

Welcome to
your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Advent Sunday

Holy Communion

Sunday 27th November 2022 at 10am

Our Advent liturgy expresses
sorrow for the world's suffering and human mistakes,
longing for God's help,
and hope for the future of earth and heaven.
We patiently prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth,
in whom God comes to work with us
for the healing of the world.

We gather

At home, have ready in an honoured place a portion of food and something to drink. It may be bread and wine or something else. Set your Bible alongside. You might have a candle ready to light shortly.

We imagine anyone in their homes around the parish, united in preparing for prayer.

MUSIC *as we gather:*

1. People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth, and set the table.

People, look east, and sing today.

Love the guest is on the way.

2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,

one more seed is planted there:
give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in the course the flow'r may flourish.

*People, look east, and sing today.
Love the rose is on the way.*

3. Birds, though ye long have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
he for fledgling-time has chosen.

*People, look east, and sing today.
Love the bird is on the way.*

4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.

*People, look east, and sing today.
Love the star is on the way.*

5. Angels, announce to man and beast
him who cometh from the east.
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.

*People, look east, and sing today.
Love the Lord is on the way.*

(words & music: Eleanor Farjeon; music: Traditional Besançon melody, arr Martin Shaw)

We imagine those worshipping at home around the parish, united in preparing for prayer.

Priest: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with us all. **Amen.**

HYMN [O come, O come, Emmanuel](#)

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

2. O come, thou rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

3. O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

4. O come, thou key of David, come
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

5. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the Law,
in cloud and majesty and awe.

*(words: From the 'Great O Antiphons' [12th-13th century], trans John Mason Neale;
music: Melody adapt Thomas Helmore from a French Missal; harm Noël Tredinnick;
descant by David Iliff)*

We pray: **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 the Holy Spirit, that we may
perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Each Sunday we light one of the Advent candles to remember those who prepared
God's people for the coming of Christ. Now is the time to light your candle at home
if you have one.*

First Sunday – the Hebrew Fathers and Mothers of our Faith

Second Sunday – the Prophets

Third Sunday – John the Baptist

Fourth Sunday – the Virgin Mary



We pray: Today we remember the Hebrew Fathers and Mothers of our faith:
boyish yet brave Abraham, grumpy but tenacious Sarah; moody Moses
and dancing Miriam; clumsy Jacob and manipulative Rachel;
persistent, prayerful Hannah and loyal Ruth; brave diplomat Esther;
bold, if wilful David. We thank you for their stories and how their gifts

inspire us and their weakness teaches wisdom. Especially we celebrate that you can turn our flaws and mistakes into opportunities for grace. Let their experience of you be a light on our path as we prepare to welcome you anew at Christmas. **Amen.**

We sing:

We shall stay awake and pray at all times,
ready to welcome Christ, the Prince of Justice.
We shall set aside all fears and worries,
ready to welcome Christ, the Prince of Peace.

(words: Pierre-Marie Hoog & Robert B Kelly; music: Jacques Berthier)

We seek forgiveness

CONFESSION

Deacon: When the Lord comes he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

(cf 1 Corinthians 4:5)

Silence

[Kyrie eleison.](#) X3 (Lord, have mercy)

Christe Eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

(music: Orthodox chant from Ukraine)

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw *us* to himself, and cleanse *us* from *our* sins that *we* may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **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 forever. **Amen**

OLD TESTAMENT READING [Isaiah 2:1-5](#)

PSALM 122

I was glad when they said to me,
‘Let us go to the house of the LORD!’
Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.
To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
For there the thrones for judgement were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
‘May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.’
For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, ‘Peace be within you.’
For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good.

NEW TESTAMENT READING [Romans 13:11-end](#)

HYMN [The Lord will come and not be slow](#)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The Lord will come and not be slow,
his footsteps cannot err;
before him righteousness shall go,
his royal harbinger. | 3. The nations all whom thou hast made
shall come, and all shall frame
to bow them low before thee, Lord,
and glorify thy name. |
| 2. Truth from the earth, like to a flow'r,
shall bud and blossom free;
and justice, from her heav'nly bow'r,
bless all humanity. | 4. For great thou art, and wonders great
by thy strong hand are done:
thou in thy everlasting seat
remainest God alone. |

(words: John Milton, based on Psalms 82, 85 & 86 alt; music: William Jones)

GOSPEL READING [Matthew 24:36-44](#)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end This is the Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON from Lu Skerratt-Love

As-salamu alaykum

Today we are beginning a journey. We have no bag, no passport, no charger, no Instagram, no Google Maps, no dinner reservation, and no hotel booked for our arrival. This is a holy journey, a chance to meet with God amongst us, but it's perhaps not quite what you're expecting.

