



# Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist** Churches

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020, 10:30am “Advent #2 – Peace” Luke 1: 26-38**

**Prepared by Rev’d Phillip Dixon.**

Welcome to the second Sunday of the Advent season. Advent means ‘a coming’, God coming to His people. Each year the season of Advent provides us, as Christians, with a special opportunity to connect with and celebrate God’s unfolding salvation/rescue plan for us and the world He created. Advent has us looking in three directions; looking back to the prophecies of the Old Testament leading to the promised birth of Jesus as Messiah in Bethlehem, looking to the present day and God’s salvation work among people now and looking forward to when Jesus will come again in power and glory.



### **Lighting the Advent Candle:**

We light again the first candle in anticipation and feel hope rising up within us. We name it **HOPE**.

We choose to be a peaceful presence in the midst of a frantic and anxious world. So today, we light the second candle as an act of preparation and call it **PEACE**.

### **Advent Hymn: Light a candle in a darkened place StF 174**

Sing/read/pray/proclaim.

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.

In the darkness, see the coming light,  
Word of God speaks through the darkest  
night,  
keep a watch, the time is near,

time for hope and not for fear,  
so let it burn

Stepping through each page of history,  
prophets contemplate this mystery,  
celebrate the coming King,  
words of joy and hope they bring,  
so let it burn. Clare Stainsbury (b 1959)

*Each week of Advent a further verse will  
be added.*

### **Opening Prayer:**

God of all holiness, Your promises stand  
unshaken through all generations and You  
lift up all who are burdened and brought  
low: renew our hope in You, as we wait  
for the coming in glory of Jesus Christ, our  
Judge and Saviour,  
who is alive and reigns with You in the  
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world  
without end. **Amen.** Advent 2 Collect from Book of  
Common Worship

**Hymn: Light of the World StF 175**

Sing/read/pray/proclaim.

<https://youtu.be/DceuoqlMuC8>

Light of the world  
You stepped down into darkness  
Opened my eyes, Let me see  
Beauty that made this heart adore you  
Hope of a life spent with you

*Here I am to worship*

*Here I am to bow down*

*Here I am to say that you're my God*

*You're altogether lovely*

*Altogether worthy*

*Altogether wonderful to me*

King of all days  
So highly exalted  
Glorious in heaven above  
Humbly you came to the earth you  
created  
All for love's sake became poor

*Here I am...*

I'll never know how much it cost  
To see my sin upon that cross  
I'll never know how much it cost  
To see my sin upon that cross

*Here I am to worship*

*Here I am to bow down*

*Here I am to say that you're my God*

*You're altogether lovely*

*Altogether worthy*

*Altogether wonderful to me.*

Tim Hughes

**Prayer of Confession:**

Christ the light of the world is coming to that which He created to dispel the darkness of the human heart. In His perfect light let us examine ourselves afresh and confess our sins.

Heavenly Father, you call us to repent of our sins: soften our proud and stubborn

hearts. Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you declared the forgiveness of God: teach us to forgive one another. Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit, you search our hearts and show us the truth: direct us in your way of righteousness. Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

*A time of quiet to ask forgiveness for ourselves and to listen to what God may be saying to us.*

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has come to us and offered us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, thank you for the forgiveness of our sins, open our eyes to Your truth, strengthen us to do Your will in this Advent season and grant us the perfect peace of Your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** Confession and Absolution from Church of England Common Worship

**A Prayer for Peace (Advent 2)**

Heavenly Father, You are the God who gives peace. This second week of Advent causes us to remember that because of Jesus we can experience peace this Christmas, released from turmoil, anxiety and chaos. Regardless of our circumstances or our situations, you offer us a peace that passes understanding.

That first Christmas, when you sent your Son, you sent the one who is called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Even the angels cried out, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

The angels knew your purpose. They know the gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love that Christmas held. They celebrated with

great joy that the fullness of God was wrapped in the tiny flesh of an infant as you humbled yourself and dwelt among us. Emmanuel. God with us as the baby Jesus. Years later he would again humble himself to face death on a cruel cross. He would triumphantly defeat sin, death and hell in order to cancel my sin and reconcile me to You, Father.

You exalted Him and gave him a name above all names. Every knee in heaven and earth and under the earth must bow to the name of Jesus. The winds and waves obey Him. He rules and reigns as King over all of creation. No situation or circumstance that we find ourselves in is a match for our Saviour Jesus.

We are able to have the fullness of peace in our hearts on Christmas day, and every day, because that same Jesus sits at your right hand in heaven and makes intercession for us. He loves me with a love that is unfathomable. Nothing can separate us from His love. He is good and his plans for us are good.

Father, in this second week of Advent, keep us in perfect peace as our minds are stayed on the truth of your powerful love. Thank you for your mighty, sovereign hand. Help us to trust fully in you and rest in the peace that you offer. It's in the precious name of Jesus we pray. **Amen**

Christianity.com

**Song: Blessed Assurance StF548**

Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veef\\_s0hmkA8&ab\\_channel=lovegodandloveothers](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veef_s0hmkA8&ab_channel=lovegodandloveothers)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending, bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

*This is my story...*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

*This is my story...*

Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) (1820-1915)

**Prayer:** Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word and Holy Spirit, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

**Reading: Luke 1: 26-38**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called

the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.'

<sup>34</sup> 'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?'

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail.'

<sup>38</sup> 'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her.

