

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

1st December 2024 — Ante Communion 11.00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist, Second Order, APBA p. 119ff.

The season of Advent is not to be confused with Lent. This short period is not primarily a time of penitence but rather a time to prepare joyfully for Christ's return and his reign. The Lord's return does indeed have a relationship to penitence, but primarily as it leads to repentance, which is an action rather than a feeling—an action of turning around and being turned around by the work of God in us. By reflecting on our lives in the light of God's Word, we recognize the direction in which our present values and habits are leading us. Then we see that those values and ways of living must be changed. We further recognize that only the action of God can make that change in us. In the words of the Collect for the First Sunday of Advent, it is God who enables us "to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light".

In Advent the liturgy deals with contrasts: light and dark; joy and sorrow; beginning and end; and, especially, chronological time and God's time.

*From The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year.
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GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Welcome & Greeting

Grace and peace to you
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
and also with you.

Blessed are those who will come
from east and west, from north and south,
to feast in the kingdom of God.

The Advent Wreath

First Candle is lit

The poet, Emily Dickinson, wrote:
"Hope is the thing with feathers
that perches in the soul."

The psalmist declared:
"I put my hope in You all day long."

Hope is more than wishful thinking.
Hope is the Spirit of God dwelling within us,
reminding us we are never alone.
Hope is our active commitment to be God's faithful people,
whether we walk an easy path or face fiery trials.

When we light the candle of Hope,
we embrace God's presence among us,
yesterday and today and always.

**Whatever we face in life,
we will put our hope in God.**



Hymn TIS 272. tune Cross of Jesus

- 1. Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.**
- 2. Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.**
- 3. Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.**
- 4. By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Charles Wesley 1707–88

The Collect is said or sung

Eternal God,
you have taught us that the night is far spent
and the day is at hand:
keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom,
and make us strong in faith,
so that when Christ comes in glory to judge the earth,
we may go out joyfully to greet him;
and, with all your saints, may worship you for ever;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

A Reading from the prophet Jeremiah [33. 14-16]

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 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. 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."

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 25. 1-10

**In you, O Lord my God, have I put my hope:
in you have I trusted, let me not be ashamed,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

**Let none who wait for you be put to shame:
but let those that break faith
be confounded and gain nothing.**

**Show me your ways, O Lord:
and teach me your paths.**

**Lead me in the ways of your truth, and teach me:
for you are the God of my salvation.**

**In you have I hoped all the day long:
because of your goodness, O Lord.**

**Call to mind your compassion and your loving-kindness:
for they are from of old.**

**Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions:
but according to your mercy think on me.**

**Good and upright is the Lord:
therefore will he direct sinners in the way.**

**The meek he will guide in the path of justice:
and teach the humble his ways.**

**All the paths of the Lord are faithful and true:
for those who keep his covenant and his commandments.**

A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians [3. 9-13]

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: AHB 224 / TiS 268. Tune, Antioch.

- 1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
let earth receive its king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**
- 2. Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;
let us our songs employ;
while fields and streams, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**
- 3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

Isaac Watts 1674–1748 *alt.*
based on Psalm 98

The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Luke [21. 25-28]

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

[Jesus said to his disciples]

‘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. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.’

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

‘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, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 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.’

For the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Affirmation of Faith (APBA p. 37)

**We believe in one God,
who made and loves all that is.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who calls, equips and sends out God’s people,
and brings all things to their true end.**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Reflection on the theme of the day

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

We pray for the world:

(Particular intercessions/thanksgivings maybe offered.)

Creator of all,

lead us and every people into ways of justice and peace.

That we may respect one another in freedom and truth.

Awaken in us a sense of wonder for the earth and all that is in it.

Teach us to care creatively for its resources.

We pray for the Church:

(Particular intercessions/thanksgivings maybe offered.)

Father, enliven the Church for its mission

that we may be salt of the earth and light to the world.

Breathe fresh life into your people.

Give us power to reveal Christ in word and action.

We pray for the community:

(Particular intercessions/thanksgivings maybe offered.)

God of truth, inspire with your wisdom

those whose decisions affect the lives of others

that all may act with integrity and courage.

Give grace to all whose lives are linked with ours.

**May we serve Christ in one another,
and love as he loves us.**

We pray for those in need:

(Particular intercessions/thanksgivings maybe offered.)

God of hope, comfort and restore all who suffer in body, mind or spirit.

May they know the power of your healing love.

Make us willing agents of your compassion.

Strengthen us as we share in making people whole.