In our Abrahamic faith traditions and holy books, most journey's where there is a desire or a call to meet with God are characterised by the familiar narrative of ascent. Often, these involve going up somewhere (normally a mountain) to access the spiritual realm. Our scriptures are full of these theophany's or turning points, where humanity encounters the divine in high places.

This isn't just about geography but is also a way to highlight God's close relationship with holy people. Think of Noah's Ark at the end of the flood, Abraham's near sacrifice of his son Isaac, Moses receiving the 10 commandments, all these are characterised by being atop a mountain. We can see this too in the Qur'an, in Surah 96, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) went to Mount Hira outside of Mecca and had God's words revealed to him through the intermediary of the Angel Gabriel/Jibril. We see this kind of language echoed in our passage from Isaiah today, *'in 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'* (2:2). God is at the top, and we are under, vying for our chance to climb up.

However, in advent, we come face to face with a pathway or an ascent that is not like the other theophany's that we're so used to. It's not linear, it doesn't fit with what we think we

know about going up to be with God...as our readings highlight for us today, it's all rather back to front.

If you're a bit puzzled, let me try and explain, advent can be described as a journey unlike any other, a onetime event that is lived each year. It is a journey that is both in and out of time, now and not yet, existing in us whilst being beyond all we know. It is a journey towards the beginning, towards God with us, the Incarnation, eternal God in human form. It is a journey of reflection and attention as we wait for the Apocalypse, the uncovering, the moment when Mary's/Maryam's labour turns everything upside down.

In our Gospel reading we are confronted with disruption. Christ is talking to his disciples about himself and when he will come, even though he's already there. This is an apocalyptic calling that is both in time and beyond it, calling us to urgency, to be ready and keep awake.

What's particularly interesting is that our Gospel reading is not about meeting God or meeting Christ in the high places but meeting God here on earth, in the vulnerable messy human ordinariness of life. Something is changing, eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage is not enough. The domestic tasks of grinding grain and being in the field won't satisfy. This relationship with the Divine has got personal, God is present in human activity and is calling what is not of God, out.

In all our readings, I wonder whether one of the central themes is how we so easily confuse our relationship with the Divine with what is life giving with what may destroy. This takes a bit of unpicking, and also because eating, drinking and marrying are not inherently bad things...but they can be, they can become the idols that separate us from God. Similarly, in Romans 13 verse 13, Paul states, *'let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy'*.

What does this mean?

In my interpretation, I think Paul is echoing the words of Christ in our Gospel reading, our human creativity and endeavour, our ability to marry, share food, laugh, delight in human experience can not only give us wings, but also cause us to teeter on the edge of destruction, to ignore this gift of life, by focusing on our limiting desires we might end up missing out or simply not seeing Christ being amongst us, we're so focused on which way is up and which way is down...we don't witness what is in our midst.

All our readings manage to highlight this paradox, the human potential to create, love and to hurt and destroy. In Isaiah, the people shall *beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks'* (2:3). In Matthew, *'two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left'* (24:40-41). In Romans, Paul is unsurprisingly more explicit, *'put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires'* (13:14)

If we're lazy in our theology, we can take this is a list of things we cannot do, and because we're human inevitably fail again and again and then get caught up in the trauma and disease of shame, guilt, and sin. However, this disruption, this journey, that is back to front and upside down isn't as simple as that. If anything, it highlights the cataclysmic event that when Christ is born, we are confronted with a new-born baby in his mother's arms – the most vulnerable of all images and it is in that vulnerability, that soberness, that we must be ready for the world to change and willing to change with it. Our relationship with God is no longer about ascending to the top but meeting with Christ here and now, on the street, in our kitchens, in our bedrooms, bringing all of our hopes, fears, desires and yearning. The need to stay awake, keep watch, and be ready is not about shaming anyone on the journey but highlighting the swooping arrival of the one who comes to be among us in this world of ordinary human pain and gorgeousness, so that our ordinary humanness is caught up in the life God.

If we start to walk this advent journey, we may find the contours of our deepest needs and cherished hopes. In this upside down, back to front holy mystery of God with us, we may begin to discern the ways in which we have misunderstood that which gives life and that which distorts it. In this journey we may be able to go down, to go deeper and know God is right there, for *salvation is nearer to us* than when we first started to question, to believe. I'd like to end with a poem by R.S Thomas called The Coming which I think articulates this journey into advent beautifully:

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look, he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows; a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With Slime
On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many people
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

Amen

We affirm our faith

APOSTLES' CREED

At home, we stand and turn to look in the direction of Church, in Church we stand, aware of our small part in God's long story of being with humankind:

**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.**

INTERCESSIONS *in church are led by Katie Birse*

At home: you might return to the names of Old Testament figures in the candle prayer and see who among them you think we would benefit from their appearing today. What would they bring that we need? Turn those thoughts into prayers for the vision, wisdom, healing, courage needed today.

