

The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The First Sunday of Advent

Year B



Waiting in joyful hope

All Age Mass for the Parish Family
with welcome of the recently confirmed

Sunday 3rd December 2023

Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church

Our readings are concerned with the final coming of Christ, something the early Christians believed was imminent.

Paul gives thanks for the many charismatic gifts God has bestowed on the Corinthians. He is confident that as they wait for Christ's coming in glory, God will; keep them steadfast in bearing witness to him.

The Gospel reading urges us to stay awake at our appointed tasks, because we do not know the hour when Jesus, our Master, will return. We must live in such a way as to be always ready to meet the Lord. For then faithful, the Lord's coming is not something to fear; it is something to look forward to because the Lord will come as redeemer, not as judging.

Reflection

Advent is a season of hope.

It would be hard to exaggerate the values of hope.

It is said that while there is life there is hope.

This has an even deeper meaning in reverse:

while there is hope there is life.

As long as there is hope, no situation is impossible.

It is the task of Christians to keep hope alive in the world.

Advent summons us to wait in joyful hope

for the coming our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In the final analysis, he is our hope.



Order of Service

🔔 Gathering to Worship God

All stand at the sound of the bell

The Advent Prose

1. *Choir*
2. *All*



Drop down, ye hea-vens from a - bove, and let the skies pour down right - eous - ness.

Choir Be not wroth very sore, O Lord,
neither remember iniquity for ever:
thy holy cities are a wilderness,
Sion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation:
our holy and our beautiful house,
where our fathers praised thee. **Refrain**

Hymn

During which the flags are presented

All **Advent candles tell their story
As we watch and pray;
Longing for the day of glory,
'Come, Lord, soon,' we say.
Pain and sorrow, tears and sadness
Changed for gladness on that day.**

Prophet voices loudly crying,
Making pathways clear,
Glimpsing glory, self-denying,
Calling all to hear.
Through their message - challenged, shaken-
Hearts awaken: God is near!

John the Baptist, by his preaching
And by water poured,
Brought to those who heard his teaching
News of hope restored:
'Keep your vision strong and steady,
And be ready for the Lord.'

Mary's gift, beyond all telling,
Was to give Christ room.
She gave God a human dwelling
In a mother's womb.
Who could guess the final story?
- Cross and glory; empty tomb!

Words Mark Earey (born 1965)

Music Angel Voices
Edwin Monk (1819-1900)

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

The Greeting

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

The service is introduced

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

A child lights the first purple candle

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.**

Saying Sorry to God

When the Lord comes, he will shine his light on the darkness of the world, and show us the truth. In the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

Confession

All **Light of the world, hear us,
as we come in our need,
as we come with hearts laid bare.
Forgive us for all that is wrong within us,
all that dims our minds and muddles our motives,
distorting the truth and pushing us off course.
Redirect our hearts, O Lord,
that we may live lives for your glory,
free from sin and shame,
and being assured of your Holy Spirit in us.
In Jesus' name. Amen.**

God's Forgiveness

Priest **May almighty God,
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring you pardon t and peace,
now and for ever.**

All **Amen.**

The Opening Prayer

Priest Let us pray.

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

Sit

¶ Hearing and Responding to the Word of God

First Reading

Reader A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1.3-9

This is the word of the Lord

All **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Acclamation

1. Choir
2. Choir and Congregation

Fintan O'Carroll

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The first staff is for the choir and the second for the choir and congregation. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia' written below the notes.

Choir Jesus said, "Keep awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."

All **Alleluia, alleluia ...**

Gospel Reading

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to Peter, James and Andrew,
'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.'

Mark 13.24-37

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

The choir come and sit in the Nave

Hymn

All 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.

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

Music and words Sue McClellan (born 1951), John Paculabo (born 1946),
Keith Ryecroft (born 1949)

Talk - Presentation

Sit

The themes of the day are briefly explored

We believe

Stand

Priest As God's family, let us declare the faith of the Church.

All **We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Sit

Welcome of the Recently Confirmed

Our friends, Donna, Hector, Jack and Katie have been discovering the joy of the Gospel of Christ through study, prayer and worship. Now that they have received the sacrament of confirmation it gives us great joy to welcome and support them as they continue along the path of faith.