We remember those who have died and those who mourn:

(Particular intercessions/thanksgivings maybe offered.)

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died in the faith of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone.

Father, into your hands we commend them.

Give comfort to those who mourn.

Bring them peace in their time of loss.

We praise you for Mary, Joseph, Michael, Paul, George and all your saints who have entered your eternal glory.

May their example inspire and encourage us.

We pray for ourselves and our ministries:

(Particular intercessions/thanksgivings maybe offered.)

Lord, you have called us to serve you.

Grant that we may walk in your presence:

your love in our hearts,

your truth in our minds,

your strength in our wills;

until, at the end of our journey,

we know the joy of our homecoming

and the welcome of your embrace,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

A voice cries out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord.'
So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.

cf John 1.23

Silence may be kept

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

The minister stands and declares God's forgiveness.

God desires that none should perish,
but that all should turn to Christ, and live.
In response to his call we acknowledge our sins.
God pardons those who humbly repent,
and truly believe the gospel.
Therefore we have peace with God,
through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The minister says

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
His steadfast love endures for ever!

The minister greets the people, who may greet one another.

Grace and peace be with you
and also with you.

All may exchange a sign of peace

Offertory Hymn AHB 451 / TiS 526. tune, Living Lord

1. **Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
you are one with us,
Mary's son;
cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring your love and goodness in,
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
living Lord.**
2. **Lord Jesus Christ,
now and every day
teach us how to pray,
Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
this in remembrance, Lord, of you:
into our lives your power breaks through,
living Lord.**
3. **Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
born as one of us,
Mary's son;
led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free,
living Lord Jesus, help us see you are Lord.**
4. **Lord Jesus Christ,
I would come to you,
live my life for you,
Son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
your many gifts will make me new,
into my life your power breaks through,
living Lord.**

Patrick Robert Norman Appleford 1925–
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Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

Notices

Concluding Hymn AHB 207 / TiS 276.

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 spirit
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
the great triumph song of Jesus,
of our King, Immanuel:
Zion, go you forth to meet him;
and, my soul, be swift to bring
all your finest and your dearest
for the triumph of our King!**

Henry Burton 1840-1930 alt.

Let us pray.

Eternal God and Father,

**by whose power we are created,
and by whose love we are redeemed:
Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves to your service,
and live this day in love to one another
and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Dismissal

As we await our coming Saviour,
let us go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.



It is January, AD 69. You are a Greek-speaking Christian in a Roman town in Turkey. You are deeply anxious about the fierce war in Judaea: the Romans have laid siege to Jerusalem; the city faces starvation, civil strife and military defeat; many Christians are caught in the middle. Official news from Rome has confirmed that the Emperor, Nero, committed suicide a few months ago, to be succeeded by Galba, a general from the provinces. Now you hear a wild rumour that Galba himself has been killed, that other would-be emperors are staking their claims, and that a major civil war is looming. All the fixed points of your ordinary life are suddenly in question. What language can you borrow to do justice to the reality?

‘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. People will faint from fear of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.’ No, you aren’t afraid of sea or sky. You use the language of tidal wave and thunderbolt because nothing else will do. And you continue, drawing on traditions going back to the early Christians who, soaked in Scripture, knew well what such words would mean: ‘Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and great glory’. No, you don’t imagine you will see Jesus flying around in the sky. You know that through these tribulations God will vindicate Jesus, and rescue his people. Up till now, the kingdom Jesus announced had been in tension with the continuing existence of the Jerusalem Temple, whose authorities had sent him to his death. Soon it will be clear which of the two God has vindicated. You cling on to these prophecies and promises for dear life. You have nothing else.

Twenty years pass, and with them the immediate crisis. Jerusalem lies in ruins. Rome has another emperor. You and your fellow Christians have had leisure to reflect on what has, and hasn’t, happened. The Church is better established, but the world is still full of wickedness. There must still remain a future fulfilment of God’s great, world-changing promises. You continue to tell the story of Jesus’ warnings and promises, but the symbols now evoke fresh meanings. God’s promise of a new world combines with your longing to be in the royal presence, and under the healing rule, of Jesus himself. Other old sayings, mused on over two generations, give this hope specific focus. ‘This Jesus, taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way.’ Welcome to Advent: a rich mix of politics, prophecy, prayer and perseverance. Oh, and holiness, too: if the Lord, in his royal presence, will ‘establish your hearts unblameable in holiness’, it would be as well to live in the present in the mode that is to be vindicated in the future.