We pray for the Vacancy in See Committee in the process of searching for a new Bishop for Birmingham.

We also pray for the family and friends mourning Cecil Lammy who died last week.

THE PEACE

We pause to remember each other: those worshipping at home, and those worshipping in Church and those we care for who are far away.

Deacon: In the tender mercy of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to give light to those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(cf Luke 1:78-79)

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

HYMN [Christ, be our light](#)

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your world alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

(words & music: Bernadette Farrell)

The Table is prepared in Church. At home, now is the time to say the Lord's Prayer (below) and consume the food and drink you have prepared, first praying:

God, we long for Communion. With this symbolic meal stir my hope for the fellowship meal we cannot yet see, and help me wait for it with patience. **Amen.**

(cf Romans 8:2)

We tell the story of salvation

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

You are worthy of our thanks and praise, Lord God of truth, for by the breath of your mouth you have spoken your word, and all things have come into being. You fashioned us in your image and placed us in the garden of your delight. Though we chose the path of rebellion you would not abandon your own.

Again and again you drew us into your covenant of grace. You gave your people the law and taught us by your prophets to look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace. As we watch for the signs of your kingdom on earth, we echo the song of the angels in heaven, ever more 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.

(music: Richard Shephard)

Lord God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness.

Amen. Lord we believe.

Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to die for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

Amen. Lord we believe.

On the night he gave up himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

Amen. Lord we believe.

A bell is rung

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: 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.

Amen. Lord we believe.

A bell is rung

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord: by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Deacon: As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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.**

Priest: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All: Though we are many, we are one body.
For we all share in one bread.**

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
But only say the word and I shall be healed.**

[Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us.](#)

Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world: grant us peace. *(music: Richard Shephard)*

We pause to remember all who pray at home, then share the bread and wine, now for us the body and blood of Christ.

CANTICLE 1. Creator of the starry height,
thy people's everlasting light,
Jesu, redeemer of us all,
hear thou thy servants when they call.

2. Thou, grieving at the helpless cry
of all creation doomed to die,
didst come to save our fallen race
by healing gifts of heav'nly grace.

3. When earth was near its evening hour,
thou didst, in love's redeeming pow'r,
like bridegroom from his chamber, come
forth from a Virgin-mother's womb.

4. At thy great name, exalted now,
all knees in lowly homage bow;
all things in heav'n and earth adore,
and own thee King for evermore.

5. To thee, O Holy One, we pray,
our judge in that tremendous day,
ward off, while yet we dwell below,
the weapons of our crafty foe.

6. To God the Father, God the Son
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honour, might and glory be
from age to age eternally. Amen.

(words: 7th century, trans John Mason Neale alt; music: Plainsong melody, arr Andrew Moore)

We are called to serve

We pray: **Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with your Word [and with the body and blood of Christ]. Strengthen us in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

We imagine our scattered fellowship, family and colleagues and all our neighbours praying for blessing on all:

THE BLESSING

May God the Father, judge all-merciful, make us worthy of a place in his kingdom. **Amen.**

May God the Son, coming among us in power, reveal in our midst the promise of his glory. **Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith, joyful in hope and constant in love. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among *us* and remain with *us* always. **Amen.**

HYMN

[Lo, he comes with clouds descending](#)

1. Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for mortal sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ appears on earth to reign.

2. Ev'ry eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
we who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply grieving, deeply grieving, deeply grieving,
shall the true Messiah see.

3. Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture, with what rapture, with what rapture
gaze we on those glorious scars!

4. Yea, amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the pow'r and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

*(words: Charles Wesley, John Cennick & Martin Madan alt;
music: from Charles Wesley's 'Select Hymns with Tunes Annex't' [1765]; descant: Richard Lloyd)*

Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ, Amen.

VOLUNTARY

Giving to All Saints Church

We are pleased to have been able to borrow a card reader from the Diocese of Birmingham to see if is a good way for people to donate to All Saints. You may already give via the Parish Giving Scheme, or weekly envelopes. If any wish to make a donation today by card, please follow the simple instructions on the screen near the Church porch. Your feedback would be appreciated before we decide whether or not to invest in such a system.

All Saints Safeguarding and child protection coordinator is Mary Miles (0121 449 0851) - if you have any concerns or worries about children, young people or vulnerable adults and don't know what to do don't hesitate to contact me



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Christmas Services:

THIS EVENING 5pm *the Christmas Lights are switched on in the Square, then everyone is welcome to 5.30pm Kings Heath Business Association Carol Service followed by a hot meal generously provided by the Association for all who come.*

Carols by Candlelight Sunday 18th December, 6.30pm

Children's Carol Service Christmas Eve, 3pm

Midnight Mass Christmas Eve, 11.30pm

Christmas Communion Christmas Day, 10am

New Year's Day Communion Sunday 1st January 2023, 10am