

**Christ Church, Ipswich**  
*Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024*  
**Advent Sunday Worship with Holy Communion**

Hello, I hope you are well. Let us worship God together:

**Call to worship**

To be alive is sometimes to experience pain and difficulties.  
 Jesus warns us not to overreact to disaster,  
 but to try to see life from a wider perspective,  
 looking for the coming of the kingdom of God.  
 There is always hope: God will not forsake us.  
 Come, let us worship.

**A gathering prayer**

*We pray as we light our first candle this week.*

As we light this Advent candle,  
 may its flame be for us a sign of hope;  
 may its warmth be a symbol of God's love for us;  
 and may it inspire us to be hope bearers –  
 people of compassion and integrity,  
 as we gather in the name of Jesus  
 who is the light of the world. **Amen.**

**A prayer of approach**

God of mystery,  
 we have stepped into Advent and await your revelations.  
 We have stepped into Advent, hoping that we and others  
 will see and feel and know your message.  
 You are a patient, persevering God, who offers your all for us;  
 you offer to us the depth of your being, the essence of life, the gift of love beyond compare.  
 And we wait to celebrate again the gift of Jesus born for us, given for us.  
 We look to you, for you will show us true life bursting forth. **Amen.**

**R&S 656 Lo! He comes with clouds descending,**

1 Lo! He comes with clouds descending,  
 once for favoured sinners slain;  
 thousand thousand saints attending  
 swell the triumph of his train:  
 Alleluia! (3 times)  
 God appears on earth to reign.

2 Every eye shall now behold him  
 robed in awesome majesty;  
 we, who set at naught and sold him,  
 crucified him on the tree:  
 Lord, have mercy, (3 times)  
 let us all thine Advent see.

3 Those dear tokens of his passion  
 still his dazzling body bears,  
 cause of endless exultation  
 to his ransomed worshippers:  
 Sing hosanna! (3 times)  
 see the risen Lord appears!

4 Yea, Amen, let all adore thee,  
 high on thine eternal throne:  
 Saviour, take the power and glory,  
 claim the kingdom for thine own;  
 O come quickly, (3 times)  
 Alleluia! Come, Lord, come!

### **A prayer of adoration**

Eternal God, hope of the world,  
 we cannot grasp the immensity of your being,  
 and yet all around us we catch glimpses of your power.  
 You speak to us in nature's blessings.  
 You speak to us through science and creativity.  
 You reveal yourself in the love and the care  
 and the support of those around us.  
 You show yourself when we most need to see you.  
 When we least expect it, we see your hand at work.  
 We read your Word, time and time again,  
 and suddenly, we are amazed by seeing something new.  
 Eternal God, we adore you. **Amen.**

### **A prayer of confession**

We wait, but don't always find it easy to wait,  
 and for that we are sorry.  
 We confess our impatience and our lack of attention  
 to the journey and its signposts.  
 Teach us that preparation is part of the journey  
 and that the journey is part of the gift.  
 You offer us a way to follow, a path to tread,  
 a journey that leads to hope, to joy, to trust and to love,  
 and we confess we do not always follow.  
 Now, may we step into this Advent as faithful people,  
 seeking forgiveness and trying to follow your path,  
 and believing you will be walking with us every step of the way. **Amen.**

### **Assurance of forgiveness**

God promises to all who follow,  
 that he will take away our sins  
 and set us on the path to life eternal.  
 Hear God's word, know God's forgiveness,  
 and feel God's peace. **Amen.**

### **A prayer of thanksgiving**

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
 to you we bring our thanks and praise  
 for your promises through the ages,  
 for your first Word,  
 for the first utterance of Wisdom,  
 for the first indwelling of the Spirit,  
 for the first sensing of divinity,  
 for the first utterance of the prophets,  
 for the dreams of the dreamers,  
 for the visions of the visionaries,  
 for the stories of the storytellers,  
 for the journeys of the travellers,  
 for the obedience of the called.  
 God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
 to you we bring our thanks and praise. **Amen.**

### **A prayer of thanks and dedication for all our giving**

**R&S 137 Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes**

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,  
the Saviour promised long:  
let every heart prepare a throne,  
and every voice a song.

2 He comes, the prisoners to release  
in Satan's bondage held;  
the gates of brass before him burst,  
the iron fetters yield.

3 He comes, from ignorance and doubt  
to clear the inward sight;  
and on the darkness of the blind  
to pour celestial light.

