

This service has been brought to you by Mrs Joyce Wild.

Service on Sunday 29th November 2020 for Wimborne Methodist Church Advent 1

Welcome Welcome to this morning's service on this first Sunday in Advent. A time when we give significant thought to our Lord's return and our preparedness for that event.

Call to Worship

O people of God, let us draw near to God.

O people who sometimes do not listen, let us listen to God's name and be renewed by the 'Name Above All Names',

the name of our maker, who made us, and who shapes us to be vessels of light in waiting times.

Come, let us worship. Let us worship the 'Name Above All Names'. **Amen.**

Lighting of Candle

First candle is for: Hope for all God's people (First candle is lit)

(Preacher) We light this candle for all God's people, struggling to be bearers of hope in a troubled world.

(Congregation) **God, as we wait for your promise, give light, give hope.**

Singing the Faith 174 Light a candle in a darkened place, Vs 1 & 2

1. Light a candle in a darkened place,
in its flame see hope on every face
Christ our Saviour will be born,
heralding a brand new dawn,
so let it burn.

2. In the darkness, see the coming light
Word of God speaks through the darkest night,
keep watch, the time is near,
time for hope and not for fear,
so let it burn.

Prayer: The Advent Hope

Father, we thank you for the hope with which you have filled our lives.

We give thanks that in the coming of Christ

you have given us assurance of sovereign control of all things

We praise you for this Advent Sunday,

when we remember the coming of Christ to be the saviour of the world.

Thank you for the promise of his coming again as Lord of all.

We are grateful for the hope with which Christ fills our lives.

In our times of doubt and despair the message of his coming,
his birth, life, death and resurrection, renews our hope.

Thank you that because of Christ's coming and the promise of his coming again

we can live each day in the knowledge that ultimately you hold all things, including ourselves.

in your love and care. Lord, come, and come again.

Come into our lives that we might have hope. In Jesus' name. Amen.

(taken from 500 prayers for All Occasions by David Clowes)

Reading

Isaiah Ch64 v 1-9

Story: If there are any potters amongst you, you will know that if you have some fresh wet clay you can make something useful from it. However if you leave the clay uncovered on a surface for any length of time the clay will dry up and go hard, making it very difficult to mould it into what you want it to be.

That reminds me of what was happening to God's people during the time of the prophet Isaiah. In our Bible reading Isaiah is very upset. He is begging God to come down and change the hearts of his people. Why because they had sinned and turned away from God. They didn't call on God's name any more or plead for his mercy. They just did their own thing and God had become angry with them and turned away from them.

It all sounded pretty hopeless, but Isaiah didn't think so. He knew if the people turned back to God, He would mould them and shape them into what he wanted them to be. Isaiah said to God, "Oh Lord, you're our Father, we're the clay and you are the potter. You formed each one of us by your hand. Please don't be angry with us. Even though our hearts are hard you can still mould us into what you want us to be. You know even today just like the people in Isaiah's day we sometimes wander away from God and our hearts become hard. But rest assured all is not hopeless. If we turn back to God and ask him to forgive us, he will mould us and shape us into what he wants us to be. God is still the potter and we're still the clay! Amen

A prayer of confession

We have turned our face from you, O God, whose face is always turned towards us.

We have forsaken what we know is just.

We have ignored what we understand is true.

We have refused to believe what should be believed.

We have deceived ourselves in word and deed.

For this, we humbly repent, and we turn our face towards you –

who waits for us, and makes us ever new. Make us ever new now, O restoring God. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 491 As servants working an estate whose owner is away

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|---|---|
| 1. As servants working an estate
whose owner is away,
And whose return they all await
Though no one knows the day,
So none of us can name the hour
The season or the year
When Christ with all of heaven's power
Will suddenly appear. | 3. For Christ the Lord will surely come,
the King whom kings will fear,
and with God's perfect justice plumb
the justice we do here,
revealing that the present age
and every age that's past
are not the final moral gauge
that judges us at last. |
| 2. Our task is not to calculate
what angels do not know,
but faithfully to watch and wait
and Christ's compassion show.
not loading fragile human schemes
with hopes they cannot bear,
we trust the promise that redeems
the present from despair. | 4. So guide, Lord Christ, our every choice
that when our hearts shall hear
your step, your knock, your calling voice
we shall not hide in fear,
but welcome you from realms above
to your estate below,
where justice, mercy, peace and love
abundantly will grow. |

Thomas H. Troegr (b1945)

Reading

Mark Ch13v 24-37

Sermon: Listening to people on the TV you would think that Christmas was cancelled this year because of the restrictions placed on them by the government who are trying to stop the spread of corona virus in a bid not to overwhelm the NHS. But perhaps for the first time in a long-time people might just begin to realise what Christmas is all about. Why there is even a hint in the beginning of the title. However for those of us who know and love Christ as our Saviour this Advent season with the restrictions in place is giving us the opportunity to truly grasp what the second coming of Christ means and to see how our preparation for the end times are coming along. Usually by the beginning of Advent the countdown to Christmas has begun. Even in church the headless chicken race takes over with preparations to decorate the church, organise carol services, think about the Lunch Club dinner, sing in old folks' home and a myriad of other seasonal festive activities. Yes, we might attend an Advent Bible study but if we are totally honest with ourselves delving into God's word is the last thing on our mind it's just another thing to squeeze into an already busy schedule. Cards to be written, presents to be bought and wrapped, food to be baked the list is never ending. We are on the run never taking time to stop. The merry go round just keeps on going.

But not this year. This year is different. We have been forced to stop by something we can't see or control. So, let me draw your attention to Mark 13 v 31 which says, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Even in these dark times we know where our hope lies. In Christ and in his word. God and his word provide the only stability in our unstable world. We should turn away from this temporary world and the need to accumulate its possessions and instead turn to the Bible and its eternal truths.

