

Advent Sunday 2020

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

**All Those who lived in a land of deep darkness  
on them light has shone.**

O nata lux de lumina Tallis

<https://music.amazon.co.uk/albums/B07QZZ68HR?trackAsin=B07QXT2SFD&do=play>

The grace and peace of God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you

**All and also with you.**

My brothers and sisters, we enter today the solemn season of Advent  
in which the Church bids us prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ;  
a coming that we recall in the Child of Bethlehem;  
a coming that we experience in the gift of his Spirit,  
in the joy of human lives that are shared;  
a coming we wait for when God gathers up all things in Christ.

Let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ  
who brings light to the world.

Let us leave behind the darkness of sin,  
walk in the light that shines on our path,  
and renew within ourselves the hope of glory to which he beckons us.

And as we turn towards the light,  
let us have on our hearts all those who see no light,  
for whom all is darkness and despair.

Let us pray that they too may be illumined by Christ who is our light.

*Silence*

Collect for Advent Sunday

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.

**All Amen.**

Hymn O come, O come, Emmanuel,

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:

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight:

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:

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

**FIRST CANDLE:** Abraham and Sarah, to whom the promise was first given.

We light our first candle to recall the men and women of faith in the Old Testament, to whom the promise would be given. 4000 years before the birth of Christ, God told Abraham and Sarah that one of their descendants would destroy sin and death, rule the world and bless all nations.

Let us pray

All God of Abraham and Sarah and all the Patriarchs of old,  
we thank you for the promise that you have given us.  
Help us, like Abraham, to listen to your word

and put our trust in your promises.  
We ask this in the name of the one born  
in Bethlehem as our Saviour and King,  
and who will return in his glory, Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

SECOND CANDLE: The prophets foretell the birth of Jesus

*Reading Isaiah 2:1-5*

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come

the mountain of the Lord's house  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,  
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,  
and their spears into pruning-hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more.

Jesus Chris the Apple Tree Poston

<https://music.amazon.co.uk/albums/B07KKJZHBK?trackAsin=B07KKL3TF6&do=play>

As we light our second candle we remember the prophets, who spoke of the coming of Christ, of a Saviour who would be born, a king in the line of King David. They told us he would rule the world with wisdom and establish his kingdom of righteousness, justice and peace.

Let us pray

All Father God, we thank you for speaking to us through the prophets.  
Help us to listen to your word and to seek your kingdom above all things.  
We ask this in the name of the one to whom they pointed us,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

HYMN Hills of the North

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,  
praise shall 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 home,  
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.

*Reading John 1: 6 - 8, 19 - 23*

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said,

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
"Make straight the way of the Lord"',

As we light our third candle, we recall that God called John the Baptist to prepare the way for the coming Saviour and King. John denied his own comforts and gave up his life in obedience to his call. John preached that because God's ruler is coming, we should repent, turn back to God and show God's love to others.

Let us pray  
All Lord God,  
Your witness John the Baptist prepared the way for your Son  
by calling people to turn to you.  
Help us to prepare ourselves to receive you again.  
Forgive us our love of things more than people,  
our wilful self-centredness,  
and our rebellion against you;  
and help us to live by putting our trust in you,  
today, tomorrow and always. Amen

HYMN: On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
announces that the Lord is nigh;  
awake and hearken, for he brings  
glad tidings from the King of kings.

Then cleansed be every breast from sin;  
make straight the way for God within;  
prepare we in our hearts a home,  
where such a mighty guest may come.

For thou art our salvation, Lord,  
our refuge and our great reward;  
without thy grace we waste away,  
like flowers that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out thine hand,  
and bid the fallen sinner stand;  
shine forth, and let thy light restore  
earth's own true loveliness once more.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee  
whose advent doth thy people free,  
whom with the Father we adore,  
and Holy Ghost for evermore.

*Reading: Luke 1: 46 - 55*

And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

As we light the fourth candle we remember Mary.

When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would be the mother of the Saviour and King, she said 'Yes'.

And so Christ was born in her, and she declared your praise with joy.

Let us pray

Thank you, Father God,  
for the gift of your Saviour and King.

Help us to be like Mary and to say 'yes' to you.

We ask that through your Holy Spirit, Christ would live in us,  
so that we might be filled with your peace, love and joy, and declare your praises.

We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem. Amen.

Master in the Hall

<https://music.amazon.co.uk/albums/B0027WIT4K?trackAsin=B0027VY2UO&do=play>

ADDRESS

We leave the final candle unlit. It is the sign that although, when Christ was born in a stable 2000 years ago, he did bring God's light into our dark world, and although he comes into hearts and minds that are open to receive him today, yet we still wait for him to come again. So let us pray.

Thank you, Father God,  
for the gift of our Saviour and King.  
Help us as we wait this Advent for Christmas  
to mark the people that you put on our way.  
We thank you for Abraham and Sarah, the prophets,  
John the Baptist and Mary.  
Help us, like them, to believe your promises,  
to seek your kingdom, to repent of our sins,  
and to be so filled with your love  
that we rejoice in the life transforming hope of the return of the King. Amen.

HYMN: Lo, he comes with clouds descending

Lo, he comes with clouds descending  
once for favoured sinners slain;  
    thousand thousand saints attending  
    swell the triumph of his train:  
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,  
shall the true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion  
still his dazzling body bears;  
cause of endless exultation  
to his ransomed worshippers:  
with what rapture  
gaze we on those glorious scars.

Yea, amen, let all adore Thee,  
high on Thine eternal throne;  
Saviour, take the power and glory,  
claim the kingdom for Thine own:  
Alleluia!  
Thou shalt reign, and Thou alone.

Come, O Lord, comfort the soul of your servant.  
**All Even so, Lord, come.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, come

**All** at evening time, with light,

and in the morning, with your glory,

**All** to guide our feet into the way of peace.

He who receives our prayers says:

Surely I come quickly.

I am the root and offspring of David,

I am the bright and morning star.

**All Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

As we await our coming Saviour,

go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**