

Christ Church, Ipswich

Sunday 7th December 2025

Worship for the Second Sunday in Advent with Holy Communion

Led by Neil

Organist: Stephen

Hello. I hope all is well. Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

God is here – present always and everywhere.
Let us make God the focus of our thoughts and worship.
Blessed be God's glorious name;
may God's glory fill the earth.
May the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,
as the waters cover the sea.

A prayer of approach while lighting the second Advent candle

We light this candle to affirm our faith in Christ.
May his light shine brightly in our sin-darkened world,
and bring hope, healing, justice and joy
this Advent and always. Amen.

R&S 269 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun

1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does his successive journeys run;
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

2 For him shall endless prayer be made,
and praises throng to crown his head;
his name like sweet perfume shall rise
with every morning sacrifice.

3 People and realms of every tongue
dwell on his love with sweetest song,
and infant voices shall proclaim
their early blessings on his name.

4 Blessings abound where'er he reigns;
the prisoners leaps to lose their chains;
the weary find eternal rest,
and all who suffer want are blessed.

5 Let every creature rise and bring
peculiar honours to our King;
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud Amen.

Psalm 72:12-19
Isaac Watts (1674-1748) altd.

A prayer of adoration

God of urgency and truth,
at this darkest time of year
we thank you for your light shown in Scripture,
shown in those who seek not their own glory
but who point to you;
shown in the ways you bless us in the ordinariness of our lives,
and in the big moments.
You are the light that no darkness can overcome,
and we thank you for inviting us to share your flame of love. **Amen**

A prayer of confession

God of humility, we are sorry for times when we behave as if life was all about us, when we show off all we do and hide all that we neglect, when we put others down instead of building them up, when we dwell on what others have done wrong, with hardly a thought to our mistakes. Forgive us, we pray, and grant us the will to change, and the courage to act after the example of John the Baptist who lived out his calling with faithfulness and courage, always pointing to your Son Jesus, in whom he trusted – and in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Loving God,
 you promise us healing when we turn away from the things that harm us;
 you promise us a welcome when we leave behind the things that separate us from you;
 you promise us forgiveness when we find the courage to name our sins;
 for you are full of love and long to see us whole,
 living life to the full, generously and compassionately. Amen.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

We thank you, God, for your richness.
 We thank you for the way your light lets us see the world and its people.
 We thank you for diversity and difference in people and places.
 We thank you for signs and symbols and glimpses of your kingdom.
 We thank you for bolts out of the blue that reveal you to us
 and for the tiny flame that offers us assurance.
 We thank you for your care through the hands of others,
 hands of family, hands of friends and hands of strangers.
 We thank you that in others we see you
 and that through seeing you we see them in different ways.
 We thank you that in wilderness experiences you come to us,
 that you come in word or deed, that you come in touch or gift,
 that you come in cacophony or whisper, but come you do.
 We are all your people, all your children, all your flock,
 and for us all you care – to you we give our thanks and praise. Amen.

A prayer of thanks and dedication

for all our giving to support our church, FIND and other charities.

BPW 311 Hills of the north, rejoice

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 home,
 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 E. Oakley (1832-65)
 Editors of *English Praise*, 1975, altd.

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 11:1-10

The Peaceful Kingdom

11 A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

³His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;

⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

R&S 629 Make me a channel of your peace

1 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:

*O, Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

2 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, let me bring your light;
and where there's sadness, bring your joy:

3 Make me a channel of your peace;
for when we give we will ourselves receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and in dying that we gain eternal life.

From a prayer sometimes attributed to St Francis (1182-1226)
arr. Sebastian Temple. (1928 - 1997)*
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Gospel Reading**Matthew 3:1-12***The Proclamation of John the Baptist*

3 In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, ‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.”’

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not presume to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our ancestor”; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ ‘I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

Reflection*A moment for reflection as Stephen plays***Prayers of Intercession**

God of our Advent journey

We pray for a spirit of wisdom and understanding for world leaders and their advisors,
For those whose nations are disfigured by violence and war... for those in Ukraine, Russia, Sudan, Israel and Palestine.

