



A Liturgy of the Word - First Sunday in Advent

Date: 3 December 2023

The full service or the sermon can be viewed on the website.

Processional Hymn

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne. throughout eternity.

Author: Charles Wesley

Call to Worship

The LORD is king! Let the earth rejoice;
The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory.

Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.
Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Introductory Rite

Today is the beginning of Advent, a time of preparation for the celebration of Christ's birth. We are here because God's promises to our ancestors came true when Jesus was born. God's promise is kept each Sunday when we worship because Christ is in our midst. God will keep the promise to come again in glory. In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. These candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in the Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

First Sunday of Advent: The Candle of Hope

Isaiah 60:2 says:

*For night shall cover the earth, and thick shadows the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you, and God's glory will appear over you.*



Lighting of the Advent Candle



We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is hope. Because of Christ we not only have hope, but we believe that good is stronger than evil. God wants us to work for good in this world.

The colour of this candle is purple— symbolizing the majesty of Christ, whose glory shines in the night.

Light the first candle: (Let us pray)

O God, we thank you that Jesus brought hope into our world. By the good news of the Bible you are still bringing hope to people. Help us to be ready to welcome Jesus Christ, so that we may think good thoughts and do good deeds and so we may be a people of hope in our world. Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Collect for Purity



**Almighty God
to whom all hearts are open
all desires known
and from whom no secrets are hid:
cleans 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**

The Penitence



If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Let us confess together:

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father
in penitence we confess
that we have sinned against you
through our own fault
in thought, word, and deed
and in what we have left undone.
For the sake of your Son, Christ our Lord
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life
to the glory of your name.**

Absolution



May the Lord of light and love forgive you your sins and set you free from them, may he strengthen you toward every Christian virtue, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**



The Collect



Almighty Father,
your Son came to us in humility as our Saviour
and at the last day he will come again in glory as our judge:
give us grace to turn away from darkness to the light of Christ
that we will be ready to welcome him;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
for ever and ever. **Amen**

The Word of God



Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Gospel Reading



Mark 13:24-37

Sermon



The Revd Dave Edwards

Affirmation of Faith



Let us declare our faith in the words of the Apostles' creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
And born of the Virgin Mary.
He 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
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
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 of Intercession



Lord of all time and space, as we come before you at the start of the Season of Advent, we ask you to prepare us for the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ, and to hear us when we pray in faith for the needs of the Church and the world and to thank you for your goodness.



Almighty God, we pray for your church today, gathering worldwide in churches, chapels and cathedrals, to praise you and to hear your holy word. Give us a sense of expectation as we come and inspiration as we go. We pray for your blessing on all those who lead, preach and teach and we pray especially for our own clergy here in the parish of St Michael's and throughout the diocese of Johannesburg. Guide us through our spiritual and worldly journey in the season of Advent, until the day when we celebrate together the birth of your Son at Christmas Day.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Sovereign Lord, we pray for the universal Church, especially during this season of Advent. May the Church not only prepare itself to receive Christ once more, but to be a herald of the good news of the birth of your Son. Unite us through your Holy Spirit and grant us conviction and power to proclaim a message of peace, hope and love to a hurting world. We pray especially for Thabo, our Metropolitan, and Steve, our Bishop. We pray for all leaders throughout the Anglican Communion; grant them wisdom and a renewed vision for your Church.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Creator God, drive away despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice and truth, and restore our passion for what is good and right. Establish your just and gentle rule throughout the world especially where there is conflict; where peace seems so far away and so many have lost everything, even the faint hope of a peaceful future. Govern the hearts and minds of all world leaders and those in authority, that they may act justly, honestly and according to your will.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Father God, we pray for those amongst our families, friends and neighbours who will only see in Advent a hectic and worrying run-up to the excesses of a secular Christmas. Help us as we try to set an example of the true spirit of preparation for that incredibly precious gift of the Christ-child. May they see in our services and our carols, whether in church or online, the true meaning of Christmas and experience your love for Christ, through the giving of your Son, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Merciful God, we pray for those for whom the season of Christmas will be a long and lonely one. Especially, we pray for the elderly; those whose children are far away; we pray for the widowed and recently bereaved; and for all those for whom Christmastime raises painful memories and associations. May they know the consolation of your love as well as your healing power. We pray especially for those who will pass away during the season for Advent, and for those whose year's mind occurs today.

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Loving God, we pray for all those who are ill or suffering at this time. In your salvation, we have true healing, in body, mind, and spirit. Look into the hearts of all those in need of your healing, Lord Jesus; extend to them your healing touch, relieve them from their pain and discomfort, and grant them your peace which surpasses all understanding. **(Add names of those on pew leaflet)**

Lord in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Advent Lord, as we move into anew liturgical year, draw near to us, strengthen our faith, deepen our love for you and for our neighbours, and open our eyes to the wonder of your creation, so that when our Saviour comes he may find our hearts ready to receive him. In the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen**



Almighty Father, in this season of Advent, as we seek to learn once more the true meaning of the gift of your Son, fill us with a spirit of generosity, that we would give joyfully not only materially, but of ourselves. Bless now these tithes and offerings, may they be used for the building of your kingdom, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**



The Lord's Prayer



Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your Name
your kingdom come
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen

Final Hymn



God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient Church's story,
bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.
Lo, the hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways.
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

Author: Harry Emerson Fosdick (1930)

Final Blessing



As the angel Gabriel announces the birth of the Saviour,
may we too be heralds: heralds of new life, of love, of peace and joy.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**



Dismissal

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

Giving

Thank you for your continued financial contribution to the church at this time so as to enable St Michael's to meet its obligations in mission and ministry.

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