New International Version UK

**A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.**

**Preaching notes:**

In the short time that the angel visits with Mary her world is turned completely upside down, From an ordinary girl looking forward to her marriage to Joseph to bearing a son who will be the Son of God and reign over Israel with a kingdom that will never end, (verses 32, 33). The angel Gabriel' greeting to Mary is very different to that of Zechariah, as we ourselves would speak differently to a young girl in comparison to a mature and experienced priest. Notice their reactions to the news that they (Zechariah and Mary) have been chosen to play their part in God's spectacular redemption plan. They both have questions: Zechariah "how can I be sure of this....?" and Mary: "how will this be...?" but notice that

Zechariah's question is one of trust and lack of belief (even though he is in the temple performing a religious ritual) therefore has a different outcome (verse 20) to Mary's.

"These are stupendous claims" (Wilcock) that are made for this unborn baby (verses 32,33) and if you use a Bible with verse cross references you will see the very many Old Testament sections that this refers to.

When reading this passage in particular and the whole of Luke chapter 1 in general do you feel the sense of excitement and anticipation jumping out of the pages at you? Perhaps also, in addition to the excitement, a sense of awe that this is God's plan for the salvation of mankind which has been slowly unfolding over hundreds of years and is now taking place and trust in knowing that we are called to participate.

The miraculous birth of a child to a virgin is an integral part of this account, to try and explain it humanly, biologically or in a way that revises the translation undermines the authority and the magnitude of the event. God, who brought the world and the universe into being, is certainly able to have a woman conceive without the natural process -isn't that the point of miracles (the supernatural)?

To conclude, we who are living through anxious times, separated from loved ones and perhaps fearful for the future can be comforted by the peace that we feel coming from Mary (verse 38). The rejection and ridicule that she will face from her family, the hard times ahead with Joseph, yet God is with her now and forever. **Amen**

**Song: When peace like a river**

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHe\\_qmo3gX4&ab\\_channel=katiekatew](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHe_qmo3gX4&ab_channel=katiekatew)

When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
"It is well, it is well with my soul."  
*It is well with my soul;*  
*it is well, it is well with my soul.*

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control:  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And has shed his own blood for my soul.

My sin oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

O Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend;  
even so, it is well with my soul.  
*It is well with my soul;*  
*it is well, it is well with my soul.*

Horatio Gates Spafford (1873)

**We look forward:**

We look forward—to seeing a new star appear in the sky, prompting those far off to draw near to you. **Lord Jesus, draw us to you.**

We look forward— to the familiar stable scene, the manger standing empty,

waiting to receive you. **Lord Jesus, come to us anew.**

We look forward – to hearing again the angels singing “Glory to God and peace to all the Earth“. **Lord Jesus, let us take up their song.**

We look forward—to seeing shepherds and kings alike – poor and humble, noble and wealthy –all bowing before you. **Lord Jesus, unite us in worship**

We look forward—to remembering a humble girl, with an ordinary background, chosen to bring your hope into the world. **Lord Jesus, bring new hope through us.**

We look forward — to a child, wrapped in linen, lying in a manger, weak and helpless, small and completely reliant on others. **Lord Jesus, teach us to depend on you.**

We look forward – to seeing, hearing and knowing afresh how you—infinite and incomprehensible God — freely entered your creation, becoming humble and tangible so that we might freely enter your presence. **Lord Jesus, we look, we wonder and we worship. Amen.**

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your Kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory are yours.  
Now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession:**

Father we pray for your world, the world to which You sent Your Son to reconcile us to You. We pray for the people of Syria in this 9<sup>th</sup> year of the civil war. We pray for the many refugees particularly vulnerable young families and the elderly during the harsh winter who continue to leave the country which once had a thriving Christian community but is now a very dangerous place. We pray for an end to the brutality and ruthless ambition that characterises much of the conflict around the world. May people find Your peace in their differences.

We pray for the people of the United States to come together in a unity of purpose as they continue to suffer a heavy death toll from the COVID 19 pandemic.

Lord, we pray for our emergency staff; medical, police, fire and military as they work together with the local authorities in the coming days and weeks in the distribution of the COVID vaccine. We pray for opportunities to introduce those of our families and friends who view Christmas as a commercial festival to the real meaning of Christmas, the hope, peace, joy and love that is embodied in our Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

### **Closing Song: Tell out my soul StF186**

Sing/read or proclaim the words.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7QWLyDWe8&ab\\_channel=mkariobangi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7QWLyDWe8&ab_channel=mkariobangi)

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;

Tender to me the promise of his word;

In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!

Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;

His mercy sure, from age to age to same;  
His holy Name--the Lord, the Mighty One

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!

Powers and dominions lay their glory by  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,

The hungry fed, the humble lifted high

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!

Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord

To children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b1926)

### **Blessing:**

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

**Amen.** From 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24

### **Notice:**

A reminder that on Thursday at 7pm we will be hosting a fun virtual Quiz for our Two Churches. The joining details for Zoom have been sent out to everyone last week, it is possible to join by telephone, for more information please contact:

[angelaafreenz@gmail.com](mailto:angelaafreenz@gmail.com) or

[katephillips@live.co.uk](mailto:katephillips@live.co.uk) or myself

[phillip.dixon@methodist.org.uk](mailto:phillip.dixon@methodist.org.uk)

Phillip Dixon, November 2020. YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith and Hymns and Psalms resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182