4 He comes, the broken heart to bind,  
the wounded soul to cure,  
and with the treasures of his grace  
to enrich the humble poor.

5 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
thy welcome shall proclaim;  
and heaven's eternal arches ring  
with thy beloved name.

Philip Doddridge (1702-51) altd.\*

**OT Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16 (OT page 671)**

*The Righteous Branch and the Covenant with David*

<sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>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 Reading Psalm 25:1-10 (OT page 464)**

*Prayer for Guidance and for Deliverance  
Of David.*

- <sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
<sup>2</sup>O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.  
<sup>3</sup>Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.  
<sup>4</sup>Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.  
<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.  
<sup>6</sup>Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.  
<sup>7</sup>Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!  
<sup>8</sup>Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
<sup>9</sup>He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.  
<sup>10</sup>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****(NT page 79)***The Coming of the Son of Man*

<sup>25</sup> '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. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

*The Lesson of the Fig Tree*

<sup>29</sup> Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup> as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'

*Exhortation to Watch*

<sup>34</sup> '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, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> 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.'

**Reflection*****A prayer:***

Lord Jesus, on you the past and the future hinge.  
 You open the door to past wisdom and to future knowledge.  
 You are the kingdom among us and the kingdom yet to come.  
 May this Advent be as a new beginning in our walk of faith.  
 And, inspired by all those who have gone before us,  
 may our steps be bold, faithful, loving and just.  
 We ask this in your name. Amen.

***A moment for reflection as Stephen plays*****Our prayers of intercession**

Heavenly Father, as Advent begins and we turn our minds to preparations for Christmas, we pray especially today for those whose lives have been turned upside down by recent weather events; for those who have lost loved ones in storms and floods; for those who have lost their homes or have been temporarily displaced; and for those whose livelihoods have been destroyed or seriously disrupted.

Give us expectant hearts as we listen for your voice.

**Wait for the Lord, his day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart.**

As we face the challenges of climate change, we pray for all those in charge of our councils and our country, who have difficult decisions to make on the way forward; and we thank you for the hope held out by COP29 – the hope of nations working together to tackle the causes of climate breakdown.

Give us expectant hearts as we listen for your voice.

**Wait for the Lord, his day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart.**

Lord, as we turn our minds towards Bethlehem at the beginning of Advent, we thank you for the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, and for the hope it brings of greater peace in the region. As we prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace, we hold in our hearts the hope for hostilities to cease the world over.

Give us expectant hearts as we listen for your voice.

**Wait for the Lord, his day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart.**

Father, for Christians, the new year begins today, with thoughts of a journey to Bethlehem, and hope in the form of a new baby, Jesus, who would change the world; but we have ahead of us four hectic, challenging weeks. December is a difficult time for many people, but especially for those who are lonely, with no family or friends to gather round the table, and those who are struggling to pay for presents to put under the tree. Many reflect on the past at this time, and become sad because of loved ones lost to them, or situations in life which haven't worked out. May your Church in each community, and we as Christians, be aware of the needs of those around us, and respond with love, holding out hope through friendship and a helping hand. Bless the special efforts made by individual congregations at this time, to be a beacon of hope and Christian love in their communities.

Give us expectant hearts as we listen for your voice.

**Wait for the Lord, his day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart.**

As we anticipate the joys of Christmas at this, the beginning of Advent, we pray for those who will find this year especially difficult, because of recent bereavement. May they know the hope held out in the promises of your Son, that they shall see their loved ones again. We ask also for a blessing of hope for those who suffer in body or in mind, or both; hope of healing and strength.

Give us expectant hearts as we listen for your voice.

**Wait for the Lord, his day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart.**

Lord, we live in times of change and great uncertainty, when faith is challenged and the Church is often found lacking; but in this season when even those who have strayed far from you, or those who have never learned of you, hear about the infant Jesus, may there be a response to the invitation held out by your Church worldwide – an invitation to celebrate the coming of light at the darkest time of the year, and to find hope for the way ahead.

Give us expectant hearts as we listen for your voice.

**Wait for the Lord, his day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart. Amen.**

### **BPW 149 There's a light upon the mountains**

1 There's a light upon the mountains,  
and the day is at the spring,  
when our eyes shall see the beauty  
and the glory of the King;  
weary was our heart with waiting,  
and the night-watch seemed so long,  
but His triumph-day is breaking,  
and we hail it with a song.