We pray for those negotiating peace initiatives and those who seek power at any cost.

We pray for the leaders trying to rebuild trust and infrastructures after years of civil war and brutality.

We pray especially for those conflicts where peace seems so far off and hatreds so raw.

We pray for those leaders who are subject to unfair pressure from those who are more powerful.

For those seeking to balance support for incoming refugees with the needs of their own vulnerable citizens.

For those tackling corruption, poverty and civil unrest,

And for those who are the cause of all those things.

Come Lord Jesus show us all the way of truth, justice and peace.

We pray for nations overwhelmed by flooding and deadly weather conditions.

Especially we pray for the people of Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

And for all who are struggling to deal with the devastation left in the wake of cyclones and storms.

We continue to pray too for the victims of the terrible fire in Hong Kong, for those still missing and for their families and friends.

We pray for all places of tragedy especially those which disappear quickly from the news but where suffering is ongoing and terrible.

Come Lord Jesus and show us all the way of restoration, healing and peace.

We pray for the natural world, so polluted, so exploited, so fragile and yet so beautiful.

For the oceans and forests, for the rivers and fields.

For all animals exposed to cruelty and abuse.

For those whose living is being eroded by climate change and the greed of others.

We pray for harmony between ourselves and nature, that there would be no hurt or harm, but care and conservation.

Come Lord Jesus and show us all the way of compassion, respect and peace.

We pray for the leaders of our churches and our local communities,
 For a spirit of knowledge and a heart to serve those entrusted to their care.
 Especially those who live alone, those whose circumstances are desperate and those searching for meaning
 and hope.

Come Lord Jesus and show us all the way of hospitality, friendship and peace.

We pray for those we know whose Advent journey is slow and painful.
 For those weighed down by anxiety, by grief, by ill health.
 Come Lord Jesus and show us all the way of courage, hope and peace.

And we pray for one another,
 That we would use our voices positively,
 Our time creatively,
 And our resources generously,
 This Advent and always,
 In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

R&S 134 On Jordan's banks the Baptist cry

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
 announces that the Lord is nigh;
 come then and hearken, for he brings
 glad tidings from the King of kings.

2 Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
 make straight the way for God within;
 and in each heart prepare a home
 where such a mighty guest may come.

3 For thou art our salvation, Lord,
 our refuge and our great reward;
 without thy grace we waste away
 like flowers that wither and decay.

4 To heal the sick stretch out thy hand,
 and bid the fallen sinner stand;
 shine forth, and let thy light restore
 earth's own true loveliness once more.

5 All praise, eternal Son, to thee
 whose advent sets thy people free,
 whom, with the Father, we adore,
 and Spirit blest, for evermore.

Charles Coffin (1676-1749)
 tr. John Chandler (1806-76) altd.*

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 - Sung today

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. 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.**

R&S 200 The kingdom of God is justice and joy,

1 The kingdom of God
is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores
what sin would destroy;
God's power and glory
in Jesus we know,
and here and hereafter
the kingdom shall grow.

2 The kingdom of God
is mercy and grace,
the prisoners are freed,
the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened
in place of despair.

3 The kingdom of God
is challenge and choice,
believe the good news,
repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
brought Christ to his cross,
our crisis of judgement
for gain or for loss.

4 God's kingdom is come,
the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun,
in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom
shall answer his call,
and all things cry 'Glory!'
to God all in all.

Bryn A. Rees (1911-83)*
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Sending out Prayer

May the road we travel be smooth and straight,
 every rut filled in, every bump smoothed out,
 any diversions easy to navigate,
 any obstacles easy to manoeuvre round.

May good companions share our journey,
 and may we be voices for good in the world,
 a sign of Jesus' love for all.

We pray 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,
 the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with us all evermore. Amen.**