

## Circuit Written Service 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025 – Advent Sunday

Revd Steph Jenner

Advent Liturgy – week 1 – you are a gift (symbol wrapped up present)

Gift-giving God, **may Advent be for us a time of giving and receiving.**

Lord God of this Advent season, of every season,

every day, minute and second,

give us, we pray, the gift of peace in this season of Advent.

Bring peace to the world, but also bring peace within each of us.

Gift-giving God, **may Advent be for us a time of giving and receiving.**

Lord God, we give ourselves afresh to you as we step into Advent.

Let us iron the crumples and the creases from our lives

so that we may be the best gift that we can be.

Gift-giving God, **may Advent be for us a time of giving and receiving.**

May we start today and not wait to become, and to be,

the person/people you want us to be,

so that we can give the best that we can of you and ourselves,

to those around us.

Gift-giving God, **may Advent be for us a time of giving and receiving.**



### Hymn StF 171

Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes,

the Saviour promised long;

let every heart prepare a throne,

and every voice a song.

He comes the broken heart to bind,

the bleeding soul to cure,

and with the treasures of his grace

to enrich the humble poor.

He comes the prisoners to release,

in Satan's bondage held;

the gates of brass before him burst,

the iron fetters yield.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,

your welcome shall proclaim,

and heaven's eternal arches ring

with your beloved name.

Philip Doddridge.

### Prayers of Praise and Confession

Glory be to you, Loving God, creator of the universe;

Glory be to you, Almighty God, dwelling in light and majesty;

Glory be to you, Everlasting God, beyond our highest thoughts;

Glory be to you, Guiding God, giver of light and life.

Glory be to you from the company of heaven who see you face to face;

Glory be to you from your people on earth who have seen your salvation.

Glory be to you, our God, through your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Almighty God, in Jesus you have called us to walk as children of the light; but we have preferred our own way, the way of darkness; we have not been willing to let the light of Christ into every part of our lives; we have not been willing to respond with wholehearted obedience and total dedication.

Forgive us, because we find it easy to profess faith but hard to translate it into action; because we say much but do so little.

By your renewing love, grant us assurance of pardon and strength to live up to our calling, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Lord's Prayer – please pray whichever version and in whatever language you prefer.

Reading: Matthew 24: 36 – 44

'But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Hymn StF 169

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.

Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child and yet a king,  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley

Reflection

We know Christmas is coming. The shops have been telling us since October, the adverts since November, and tomorrow our calendars will say December and then we know the countdown truly begins. I don't know if you do anything specific to make Advent, like you may do for Lent, or if it is literally your countdown to Christmas.

You may have rituals and remembrances that you do, traditions that your family or church have, that help you mark the passage of time to the great celebration. Or you may find it all rather difficult and would rather it went away and left you alone, my thought often when the commercialism takes over and the Christmas meaning is lost. But whatever you do and however you do it, we are now in the official Christmas make ready time.

I am extremely grateful for a designated time to get ready as I like to be organised (even if it doesn't come to fruition) and have everything ready so that I can enjoy Advent and Christmas, but I know I would be stumped if I didn't know when it was happening. Like the first Christmas, like Matthew tells about the second coming.

None of us could live in a perpetual state of Christmas happening with no notice – food would go off, or we'd end up over eating, cards wouldn't get to people in time, first class post or not, gifts may become redundant because children grow and people change, or what you thought was a great idea, they may have agreed and bought for themselves.

So how do we live faithfully in this constant state of readiness? How do we cope with the pressure and anxiety? It's hard enough when we know the day and date, an even hour, of Christmas.

And then we remember, Christmas isn't about making sure we have the right food in, or exchanging cards, or even buying presents, it's about living our lives in an open, inclusive, welcoming, caring, compassionate way. So that we are ready to help when someone needs it, we are ready to love someone who feels unworthy, we are ready to step up when someone is neglected or ignored.

Our Advent liturgy reminds us today that we ourselves are the gift of Jesus Christ in the world, and we give with mercy and receive with grace, allowing humankind to live peacefully in the world. All the rest is there to remind us of the present and presence of Jesus, light in our darkness, almighty in our weakness, peace in our sorrow and pain, God with us, always and unchanging.

If we can carry this in our hearts and minds and spirits during these next 25 days, then however lavish or meagre, however many or few, we will have Christmas again, with all the promise that it brings.

### Hymn StF 173

Into the darkness of this world,  
into the shadows of the night;  
into this loveless place you came,  
lightened our burdens, eased our pain,  
and made these hearts your home.  
Into the darkness once again –  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.  
*Come with your love  
to make us whole,  
come with your light to lead us on,  
driving the darkness far from our souls:  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Into the longing of our souls,  
into these heavy hearts of stone,  
shine on us now your piercing light,  
order our lives and souls aright,  
by grace and love unknown,  
until in you our hearts unite –  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come with your love  
to make us whole,  
come with your light to lead us on,  
driving the darkness far from our souls:  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

O Holy Child, Emmanuel,  
hope of the ages, God with us,  
visit again this broken place,  
till all the earth declares your praise  
and your great mercies own.  
Now let your love be born in us,  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.  
*Come in your glory,  
take your place,  
Jesus, the Name above all names,  
we long to see you face to face,  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Maggi Dawn

### Prayers of Intercession

We are unprepared for the coming of Christ: we continue our everyday, everyday lives as if, God, we can manage without you or even as if you do not exist.

We do not expect our worship to be so exciting that we shall meet and greet you there, and we do not live like faithful servants awaiting your return.

Yet your promises are clear: though we do not know how or when or where you will return, and we need to be ready.

May we respond to your loving presence in our world, with minds open to your truth, wills open to every opportunity of service, and hearts open in love and praise.

Then, with all our saints in earth and in heaven, we shall be enabled to worship and serve you now and prepared, at your coming, to join you in the world to come.

And so we pray for:

Everlasting peace:

Nations walking in your way:

Disputes settled according to your will;

Swords becoming ploughshares:

Neighbours caring for each other as for themselves:

Your will being done on earth as it is in heaven: Amen

### Hymn StF 172

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.

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.

Lands of the east, arise!  
He is your brightest morn;  
greet him with joyous eyes,  
let praise his path adorn:  
your seers have longed to know their Lord;  
to you he comes, the final word.

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.

Shout, as you journey on;  
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 Edward Oakley

### Blessing

Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
blessed is Gabriel, who brought good news,  
blessed is Mary, your mothers and ours.  
Bless your Church, preparing for Christmas;  
and bless us your children, who long for your coming. Amen.

