

Morning Prayer

at home with your
Parish Church

in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Advent Sunday

3rd December 2023

Preparation

You may wish to mark your time of worship by arranging a table with a cloth and your Bible, or anything, such as flowers, that makes it a special reflective space. If possible and safe, have four tea lights and matches ready,

Music: click on the links to hear and join in the music. Click stop at the end of each.

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)

At home, we pause to remember those gathered in Church who, in turn remember us.

We take this time, united in Christ, to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and 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 find new ways to serve God.

*In this first Sunday of Advent now light **one** of the candles to remember:*

First Sunday – the Hebrew Fathers and Mothers of our Faith

Second Sunday – the Prophets

Third Sunday – John the Baptist

Fourth Sunday – the Virgin Mary

PRAYER: 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.**

Prayers of Penitence

We confess:

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

Lord, have mercy.

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

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

Lord, have mercy.

We keep silence, then pray:

May almighty God who forgives all who truly repent have mercy upon us, pardon us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT READING Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

PSALM 25:1-10

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.
Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.
Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

GOSPEL READING Luke 21:25-36

'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'

'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *We stand if able and turn to look in the direction of Church, to emphasise our gathering around a precious, shared story:*

We declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles,
this we have received and this we believe. Amen.** (cf 1 Corinthians 15:3-7)

Prayers

We pray THE COLLECT for Advent Sunday

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**

LORD'S PRAYER

We pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

All: Our Father in heaven...

FOR REFLECTION

He was right. There are signs in the Sun, changes in climate, fearful conflicts. How did Jesus press on so quickly from that warning to talk of hope budding like trees in spring time? How can he expect us to hold up our heads confidently? Yet he does. Through the ups and downs of the Hebrew scriptures, there have been many times when the end seemed nigh, enemy powers seemed unstoppable and indeed plenty of climate-related crises, famine, drought. It has often seemed the end is upon us. Irrepressible hope, such that even gloomy Jeremiah can't keep it down, has kept God's people going.

Look for the signs of hope today, even among the ferocious conflicts: the restraint of ceasefire; the courage of aid workers, bakers, journalists, medics in war torn regions; the incremental changes in attitudes in sexual politics or environmental responsibility; examples of generosity outshining cruelty.

We turn our reflection into PRAYERS:

Hold the budding fruit tree image in your heart and mind, and pray for those who have come to mind.

See if you can catch the melody and join in Jesus' insistence that life and fruitfulness will have the last word.

Among those who are bereaved we pray for the family of David Shephard.

We are also asked to pray for all victims of knife crime.

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

PRAYER FOR 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.**

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England

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