2 There's a hush of expectation,  
and a quiet in the air;  
and the breath of God is moving  
in the fervent breath of prayer;  
for the suffering, dying Jesus  
is the Christ upon the throne,  
and the travail of our spirits  
is the travail of His own.

3 He is breaking down the barriers,  
He is casting up the way;  
He is calling for His angels  
to build up the gates of day;  
but His angels here are human,  
not the shining hosts above,  
For the drum-beats of His army  
are the heart-beats of our love.

4 Hark! we hear a distant music,  
and it comes with fuller swell;  
it's the triumph song of Jesus,  
of our King Immanuel;  
Zion, go ye forth to meet Him,  
and my soul, be swift to bring  
all thy sweetest and thy dearest  
for the triumph of our King.

Henry Burton (1840-1930)

*Our children and young people join us ready for Holy Communion*

## **Holy Communion**

### **Gospel Words**

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life.  
Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,  
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.           John 6:35

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;  
for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.                   Matthew 11:28-30

### **Invitation to the Table**

Come to this table, not because you must but because you may,  
not because you are strong, but because you are weak.  
Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come,  
but because you need mercy and help.  
Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.  
Come, because he loved you and gave himself for you.  
Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body.

We pray together:

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse 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 Institution**

The apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper:  
For I received from the Lord  
what I also handed on to you,  
that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed  
took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks,  
he broke it and said,  
'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'  
In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying,  
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'  
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,  
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.           1 Corinthians 11.23–26

## Thanksgiving

Loving God, we praise and thank you  
for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ.

We thank you for his life and ministry,  
announcing the good news of your kingdom  
and demonstrating its power  
in the lifting of the downtrodden,  
and the healing of the sick,  
and the loving of the loveless.  
We thank you for his sacrificial death upon the cross  
for the redemption of the world,  
and for your raising him to life again,  
as a foretaste of the glory we shall share.

We give you thanks for this bread and wine,  
symbols of our world  
and signs of your transforming love.  
Send your Holy Spirit, we pray,  
that we may be renewed  
into the likeness of Jesus Christ  
and formed into his Body.  
This we pray in his name and for his sake. Amen.

## The Breaking of Bread

Jesus said, 'This is my body which is for you;  
do this in memory of me'.

### *Sharing the Bread*

Take this in remembrance that Christ died for you  
and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

## The Lifting of the Cup

In the same way,  
he took the cup after supper, and said:  
'This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood.  
Whenever you drink it,  
do this in memory of me.' 1 Corinthians 11:25

### *Sharing the Wine*

Drink this and remember that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

## Words of Acclamation and Prayer

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate.  
Your resurrection we confess.  
Your final coming we await.  
Glory be to you, O Christ.  
**Christ has died,**  
**Christ is risen,**  
**Christ will come again.**

**Father of all,**  
**we give you thanks and praise,**  
**that when we were still far off**  
**you met us in your Son and brought us home.**  
**Dying and living, he declared your love,**  
**gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.**  
**May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;**  
**we who drink his cup bring life to others;**  
**we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.**  
**Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,**  
**so we and all your children shall be free,**  
**and the whole earth live to praise your name;**  
**through Christ our Lord. Amen**

## The Lord's Prayer will be sung

### R&S 265 I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,

1 I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,  
should set his love upon the human race,  
or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,  
to bring them back, within the fold of grace.  
But this I know, that he was born of Mary,  
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,  
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,  
and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.

2 I cannot tell how silently he suffered,  
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,  
or how his heart upon the cross was broken,  
the crown of pain to three-and-thirty years.  
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,  
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,  
and lifts the burden from the heavy-laden,  
for yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here.

3 I cannot tell how he will win the nations,  
how he will claim his earthly heritage,  
how satisfy the needs and aspirations  
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.  
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,  
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,  
and some glad day his sun shall shine in splendour,  
when he the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is known.

4 I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,  
when, at his bidding, every storm is stilled,  
or who can say how great the jubilation  
when all the hearts of earth with love are filled.  
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,  
and myriad, myriad human voices sing,  
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer:  
'At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'

William Y. Fullerton. (1857-1932)

### A sending out prayer

Loving God,  
as we end our time together and leave this place,  
let us go in hope,  
live by hope,  
and be signs of hope for all to see.  
In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

### The Blessing

And may the blessing of God Almighty,  
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
be upon us and those we love,  
this day and always. **Amen.**

### The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**