

Welcome to
your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Holy Communion

Advent II, Sunday 10th December 2023

We gather

For those worshipping 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. If possible and safe, have four tea lights and matches ready, light one of them before you begin the service.

1. [Comfort, comfort now my people](#); speak of peace – so says your God.

Comfort those who sit in darkness, burdened by a heavy load.
To Jerusalem proclaim: God shall take away your shame.
Now get ready to recover; guilt and suffering are over.

2. Hear the herald's proclamation in the desert far and near,
calling all to true repentance, telling that the Lord is near.
Oh, that warning cry obey! For your God prepare a way.
Let the valleys rise to greet him and the hills bow down to meet him.

3. Straighten out what has been crooked; make the roughest places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble, live as fits God's holy reign.
Soon the glory of the Lord shall on earth be shed abroad.
Human flesh shall surely see it; God is ready to decree it.

*(words: Isaiah 40:1-5, para Johannes Olearius, trans Catherine Winkworth, alt John L Bell;
music: attrib Louis Bourgeois, arr John L Bell)*

When the song finishes we stand in silence.

SONG [Wake up, O people](#)

Wake up, O people, the Lord is very near!

Wake up, and stand for the Lord. (x2)

1. Your saving Lord is near. Wake up!
His glory will appear. Wake up!
Your hour of grace is nearer than it ever was.

2. The night of sin has passed. Wake up!
The light is near at last. Wake up!
The day star, Christ, the Son of God, will soon appear.

3. To live in love and peace. Wake up!
To let all quarrels cease. Wake up!
To live that all you do may stand the light of day.

4. That Christ may be your shield. Wake up!
That death to life may yield. Wake up!
That heaven's gate be opened wide again for you.

(words: Marie Lydia Pereira, from Romans 13:11-14)

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

All: And also with you.

WELCOME and NOTICES

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 your 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. For those at home, now is the time to light your second candle if you have one, saying the prayer below.

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: God our Father, you spoke to the prophets of old of a Saviour who would bring peace. You helped them to spread the joyful message of his coming kingdom. Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, to share with those around us the good news of your power and love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**

CANDLE SONG

1. Stay awake, be ready.
You do not know the hour
when the Lord is coming.
Stay awake, be ready.
The Lord is coming soon!
Alleluia, alleluia!
The Lord is coming soon.

2. Prepare! he's coming!
The one who will give peace
to the world is coming!
Prepare! he's coming!
The reign of God is near!
Alleluia, alleluia!
The reign of God is near.

(words & music: Christopher Walker)

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

Heavenly Father, you have created a universe of light: forgive us when we return to darkness. Lord, have mercy.

[Kyrie eleison.](#) X3

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world: cleanse and heal our blinded sight. Christ, have mercy.

Christe Eleison.

Holy Spirit, you give us light in our hearts: renew us in faith and love.

Lord, have mercy.

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.**

A COLLECT for the second Sunday of Advent

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen**

OLD TESTAMENT READING [Isaiah 40:1-11](#)

PSALM 85

NEW TESTAMENT READING [2 Peter 3:8-15a](#)

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.

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.

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.

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)

We remain standing for the GOSPEL READING [Mark 1:1-8](#)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end This is the Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON in Church is from Tariro

For those at home, David offers:

Anticipating John's voice crying in the wilderness, Isaiah calls upon the people of Israel to begin preparation for the new things God will do for them. John, preparing people for Jesus' arrival, gives the people of his generation some agency, some active, meaningful thing they can do to get ready, something worth doing in itself; something that will create the conditions in which Jesus's ministry will bear fruit; something that will make them receptive to what he offers.

The modern state of Israel is not congruent with the concept of God's people, Israel, but of course the Hebrew heritage shimmers through, the ironies and tragedies of biblical patterns of conflict repeated today are heart breaking. One of the deeply frustrating things about the present conflict is the way each side shouts at the other from what they each think is morally high ground. It is not, but it feels like it to them. Meanwhile, those attacked, raped, captured, bombed, displaced are surely in the deepest trough of despair.

Terrifying details emerge of the sexual violence perpetrated on 7th October as a deliberate part of the murderous day. Typically in this conflict, as with the missile strikes on hospitals, there ensues a pendulum swinging dispute about verification. If even some of the findings of Lucy Williamson are proved to be true, any thought of high ground on Hamas' part would, of course, be ludicrous and despicable. Already, any whiff of a claim that they acted in the name of Islam is blasphemous. If evil sexual violence was committed against Israeli women that day, it would also mean the women of Gaza are not safe. For if the leadership under whom Palestinians live underwrite such sexual violence, no woman is safe in Gaza either. For the fundamental attitude to womanhood among the male leadership is revealed and any acquiescing under that leadership are contributing, however passively, to that patriarchal violent culture. The moral high ground is gone. The mountain is made low.

Isaiah gives agency to the beleaguered people of Israel in exile, telling them to get busy lowering the mountain and lifting up the valley. Even before God comes with any kind of solution they are encouraged to be active in the work of preparation; they are given the dignity of agency when, in exile, they thought they had none. "Don't just sit and wait. Create the conditions in which God's presence will bear fruit among us," cries Isaiah.

Today, in Palestine, many, many people are tear jerkingly, astonishingly courageous, lifting each other up, trying to bake bread, trying to offer medical care, wanting to be as kind as possible in such a cruel environment, doing their bit to lift up the valley of despair. Perhaps also, some need more actively to begin crumbling, then scrabbling, the tearing away a the claimed moral high ground of their brutal leadership whose shameless provocation and evil violence is now reaping the whirlwind.

