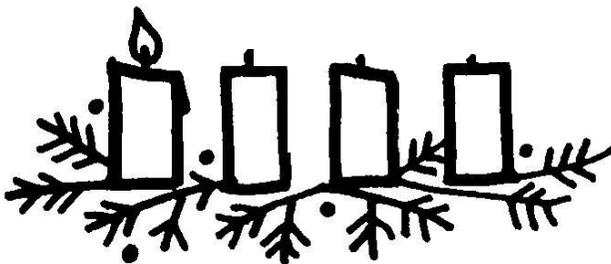


**Ashburton and Moorland Team**

**Advent Sunday**

28<sup>th</sup> November 2021



## ¶ The Gathering

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

## Lighting of an Advent wreath or candle

### *Week 1. The Patriarchs*

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith  
and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment.  
May we be obedient to your call  
and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,  
a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;  
for you are our light and our salvation.  
Blessed be God for ever.

**Amen**

### ***Hymn – O come, O come Emmanuel***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h03SJnUx8mq>

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here,  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free  
thine own from Satan's tyranny.  
From depths of hell thy people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave.  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Day-Spring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here.  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe the way that leads on high  
and close the path to misery  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might  
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did'st give the law  
in cloud, and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

Words: from the "Great O  
Antiphons"(12th - 13th century)  
trans. John Mason Neale (1818 - 1866)

### ***Prayer of Preparation***

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## ***Prayers of Penitence***

### *The Summary of the Law*

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

### ***Confession***

When the Lord comes,

he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

**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**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon us,  
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,  
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,  
and keep us in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### ***The Collect***

Almighty God,  
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
and to put on the armour of light,  
now in the time of this mortal life,  
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;  
that on the last day,  
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living  
and the dead,  
we may rise to the life immortal;  
through him who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **¶ The Liturgy of the Word**

#### ***Readings***

*Jeremiah 33:14-16*

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## 1 Thessalonians 3:9-end

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.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### ***Hymn – Come thou long expected Jesus***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEE0uWnDGs>

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.

Words: Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788)

## ***Gospel Reading***

Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

**Alleluia!**

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Luke 21:25-36*

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.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## ***The Sermon***

“O come, O come Emmanuel” are words that express a great longing for Jesus to return – to be with us, to comfort us, to allow us to celebrate his presence with us for all time. A sentiment echoed by another of our Advent hymns today “Come thou long expected Jesus.”

The great hymn writers are capturing a sense that none of us is complete without the presence of God in our lives, God fitting into the spiritual space in the heart of us, meeting a deep inner longing, making us complete.

During his lifetime, Jesus brought that sense of completeness to so many people that he met – his disciples and many others. Showing them how to find God, to pray to him, to call on him for help.

And allowing them to gradually realise that he himself was the Son of God and the Son of Man. He was Emmanuel – “God with us”. God had come among them, he was everything that they had longed for. At least for his lifetime....

But, knowing that he had to leave them, he taught them what was to follow – difficult times for the world, great distress, wars, dissipation – the sort of behaviour that people turn to when reverting to selfish indulgence, rather than a spiritual focus on God.

There *will* come an end to all the difficult times, he told them, because the Kingdom of God, here on earth, will finally come to completion through his return, though no-one can predict when this will be.

So he told them to wait expectantly, but also to live as much as possible as if the Kingdom of God was already present. Longing for Jesus’ return, but also rolling up our sleeves and getting on with doing what we can to help bring in the Kingdom.

Jesus is clear that when he does return it will be everything we’ve ever dreamed of! However, given that he made this promise two thousand years ago and it hasn’t yet been fulfilled, it’s really hard to live as though it might be tomorrow.

Over the centuries the church has puzzled over this, and has come up with an annual pattern of themes for the church year that, as it were, cycle round and round reminding us of the big picture – God’s promises to the world.

Advent (the word means “the coming”) begins our yearly Christian cycle with an expectation of Jesus’ coming birth at Christmas – just four weeks away now! Then we move on through the Christian year with Lent, Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension leading once again to a time of waiting until his return in glory – Advent!

Combining the themes of waiting for Jesus’ birth with waiting for his second coming, gives Advent two flavours in one! But both flavours of Advent emphasise that we feel incomplete without Jesus in our midst, we feel lonely without him. We long for his coming.

Loneliness and longing are closely related.

Loneliness is a common enough feeling I guess? Something that we all feel from time to time in our ordinary lives?

Maybe someone who’s normally with us has had to go away?

