

The Parish Church of St Matthew  
Northampton

# The First Sunday of Advent

(Year B begins)



## The Parish Mass

live streamed from the Vicarage  
during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2020

10.15 am



## ¶ Introduction to the Season

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (*adventus*) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth, they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement:

Every eye shall now behold him  
robed in dreadful majesty. (Charles Wesley)

The Four Last Things - Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell - have been traditional themes for Advent meditation. The characteristic note of Advent is therefore expectation, rather than penitence, although the character of the season is easily coloured by an analogy with Lent. The anticipation of Christmas under commercial pressure has also made it harder to sustain the appropriate sense of alert watchfulness, but the fundamental Advent prayer remains 'Maranatha' – 'Our Lord, come' (I Corinthians 16:22). Church decorations are simple and spare, and purple is the traditional liturgical colour. In the northern hemisphere, the Advent season falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas.

The lighting of candles on an Advent wreath was imported into Britain from northern Europe in the nineteenth century, and is now a common practice. The Moravian custom of the Christingle has similarly enjoyed great success in Britain since the latter part of the twentieth century, with the encouragement of the Children's Society; Christingle services may take place before or after Christmas. The Third Sunday of Advent was observed in medieval times as a splash of colour in the restrained atmosphere of Advent (*Gaudete* or 'Rose Sunday'), and the last days of Advent were marked by the sequence of Great 'O' Antiphons, which continue to inspire modern Advent hymns and meditations.

# Order of Service

## ¶ The Gathering

### The Advent Prose

Drop down, ye heavens, from above,  
and let the skies pour forth righteousness:

**All let the earth be fruitful, and bring forth a Saviour.**

Be not very angry, O Lord, neither remember our iniquity for ever:  
thy holy cities are a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation:  
our holy and our beautiful house,  
where our fathers praised thee.

**All Drop down, ye heavens, from above,  
and let the skies pour forth righteousness:  
let the earth be fruitful, and bring forth a Saviour.**

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*The first purple candle is lit*

**All Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
born like him to be a king:  
be born in our hearts at Christmas,  
be King of our lives today.  
Amen.**

† In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**All Amen.**

### The Greeting

**All May the light and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord be with you.  
and also with you.**

## Invitation to Confession

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

*Silence is kept*

## Confession

**All**      **Lord our God,  
in our sin we have avoided your call.  
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,  
like the dew that goes away early.  
Have mercy on us;  
deliver us from judgement;  
bind up our wounds and revive us;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## Kyries

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

**All**      **Kyrie eleison.**

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

**All**      **Christe eleison.**

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

**All**      **Kyrie eleison.**

## Absolution

May the God of love bring you back to himself,  
forgive † you your sins,  
and assure you of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All**     **Amen.**

## The Collect

Let us pray.

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 for ever.

**All**     **Amen.**

## ¶ The Liturgy of the Word

**First Reading**             Isaiah 64:1-9

*Reader*             A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

○ that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,

you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.  
There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.  
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,  
and do not remember iniquity for ever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 80:1-8**

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you that led Joseph like a flock;  
Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,  
before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.  
Stir up your mighty strength  
and come to our salvation.

**All Turn us again, O God;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?  
You feed them with the bread of tears;  
you give them abundance of tears to drink.  
You have made us the derision of our neighbours,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

**All** *Turn us again, O God of hosts;  
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.*

## Holy Gospel

Mark 13:24-37

### Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

O Lord, let us see your mercy and give us your saving help.

**All** **Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you

**All** **and also with you.**

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

**All** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

'But in those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
and the stars will be falling from heaven,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his

slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

## The Homily

### Affirmation of Faith

We say together in faith:

**All Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,  
who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father, who created all things:

**All for by his will they were created  
and have their being.**

We believe in God the Son, who was slain:

**All for with his blood, he purchased us for God,  
from every tribe and language,  
from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:

**All the Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’  
Even so come, Lord Jesus!  
Amen.**

## Prayers of the Faithful

Watchful at all times,  
let us pray for strength to stand with confidence  
before our Maker and Redeemer.

*After each petition ...*

Maranatha:  
**All Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

*After the final petition*

Come, O Lord, and visit us in peace:  
that we may rejoice before you with a perfect heart.  
**All May the Lord when he comes  
find us watching and waiting.  
Amen.**

## ¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

### Sign of Peace

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

**All** The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

As you are able, let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

## The Offertory

*The altar table is prepared*

## Invitation to Prayer

Pray, my brothers and sisters,  
that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God,  
the almighty Father.

**All** **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands  
for the praise and glory of his name,  
for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

## Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord, we pray that you will accept these offerings we make,  
gathered from among your gifts to us,  
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below,  
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** **Amen.**

## The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you  
**All** **and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**All** **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**All** **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.  
For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,  
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world  
to open for us the way of salvation.  
Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,  
we now watch for the day  
when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.  
And so we join our voices with angels and archangels  
and with all the company of heaven  
to proclaim your glory,  
for ever 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.**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,  
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
and as we follow his example and obey his command,  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us his body and his blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,  
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.

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.

**All** Praise to you, Lord Jesus:  
**Dying you destroyed our death,  
rising you restored our life:  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Therefore, heavenly Father,  
we remember his offering of himself  
made once for all upon the cross;  
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;  
we look for the coming of your kingdom,  
and with this bread and this cup  
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Accept through him, our great high priest,  
this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,  
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts  
in the presence of your divine majesty,  
renew us by your Spirit,  
inspire us with your love and  
unite us in the body of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Through him, and with him, and in him,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,  
we worship you, Father almighty,  
in songs of everlasting praise:  
**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

*The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung*

## The Lord's Prayer

Awaiting his coming in glory  
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour Christ has taught us:

**All**      **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.**

## Breaking of the Bread

Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**All**      **we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

## Agnus Dei

**All**      **Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
grant us peace.**

## Invitation to Communion

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

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

## Giving of Communion

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

## Spiritual Communion – *for those at home*

*It is an ancient practice of the Church that, when you are prevented from attending the Holy Eucharist, people are invited to express, in the words of St Thomas Aquinas, “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.” Therefore, during this time you are invited to pray this prayer, which may be said as often as you desire:*

## Act of Reception

**All**     **In union, blessed Jesus,  
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church  
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,**

*(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)*

**I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,  
for creation and all the blessings of this life,  
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,  
and resurrection,  
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.**

*(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)*

**I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,  
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,  
I pray you to come into my heart.  
I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,  
my soul, and my mind.  
Let nothing separate me from you;  
let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,  
I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace.  
Amen.**

## Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

O Lord our God,  
make us watchful and keep us faithful  
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;  
that, when he shall appear,  
he may not find us sleeping in sin  
but active in his service and joyful in his praise.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen.

**Generous God,  
you feed us at your heavenly table.  
Set us on fire with your Spirit  
that when Christ comes again  
we may shine like lights before his face;  
who with you and the Spirit lives for ever.  
Amen.**

## Notices for the Community

## ¶ Sending Out

*All*            The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

### Solemn Blessing

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

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

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

*All*            And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

### The Dismissal

*All*            As we await our coming Saviour,  
go in the peace of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**