So how are going to do that you might be asking? Well think about preparation. We've all been on holiday and more often than not we are usually well prepared. We take out travel insurance, pack the right clothing, make sure we have the correct currency, we may even purchase a book that gives us all the information about our destination.

Also, when there's a wedding in the family it doesn't just happen. There's a venue, the photographer, the disc jockey, the florist, the registrar or the church and many other things all to be booked before you start to think of invitations, food, and clothes etc, etc. Now adays many of us even prepare for our death but prepaying for a funeral service, choosing our own hymns and readings. My friend is writing a letter to each of her children and grandchildren to be read by them when she dies.

In everyday life as the boy scout's motto says we are prepared yet can the same be said when it comes to the second coming of our Lord. It's tricky isn't it preparing for something when you don't know the date or time. Due to the pandemic planning for a wedding or a baptism these days it's very tricky as lock down rules keep changing but as Christians preparing for our Lord's return should be second nature because come what may it will happen. So back to God's word the Bible, study it, digest it and more importantly live by its instructions every single moment of your life.

Jesus in his words in Mark 13 v 33 actually tells us how to prepare for his second coming by being alert and be on our guard. But on our guard against what you might ask?

For most of this year we haven't been able to worship together in the church building, but God's work hasn't stopped. There have been services online, phone calls and letters to keep God's people in touch with each other. The building is by the by God's people are the church. Sometimes we put too much stock in bricks and mortar and forget what our mission is. Think about it we can speak about Jesus and his saving grace in any place and in any situation.

Jesus asks us to hold firm to the truth and that means checking to see that those who lead us are God centred not self- centred, are scripture based and spirit led. How many times have we heard people proclaim the end of the time is nigh. Rubbish they don't know when that will happen, they are just guessing don't listen to them.

Our role is to speak the gospel message which isn't always easy in a world where many ignore God. But we should always remember that God is with us and will guide us.

You and I live by faith and for us that means not knowing the whole story, but verse 27 give us such hope. Because at the end times God is going to gather up his elect and take us to be with him.

So, I ask will you watch and endure. Remember we aren't part of a world of quick spiritual fixes or flashy impressive messiahs. Our role is to be on guard and last out. There is no escapism here. Each day we are to take up our cross and follow our Lord and masters' example. Let's always remember that when we die to all that he died, we shall live to all that he rose. Everything that happens to us is projected on the screen of eternity. We are becoming what eternally we shall be. We are called to live now in the light of then. Now that's exciting. Amen.

Prayers Intercession using a labyrinth

Today we will use a printed labyrinth image as a way of demonstrating that it is worthwhile persevering and waiting. Imagine the light in the centre. By tracing the labyrinth with a finger you can see how we move in and out from the centre of prayer, with the labyrinth helping us to keep hope, and to keep persevering as we wait for the Lord to return.

Moving into your labyrinth: Pray for the World asking God to change hearts and minds so that all may see the light of Christ

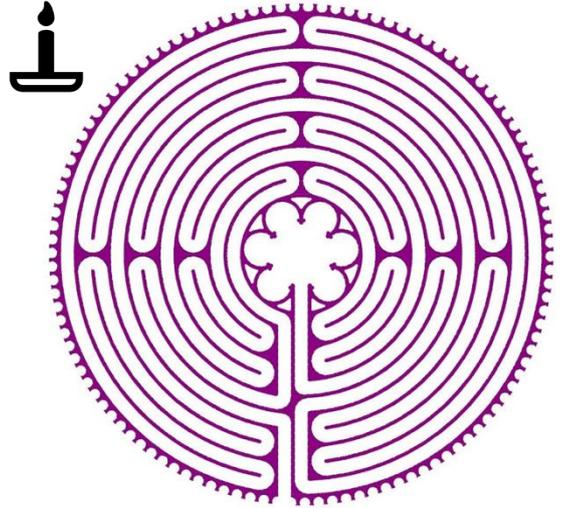
Pray for our country its government and people that in the darkness of the pandemic they will see the light of Christ

Pray for those who find themselves in darkness due to illness, loneliness, stress, unemployment, financial difficulties and worry asking that they may see the light of Christ

Pray for yourself that the light of Christ may shine from you out into the darkness, Ask the Lord for guidance as you continue to watch, pray, hope and preserve until his return. **Amen**

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**



Hymn StF 185 Sing we the King who is coming to reign

Sing we the King who is coming to reign ;
glory to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain !
Life and salvation his empire shall bring,
joy to the nations when Jesus is King :

*Come let us sing : praise to our King,
Jesus our King, Jesus our King :
this is our song, who to Jesus belong :
glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King.*

- 2 All shall be well in his kingdom of peace ;
freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase ;
justice and truth from his sceptre shall spring ;
wrong shall be ended when Jesus is King :

- 3 Souls shall be saved from the burden of sin;
doubt shall not darken his witness within;
hell has no terrors, and death has no sting;
love is victorious when Jesus is King:

- 4 Kingdom of Christ, for your coming we pray;
hasten, O Father, the dawn of the day
when this new song your creation shall sing;
Satan is vanquished and Jesus is King:

Charles Silvester Horne (1865–1914) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 185

Benediction

We have been called in, to be renewed in the name of the one who is love.
Even in the darkest night, even when there is only one small candle lit,
your power and love restore us.

Let your light shine on us as we go from here,
so that we may be warmed and strengthened to light your light all around. **Amen.**

We sing StF780

Stay with me,
Remain here with me,
watch and pray,
Watch and pray. **Amen**

Taize community