another way of saying we have time to prepare! Kind of like giving someone a call to say put the kettle on for a cuppa tea! We have a bit of time to get things ready! What are some of the things we must prepare before Christmas?

[Get some idea from the congregation. Possible things to include are Church events that are upcoming, which is a very good opportunity to share them here and have a handout after the service!]

That's a lot to look forward to over the next few weeks! A lot of things to hope for! This is funny because when we light the first candle of Advent, that's what we are doing: Hoping. Hoping for a good Christmas. Hoping for a relaxing few weeks. Hoping for things to go smoothly at all these things that are upcoming! Hoping that we don't forget anything. Waiting for the Birth of Jesus. We have a lot to be excited about, and a lot to prepare, and being Hopeful helps add to the excitement!

[If you haven't already, light the first candle of Advent here. If already done, continue to the prayer].

Loving God.

We wait in expectation and hope for the coming of Jesus and the excitement of the Christmas season. Help us to keep Jesus at the heart of this Christmas season and to share the hope of this season with others.

Amen.³

Hymn:

169 STF – Come, thou long-expected Jesus OR

528 STF – Pray without ceasing, pray

Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

Hymn:

170 STF – Darkness like a shroud covers the earth OR

483 STF – We are marching in the light of God

³ All Age Talk written by Tim Annan-Hood

Reflections on the readings

So here we are in Advent. Again.

In the darkness longing for light. Again.

The world can seem like a dark place can't it?

[You may like to share some of the challenging stories that caught your attention from the news this week or invite the congregation to do so].

Perhaps there have been dark times in our own lives or in the lives of our loved ones?

Two of today's readings echo and speak into some of that darkness:

- The prophet Jeremiah proclaims God's judgement on human systems (yes, even religious ones) that are corrupt, unjust and exploitative.
- In Luke's gospel, the good news about Jesus seems like anything but good news as we are invited to enter with Christ into the darkness, destruction and desolation of the cross with all its human degradation.

These readings remind us that we are not alone when we experience darkness. Jesus suffered. Jesus understands our suffering and the suffering of a world that is often dark and still longing for light.

These readings remind us that God's desire is for creation to be liberated from the darkness of injustice.

These readings and all the readings for today remind us that there is hope. Not the hope that buys a lottery ticket and crosses its fingers but that deep Hebrew hope that holds onto and lives in line with what it believes will one day be – even if surrounded by so many signs to the contrary.

- Jeremiah expresses this hope in God's future by speaking of the day that is coming when what is right and just will be done on this earth.
- Psalm 46 encourages us to hold onto this hope because God is with us in all things.
- The reading from Colossians assures us that, ultimately and eternally, we are already citizens of a kin-dom community of light, love, justice and peace.
- The story of the crucifixion reminds us that, ultimately and eternally, day has already dawned on night and as for darkness? It is finished.

But.

Here we are in Advent. Again.

In the darkness longing for light. Again.

The world can seem like a dark place can't it? But isn't it always darkest before the dawn?

So, may we be strengthened in endurance and patience as people of a kin-dom of light that is not yet but will fully be.

May we speak, act and live in a way that celebrates the light of love, justice and peace where it is to be found and offer that light where it is not. Until that kin-dom of light fully is. For all people. And all creation.

Amen.

[Prayer – you may like to invite people to light a candle for the people and places of God’s world. ‘Run’ by Snow Patrol or ‘Within Our Darkest Night’ from Taize may be appropriate pieces of music to use during this.

After giving people space to pray, and pausing in quiet, invite someone to read this poem and invite people to think about how they can keep enduring with Christ despite the darkness.]

Jesus said,
“There will be wars and rumours of wars”
And there’s been
Hurricanes, earthquakes and so much more
“But I am with you,
To the end of the age
Don’t trouble your hearts
And do not be afraid.”

But...

North Korea
Aljazeera
I don’t know ya
So I fear ya

There’s something wrong with the world today
But are we willing to go his way?

Like Mercury and Queen,
Because of what we’ve seen:
Open your eyes,
look up to the skies;
And see...

The breaking in of morning,
That promised light now dawning.
The day is near,
The time is here.

I am here,
As you are here,
And we are all together.

He is here,
As we are here,
And we are all together
Now, is the time
So let your light shine
No matter how little
No matter how bright
For morning will always
Extinguish the night.

Here comes the sun (do, do, do-do)
So, look to the Son
For he is the one
Who’s already won
So, let’s do one -

Pass the love on
And on, and on, and on, and on, and...

Learning to dance in the rain
Until only love remains
Together, let us dance before the storm
While ever anyone needs to be warm

Because...
All the sound-bite policies
All the fiscal prudence
All the bombs and milit'ry
'Aint nothing eternally.

For, all that the Lord requires,
Of all those who would aspire
To see heaven come to earth,
Where each person has true worth

Is this:
Just do it,
(Not like Nike),
See a wrong,
Make it right.
Show mercy
Walk humbly.

It's started,
And will be –
Finished.⁴

Hymn:

732 STF – Day of judgment! Day of wonder! OR

780 STF – Stay with me, remain here with me

Prayers of intercession

“About that day and hour no one knows, only the Father.”

Lord, we are as uncertain about when you will come again, as we are certain that you will. In the meantime, help us to live in the now and the not yet of your Kingdom – both still arriving and yet already here.

Help us not to act as if your return is so imminent or so distant that to work for justice in the world is pointless. Help us to recognise that the arrival of your new creation is not detached from what we do now. We are your agents of change in the world, may we let you in so that you can work through us more powerfully.

May we learn to live with uncertainty – humbly acknowledging the limits of our knowledge, and realising that certainty is not a prerequisite for service.

We think of those who live with uncertainty every day, and particularly those whom the Methodist Church seeks to help through All We Can. We think of the women of the Binga district of Zimbabwe, who are hindered by traditional attitudes to gender, an

⁴ Reflection written by James Morley

isolated environment, and high levels of poverty. We pray for the work of All We Can's partner the Zubo Trust, who train women in basket weaving as a means of economic and social empowerment – may they continue to help people fulfil their God-given potential.

We pray also for any uncertainty in our own lives, and we take a moment to bring our personal prayers to God.

All these things we pray in the name of Jesus,

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

Thank you Lord, for all your goodness to us. Thank you that you came and lived amongst us, and continue to come amongst us today. Accept these our gifts, as a measure of our response to your love, in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Hymn:

706 STF – Longing for light, we wait in darkness (“Christ, be our light!”) OR

377 STF – Down the mountain the river flows

Blessing

God, whoever comes to you, draw them to your love, draw them to your light, draw them to you; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always.

Amen.⁶

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by All We Can

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker