

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet for Advent Sunday, 27th November 2022

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Rev. Jacquie Evans.

Call to Worship

Wake up! God's new day is dawning!
Today we begin the countdown.
Jesus Christ is coming, ready or not.
Shall we be prepared and alert,
or are we going to be caught out in a last-minute frenzy
and perhaps left behind,
like those who switch off the alarm,
turn over and fall asleep again?

Christ is coming!
On this Advent Sunday we look forward
to both the first coming of Jesus in great humility and obscurity,
and the second coming of Christ in dazzling power and glory,
like lightning rending the heavens,
at an unknown moment,
when we least expect him.

'You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.' (Matthew 24:44.)

Hymn **StF 706** **Christ be our light**

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 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 word 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.

Bernadette Farrell

Prayer of Adoration

**We praise you, living God, for these days of Advent,
for the opportunity they offer to reflect on Scripture,
and to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming
of your Son.**

**As we set out on our journey,
may we find a stillness that is your presence with us,
leading us on to Bethlehem
where our spirits can soar
towards the light of your eternal love,
revealed in the Christ Child.**

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Advent God, forgive us, we pray,
when our preparations for the coming of your Son
are superficial and we don't invest our whole selves into them
prayerfully, practically or purposefully.

May we not be left with regrets and 'if onlys',
but adapt to the challenges of our lives and our world
with the grace and agility of your Holy Spirit –
in whose power we pray.

Amen.

Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

God of all creation,
though the nights are long, the sun still rises;
though the mornings are dark, the birds still sing;
though the world isn't ready, your Son still comes;
though we don't listen or prepare or deserve,
you still love and forgive and renew us –
in Jesus' name.

Amen.

New Testament Reading

Romans 13: 11 - 14

And do this, understanding the present time: the hour has already
come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our
salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is
nearly over; the day is almost here.

So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of
light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing
and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in
dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord
Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of
the flesh.

Hymn

StF 176

Like a candle flame

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press **Shift** and **Ctrl** together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

Like a candle flame
flickering small in our darkness.
Uncreated light
shines through infant eyes.

God is with us, alleluia.
God is with us, alleluia.
God is with us, alleluia.
Alleluia!

Stars and angels sing,
yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark
set a world on fire?

Yet his light shall shine
from our lives, Spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame
of his holy fire.

Graham Kendrick

Gospel Reading

Matthew 24: 36 – 44

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept

watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Reflective Prayer Meditation for Advent

The longer we have to wait,
the harder it is to believe
that the expected visitor will come,
be they a friend or a tradesman,
and the same can be true of our waiting for Jesus.

It's hard enough to prepare for an event
when we know its date and time -
a party, an exam, an operation -
but when we don't know when
or where or how it will happen,
it's so much harder to be ready.

Advent God,

forgive us for undue concern about the past,
our sins and failures and missed opportunities.
Be our companion in the present,
guiding our thoughts, our words and our actions.
Lead us into the future,
preparing us for what lies ahead.
Make us ready to receive you afresh in this Advent season.
Break into our comfortable and comforting routines
and breathe freshness and enthusiasm into our busy lives.

Reflection

Are you awake?

Do you know what day it is?

Everything that we read and sing about today draws our attention to the need to be alert as we do not know when Jesus is coming. Yes, we are entering Advent once again, and this is the time when we prepare for the coming of the Lord. The trouble is we spend so much time preparing for our own Christmases that we lose sight of Christ. But today's readings remind us of the need for

preparation, not just of our homes, but also of our hearts and minds.

The traditional Advent Collect (as found in many prayer books) quotes St Paul where he develops the image in today's Epistle: 'Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.' We may feel that the early Christmas lights in our streets detract from Advent themes such as this, but perhaps they can remind us of this call 'to live honourably, as in the day', so that those around us may also be drawn to walk in the light of the Lord. But again the message here is one of preparation.

Jesus' disciples want to know more about his second coming, and even as we listen to the words of the passage from Matthew, we wonder whether we are at that point in our world. They approached him with a question: 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming?'. Jesus predicts a time of great upheaval, when there will be both international conflict and personal suffering. Matthew is likely to have known of the fall of the Temple in Jerusalem, destroyed by Roman armies in 70 AD. This traumatic event destabilised the worship of God for a generation. Matthew and Luke describe this event in greater detail than Mark – who probably wrote before the disaster. All three Gospel writers draw on the traditions of apocalyptic writing, where appalling events are interpreted as signs of God's judgement.

Against this background, Jesus anticipates the coming of the Son of Man. The imagery draws on that of Daniel 7, which envisions God sitting in judgement on Israel's enemies and commissioning the Son of Man to hold eternal power over the whole of creation. Here, Matthew emphasises the worldwide impact of the Son's arrival, which will be unlike anything the world has ever seen. He recalls the story of the Flood as an earlier world-changing cataclysm, and encourages his readers to identify with Noah, the only man who was prepared for it.

Jesus tells his disciples urgently 'Keep awake!' This becomes the pivot for all that he says to them, as he swings away from vivid descriptions of what will happen and towards stories stressing how important it is to be prepared. We read about the householder who was not prepared for the night-time thief. Jesus goes on to

tell the story of the wise and foolish bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom, and then the three slaves, each entrusted with talents by their master until he returned. The repeated emphasis is on waiting expectantly, not allowing apathy or impatience to blunt our focus even when we have no idea when the long-awaited event will happen. Keep awake!

So my question to everyone reading this is: are you awake?

Hymn StF 167 Colours of day

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

Colours of day dawn into the mind,
The sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
And let's give the message to the people we meet.

*So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
Open the door, let Jesus return.
Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,
Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.*

Go through the park, on into the town;
The sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
The people of darkness are needing a friend.

Chorus

Open your eyes, look into the sky,
The darkness has come, the Son came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
But Jesus is living, His Spirit is near.

*So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
Open the door, let Jesus return.
Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,
Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.*

Sue McLellan, John Paculabo & Keith Rycroft

Prayers of Intercession

God of hope,

where things seem to be one big tangle of pain and unhappiness,
intervene with your saving love;

where people are in conflict or locked in a stalemate,
release them from the cycle of war;

where your name is outlawed and your children are forced to hide,
break through their darkness and be God-revealed to them;

where despair takes centre stage

and depression and anxiety sharpen their claws,
fill those situations with unexpected peace and joy.

God of hope, God-with-us, God of all time and of every place:

may the earth be filled with the knowledge of you,

and may your light flow over the world like a covering,

bringing protection from the darkness

and from the evil that often frightens and wounds us.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy Name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

We can make a change in the world, particularly when we go out with the light of God shining through us.

Hymn StF 172 Hills of the north rejoice

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Hills of the north, rejoice,
 river and mountain-spring,
 hark to the advent voice;
 valley and lowland, sing.
 Christ comes in righteousness and love,
 he brings salvation from above.

- 2 Isles of the southern seas,
 sing to the listening earth,
 carry on every breeze
 hope of a world's new birth:
 in Christ shall all be made anew,
 his word is sure, his promise true.

- 3 Lands of the east, arise,
 he is your brightest morn,
 greet him with joyous eyes,
 praise shall his path adorn:
 your seers have longed to know their Lord;
 to you he comes, the final Word.

- 4 Shores of the utmost west,
 lands of the setting sun,
 welcome the heavenly guest
 in whom the dawn has come:
 he brings a never-ending light
 who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

- 5 Shout, as you journey on;
 songs be in every mouth!
 Lo, from the north they come,
 from east and west and south:
 in Jesus all shall find their rest,
 in him the universe be blest.

Charles Ernest Oakley

Blessing

**Let me not walk in darkness, Lord,
let me walk in light.**

**Let me not walk in danger, Lord,
but safely in your sight.**

**Teach me to live your way of peace,
teach me to love and not to fight.**

Amen.