Today in the State of Israel, many are working to comfort the wounded and bereaved, many are courageously looking into the dark void of evil to gather evidence of the atrocities committed against women that day. Some are reaching out to Arab neighbours, refusing to dehumanise people with whom they've learned to live and break bread in more peaceable times. Some are still collecting Palestinians from the West Bank to drive them safely to medical appointments. Every such act helps lift up the valley of despair and bitterness. Perhaps some there see the moral high ground claimed by the state of Israel crumbles with every thudding missile, every collapsing tower block or hospital, every civilian death in Gaza. Surely the military action justified from the moral high ground is not creating the conditions in which peace may come, but is digging deeper the valley of bitterness where hatred is spawned and Hamas recruits its fighters. Could it be that there will be no peace until the moral high ground is lowered and people can stand, human before human, and God can get a word in edgeways?

This is not to speak cheaply of equal blame. It is, though, to wonder how we create the conditions in which we will be receptive to God coming to help us imagine an equality of dignity.

We affirm our faith

We stand and at home, if able, we turn to look in the direction of Church:

APOSTLE'S CREED

Deacon: We stand to declare our faith in God, made known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

**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

For those praying at home: Listen out for moral high-ground-language in our own nation's politics and pray for the people who come to mind.

Listen out for signs of despair or bitterness in communities and pray for them to be lifted up.

Among those in our community who have asked for our prayers, we remember Tricia Howard and Ingrid, Janet Tilley, Wendy Turner, Adrian Koslowski, Lynn Busfield and Kathy Farbrother.

Among those who have died, we remember Mrs Pat Flynn, and Robin Centre volunteer Greg Mason.

We stand for THE PEACE

Deacon: God will speak peace to his people, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

All: and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

HYMN

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 Annexed' [1765]; descant: Richard Lloyd)*

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.

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.

Joyful, joyful, we adore you God of glory, Lord of love. You wrote your law not only on to stone tablets but into the very life of your holy people. Through Moses you summoned your people to love you with all their heart, all their soul and all their might. When your Son, walking in the way of the law and the prophets, came to live among us, loving you with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, he showed us how to love our neighbours as ourselves. When his neighbours did not love him and raise him up in shame on the cross, you raised him in the glory of the resurrection. You, O Lord our God, are holy and you are one. And so we remember and celebrate your covenant with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven as we join the unending hymn.

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.

(Shepherd)

Abiding God, you are our dwelling place in every generation. You sent your spirit of wisdom to rest upon Joshua, and blessed him through the hands of Moses to continue the story of your mighty works. You sent Jesus as the new Joshua, our saviour and the pioneer of our hope. As we remember our Lords saving mercies, send down your Holy Spirit to continue in and through us your story of salvation, and sanctify this bread and cup to be for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread and gave it to them saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

A bell is rung

After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples 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."

A bell is rung

Deacon: Great is the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Embracing God, you invite us to love you by loving our neighbours. Open wide every heart to the way of your commandments. Make your church a living body of your law, written into one shared life. Fill your children with the zeal of the prophets. Show your people how to love their neighbours not only in word but in action. Pour your transforming Spirit upon any whose most difficult struggle is learning to love themselves. Reveal yourself in the face of friend and stranger, until that day when your world shall see you face to face; when, by the fullness of your grace, we come to share in your lasting glory, ever-loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **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.

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you and his blood which he shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that he died and now lives for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

We sing: [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. (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.

HYMN *during Communion*

1. This is the truth sent from above,
the truth of God, the God of love;
therefore don't turn me from the
door,
but hearken all, both rich and poor.

2. The first thing that I will relate,
that God at first did man create;
the next thing which to you I tell –
woman was made with him to
dwell.

3. Thus were we heirs to endless
woes
till God the Lord did interpose;
and so a promise soon did run:
that he'd redeem us by his Son.

4. And at this season of the year
our blest Redeemer did appear,
and here did live, and hear did
preach,
and many thousands he did teach.

5. Thus he in love to us behaved,
to show us how we must be saved;
and if you want to know the way,
be pleased to hear what he did say.

(words & music: Traditional English, arr Ralph Vaughan Williams)

We are sent out

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.**

THE BLESSING

[May] Christ the sun of righteousness shine upon *us* and scatter the shadows from *our* path and make *us* ready to meet him when he comes in glory, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with *us* now and always. **Amen.**

SONG [How lovely on the mountains](#)

1. How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him
who brings good news, good news,
announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness:
our God reigns, our God reigns.

*Our God reigns, our God reigns,
our God reigns, our God reigns.*

2. You watchmen, lift your voices joyfully as one,
shout for your King, your King!
See eye to eye, the Lord restoring Zion:
our God reigns, our God reigns.

3. Wasteplaces of Jerusalem, break forth with joy!
We are redeemed, redeemed.
The Lord has saved and comforted his people:
our God reigns, our God reigns.

4. Ends of the earth, see the salvation of our God!
Jesus is Lord, is Lord!
Before the nations, he has bared his holy arm:
our God reigns, our God reigns.

*(words: v1 Leonard E Smith Jnr, based on Isaiah 52 & 53, vv2-4 unknown;
music: Leonard E Smith Jnr, arr Keith Stent)*

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

*Do stay for coffee after the service if you can, and participate in the Big
Christmas Card.
Evening Prayer 6.30pm this evening. Compline, Wednesday 9pm in the
Chapel.*



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