God of mercy and love,
by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body
and made to drink of the one Spirit;
we thank you for the gifts you have given to these your servants,
for bringing them to confirmation,
and for the building up of the body of Christ.
Grant that they may continue in the life of the Spirit
and walk with us in the light and obedience of Christ.
By the same Spirit,
fill the whole Church with your overflowing love;
give us knowledge and discernment of your will,
and steadfastness in your service,
until we all come to the unity of the faith,
to the measure of the full stature of Christ,
through whom we make our prayer.

All **Amen.**

**Defend, O Lord, these your servants with your heavenly grace,
that they may continue yours for ever,
and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more
until they come to your everlasting kingdom. Amen.**

Our Prayers to God

Priest As we begin another Church Year
let us give thanks to God that he has made us,
that he loves us and that he comes to us.

kneel

Intercessor

O God, you are our Maker:
you give us life, you give us love, you give us yourself.
Help us to give our lives, our love and ourselves to you.
Keep us alert and aware of your presence,
that we may meet you each day
and know that you come to us in grace and in love.

Come, Lord Jesus;

All **come, our Saviour and our God.**

Lord, you come to your Church,
help us to reveal your glory.
Grant that we may show your grace and
your goodness in our lives.
We thank you for the grace and goodness revealed
in Jesus Christ
and that we are enriched in him.

Come, Lord Jesus;

All **come, our Saviour and our God.**

We remember churches that are struggling against
the darkness of evil, of oppression, of apathy.
We remember especially Christians who are being persecuted
for their faith,
and we pray for an end to religious intolerance.

Come, Lord Jesus;

All **come, our Saviour and our God.**

As we pray for your world,
we remember those who are seeking to bring peace
and goodwill among all.
We pray for those involved in war or the threat of war,
for the Middle East and Ukraine .
We think of those caught up in natural earthquakes, famine
or flood.

All Come, Lord Jesus;
come, our Saviour and our God.

Lord, let your presence be known in our homes and our actions.
May people be thankful for us
and our care of all that is around us.
We pray that you will show yourself to us
through our loved ones and friends.

All Come, Lord Jesus;
come, our Saviour and our God.

We remember all whose lives are darkened by pain
and distress;
all who are struggling with doubt and despair;
all whose faith is shaken by what is happening around them.
We pray for members of our community and friends who
are ill at this time.
(*The acutely ill ...*).

All Come, Lord Jesus;
come, our Saviour and our God.

God our Father, your grace has been given to us,
in the gift of eternal life and in your abiding presence.
We pray for all who are departed from us,
(*The recently departed ... ; anniversaries of death ...*).

We rejoice with them in the gift of life and your love.

Priest Merciful Father,
All **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Uniformed Organisations

Sit

Members of the uniformed organisations may be invested or presented with awards etc.

The presentation of a Long Service Award to Mark Ludlow by Ian Malcolmson, Northampton District Commissioner

¶ Preparing to meet Jesus in Bread and Wine

Hymn

Stand

The Choir return to their stalls, the bread and wine are brought forward, and the monetary collection is placed under the altar

All

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear:**

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

**O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave:**

**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by your advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight:**

O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery:

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

Latin 13th century
translated by John Mason Neale (1818-1866)
A&M 45

The children are invited to stand either side of the altar

Offering the Gifts of Bread and Wine

Children Why do we give thanks and praise to God?

Adults Because he has created all that is, and he has given us life.
He is Lord of all, and yet loves each of us.

Children Why do we remember Jesus?

Adults Because he was sent from God and he gave up his life for us
on the cross. God raised him from the dead so that we might
see that death is the beginning of a new life, the life Jesus
showed us how to live.

Children Why do we use bread?

Adults Because Jesus took bread at the Last Supper. It is a sign of
Jesus feeding us as we share with others around his table.

Children Why do we drink wine?

Adults Because this wine is a sign of Jesus' saving love, poured out
for us when he died on the cross.

Prayer over the Bread and Wine

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

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

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

Children **Why is it right to give thanks and praise?**
Adults Listen, and we will hear.

Lord of all life, you created the universe,
where all living things reflect your glory.
You give us this great and beautiful earth,
to discover and to cherish.

You give us happy times
and things to celebrate.
In these we taste your kingdom,
a feast for all your children.

