

Advent

Agape Service

Introduction & Greeting

The Rector Welcome and introduction

Officiant I Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation. In your great love you gave us Jesus your Son to be our Saviour and to bring the light of grace into your world. Bless this Advent wreath; make it an ever-present reminder of the coming of Jesus so that we may renew our lives and become worthy to be called his followers.

All **Amen.**

Officiant I We light the first candle of our Advent ring rejoicing at the coming of the light into our world.

A candle is lit whilst this collect is prayed:

Officiant I God of Abraham and Sarah,

All **help us in preparing to celebrate Christ's birth
by making our hearts ready
for your Holy Spirit
to make his home amongst us;
we ask this through Jesus the Light of all,
who is coming into the world. Amen.**

Officiant I Jesus the Light is coming:

All **Your Kingdom come.**

Officiant I Bring us Good News:

All **Your Kingdom come.**

Officiant I Bring us understanding:

All **Your Kingdom come.**

Officiant 1 Bring us truth:

All **Your Kingdom come.**

Officiant 1 Welcome to this agape meal, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We gather to celebrate God's love revealed for our world by our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

All **We come to share our food, our lives and God's grace.**

Officiant 1 O Lord, open our lips.

All **and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Prayers of Penitence

Officiant 2 God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth,
your saving power among the nations:

Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Officiant 2 Almighty God,
who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive you your our sins
and make you holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Collect

Officiant 1 Lord God,

All **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. Amen.**

Ministry of the Word

Isaiah 64: 1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil – to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Psalm 80: 1-8

Officiant 2 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you that led Joseph like a flock;

All **Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,
before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.**

Stir up your mighty strength
and come to our salvation.

Turn us again, O God;

show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts,

how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?

You feed them with the bread of tears;

you give them abundance of tears to drink.

You have made us the derision of our neighbours,

and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Turn us again, O God of hosts;

show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning is now

and shall be for ever. Amen.

A cantor will now sing The Advent Prose (plainsong arr. Stephen Cleobury (1948-2019))

DROP DOWN, YE HEAVENS, FROM ABOVE, AND LET THE SKIES RAIN DOWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

TURN YOUR FIERCE ANGER FROM US, O LORD, AND REMEMBER NOT OUR SINS FOR EVER. YOUR HOLY CITIES HAVE BECOME A DESERT, ZION A WILDERNESS, JERUSALEM A DESOLATION; OUR HOLY AND BEAUTIFUL HOUSE, WHERE OUR FATHERS PRAISED YOU.

WE HAVE SINNED AND BECOME LIKE ONE WHO IS UNCLEAN; WE HAVE ALL WITHERED LIKE A LEAF, AND OUR INIQUITIES LIKE THE WIND HAVE SWEEPED US AWAY. YOU HAVE HIDDEN YOUR FACE FROM US, AND ABANDONED US TO OUR INIQUITY.

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES, SAYS THE LORD, AND MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN, THAT YOU MAY KNOW ME AND BELIEVE ME. I MYSELF AM THE LORD, AND NONE BUT I CAN DELIVER; WHAT MY HAND HOLDS NONE CAN SNATCH AWAY.

COMFORT MY PEOPLE, COMFORT THEM; MY SALVATION SHALL NOT BE DELAYED. I HAVE SWEEPED YOUR OFFENCES AWAY LIKE A CLOUD; FEAR NOT, FOR I WILL SAVE YOU. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, YOUR REDEEMER.

Mark 13: 24-37

Jesus said to his disciples: '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.’

Sermon

A short address by Doreen Mills, Reader at St Mary’s, Warwick

Intercession

Officiant 1 In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

This response is used:

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

At the end:

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

For the sake of your Son

our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

AGAPE

Officiant 2 In this Agape for Advent Sunday we celebrate that Jesus is God’s living Word who calls us to proclaim the good news of God’s kingdom. Therefore we acknowledge these symbols to remind us of Christ’s promises to us:

A candle, to remind us of Jesus’ words, “I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life”. (John 8: 12)

Some food we have found sustaining in demanding times to remind us of Jesus' words in Mark's Gospel: "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 the Son of Man is near." (Mark 13: 28-29).

A cup of wine or grape juice to remind us Jesus' proclaimed, "I am the true vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit". (John 15: 5)

Living and Risen Christ, we welcome your presence with us. May the food, drink and companionship we share nourish our bodies, hearts and minds. And may our spirits be refreshed. As we live in the light of your presence with us now, and at all times and places. Amen.

Sharing of Food and Drink

A portion of our food is eaten, followed by the sharing of the cup. If there are others present in your 'bubble' they can be passed from person to person, during which a cantor will sing *Kyrie* from *Missa de Angelis* (plainsong)

KYRIE ELEISON	LORD, HAVE MERCY
CHRISTE ELEISON	CHRIST, HAVE MERCY
KYRIE ELEISON	LORD, HAVE MERCY

Conclusion

Officiant I As our Saviour has taught his followers, so we pray

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.**

Hymn

Words: Latin tr E Caswall; Tune: Merton

**Hark! a herald voice is calling:
'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;
'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!'**

**Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, her Sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.**

**Lo! the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heaven;
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all to be forgiven;**

**So when next he comes with glory,
Wrapping all the earth in fear,
May he then as our defender
Of the clouds of heaven appear.**

**Honour, glory, virtue, merit,
To the Father and the Son,
With the co-eternal Spirit,
While unending ages run.
Amen.**

Blessing

Officiant 2 Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Officiant 2 Live in the peace of the coming light of Christ!

All **Thanks be to God!**

Organ Voluntary

*CHORALE PRELUDE ON "ST THOMAS"(LO! HE COMES WITH CLOUDS DESCENDING) SIR HUBERT PARRY
(1848-1918)*

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