Maybe when we are in a busy place, and everyone else seems to know each other, but we know no-one?

Maybe at the end of a visit to a friend when it feels hard to leave because it will mean feeling lonely once again.

Living on your own, and sometimes finding that hard?

Loneliness is different from being alone and feeling relaxed, enjoying some peace and quiet. That can be a pleasant experience. Loneliness is a bad feeling, which can make life really challenging.

There’s no shortage of people offering advice on what to do to combat loneliness – join a club, phone someone up, try and get out of the house each day – plenty of advice, but very often the feeling remains.

It was a problem that Jesus was acutely aware of.

He was constantly encountering lonely people – often social outcasts – and teaching them that they were not alone – God was with them, their heavenly father cared for them just as he cared for

each individual sparrow. That they were loved and valued. There was no need to feel alone.

It's like God is our Father, Jesus taught, and we are his children. And like a good father, God always loves us, cares for us. And far more than that, he guides us, he inspires us. He accompanies us, he keeps us from feeling lonely.

However, "God" can feel remote and distant..... so many Christians find it easier to relate to Jesus, his son. Finding in him a companion and friend when feeling lonely.

I am reminded of the poem called "Footsteps" – us walking through life with Jesus, and in normal times, seeing two sets of footprints behind. But there seem to be difficult times when there is only one set of footprints behind – has Jesus left us? No, quite the opposite, he has carried us – they are his footprints.

Advent reminds us that even though Jesus has not yet returned in all his glory, he is with us already. We can turn to him in loneliness or happiness at any time. Rather than waiting for him to come to us – we can always turn towards him and seek him out.

This Advent, may you find comfort, companionship and strength from the God who is already with us.

Amen.

### ***The Nicene Creed***

***I / We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.***

***I / We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.***

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

***// We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.***

***// We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
// We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
// We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.***

### ***The Peace***

In the tender mercy of our God,  
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,  
to give light to those who dwell in darkness  
and in the shadow of death  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**The peace of the Lord be always with us.**

## **Hymn – Hark a herald voice is calling**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEfNOcEy4u4>

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 in glory,  
shrouding all the earth in fear,  
may he then as our defender  
on the clouds of heaven appear.

Honour, glory, virtue merit,  
to the Father and the Son,  
with the co-eternal Spirit  
while unending ages run.

Words: 6th century  
(trans. Edward Caswall 1814 - 1878)

### ***Prayers of Intercession***

United in the company of all the faithful  
and looking for the coming of the kingdom,  
let us offer our prayers to God,  
the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord,  
strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit,  
that we may live as a royal priesthood and a holy nation  
to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Bless Robert our bishop, and all ministers of your Church,  
that by faithful proclamation of your word  
we may be built on the foundation of the apostles  
and prophets  
into a holy temple in the Lord.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Empower us by the gift of your holy and life-giving Spirit,  
that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ  
from glory to glory.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Give to the world and its peoples  
the peace that comes from above,  
that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love in the  
service of the poor and needy;  
all those who minister to the sick and dying;  
and all who bring light to those in darkness.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin  
or disfigured by pain,  
that, raised from death to life in Christ,  
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us,  
who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity;  
preserve in your faith your servants on earth,  
guide us to your kingdom,  
and grant us your peace at all times.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Hasten the day when many will come  
from east and west, from north and south,  
and sit at table in your kingdom.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

We give you thanks  
for the whole company of your saints in glory,  
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;  
by your grace may we, like them,  
be made perfect in your love.

**Blessing and glory and wisdom,  
thanksgiving and honour and power,  
be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

### *The 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.**

*(For those in church, the Eucharistic prayer comes here)*

## **Hymn – Lo, he comes with clouds descending**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-5ACjv23-Q>

Lo, he comes with clouds descending,  
once for favoured sinners slain;  
thousand thousand saints attending  
swell the triumph of his train:  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
God appears on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him  
robed in dreadful majesty;  
those who set at naught and sold him,  
pierced and nailed him to the tree,  
deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,  
shall the true Messiah see.

Sing, Amen, let all adore thee,  
high on thy eternal throne;  
saviour, take the power and glory,  
claim the kingdom for thine own:  
come Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus,  
everlasting God come down.

Words: Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788)  
John Cennick (1718 - 1755)  
and Martin Madan (1726 - 1790)

### **¶ Ending**

Eternal God,  
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,  
teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,  
that all the world may acknowledge  
the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## ***The Blessing***

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon us,  
scatter the darkness from before our path,  
and make us 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 us and remain with us always.  
**Amen.**