You made us all, each wonderfully different,
to join with the angels and sing your praise:

All sing **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.**

We thank you, loving Father,
because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son.
He gave his life for us on the cross
and shows us the way to live.
Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine
may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

Children Why do we share this bread and wine?
Adults **Listen, and we will hear.**

On the night before he died,
when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread.
He gave thanks, broke it,
and shared it with his disciples, saying:
'This is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine,
gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:
'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many,
for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup
we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.
As you feed us with these gifts,
send your Holy Spirit,
and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Children How do we follow Jesus Christ?
Adults **Listen, and we will hear.**

Help us, Father, to love one another,
as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended,
and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.
And now with Mary and all your saints
we give you glory,

through Jesus Christ,
in the strength of the Spirit,
today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

If you are able, please remain standing

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.**

Sign of Peace

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

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

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

The children return to their seats

Kneel

Breaking of the Bread

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

Invitation to Communion

All God's holy gifts for God's holy people.
**Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

The clergy and other ministers receive Holy Communion

Giving of Communion

Come, O Lord, visit us in peace,
that we may rejoice before you with a blameless heart.

*Those who are baptized and are communicant members of other
churches are warmly invited to receive Holy Communion.*

*Alternatively, if you wish to receive a blessing,
please bring this booklet with you to the communion rail.*

The Choir sing Lamb of God

Motet

Choir

People look East. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Guest is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Rose is on the way.

Birds, though ye long have ceased to build,
Guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
He for fledging time has chosen.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Bird is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim.
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Star is on the way.

Angels announce to man and beast
Him who cometh from the East.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the Word, the Lord is coming.
People look East, today:
Love the Lord is on the way.

*Music Andrew Padmore
Words Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)*

Prayer after Communion

Priest Let us pray.

Stand

As the clouds hide the sun,
so often you are hidden from us, O God.
We thank you for revealing yourself to us
in the body and blood of your Son.
Let us know that you are always there,
you are always with us.
You love us and never leave us.

All **Amen.**

**Awaken us, O God to your coming.
Open our eyes that we may see you.
Open our ears that we may hear you.
Open our lips that we may talk with you.
Touch our hearts that we may love you.
Come, Lord, come, among us.
Amen.**

Hymn

The flags are returned to their bearers

All **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.**

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.

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your Church gathered today.

Words and music Bernadette Farrell (b.1957)

Notices for the Community

Sit

¶ Going out to serve God

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

God's Blessing

May the God of peace,
make you perfect and holy,
and keep you safe and blameless, in spirit, soul, and body,
for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;

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

All **Amen.**

The Dismissal

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Organ Voluntary

Herr Christ der ein'ge Gottes Sohn BWV 601 *J S Bach*

The procession departs

*Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those
who wish to listen to the organ voluntary.*

*Café Guides are serving refreshments in the parish centre.
Please do join us.*

If you are a newcomer to the parish, please introduce yourself to the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.

Collection - responding to God's generosity

We invite you to make a monetary offering towards the ministry and mission of St Matthew's Church. You may do so using any of the following methods:

Cash, cheques, stewardship envelopes - using the receptacle provided at the back of church. If you are a taxpayer please use the envelopes in the chairs, and fill out the details in order that our parish may also benefit from the Gift Aid (an extra 25p for every pound given) associated with your giving.

Contactless giving - using the terminal provided. Just press the button for the amount you wish to give - £5, £10, or £20, and then hold your bank card over the reader.

Giving on your smart phone - using the QR code printed below. It gives you the option of any amount, Gift Aid, and making a regular payment.

Giving online - click the donate button on the parish website or Facebook page and follow the instructions.

Your generosity is gratefully received. Thank you.



Our thanks are due to 32nd St Matthew's Guides, Brownies and Rainbows who have generously financed the production of this week's service booklet.

This evening at 4.00 pm
The Advent Procession
by candlelight

Our next All-Age Service

The First Sunday of Advent
Sunday 3rd December
at 10.15 am

Christingle Service
Sunday 10th December at 4.00 pm

Crib Service
Christmas Eve at 4.00 pm
(Children are invited to come dressed
as a shepherd, angel, or king)

**Please take this booklet home
as an aid to prayer and reflection during the week,
and then re-cycle it.**

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