



‘Worship at home’ Sunday December 1st 2024



This Sunday marks the **first Sunday in Advent**, and the start of a new liturgical year. Advent is a time of waiting and preparation, as we anticipate the coming Christmas celebration, and await the fulfillment of God’s kingdom in our hurting, uncertain world. You might **light a special candle** for the season of Advent, and leave it set up over these next four weeks as a focus for your prayer time.

Opening

Where do we find hope in changing times?

We find hope in God’s faithful presence.

Where do we find hope in this time of Advent?

We find hope in Jesus the Christ

who renews and restores us,

bringing hope to the world,

and hope to our lives.

Let us worship the One who leads us on:

in the promise of the Spirit of hope.

We live in a time of uncertainty, with widespread unrest, political uncertainty, climate change discussions, the exposure of corruption, oppression, and injustice on both a global and an individual level. We may experience grief, loss, despair. When we look back through history, there have been many times of uncertainty, with widespread disease, natural disasters, political trouble and personal struggles. The world, and our lives, are constantly changing.



**Where do you find hope in
changing times?**

How do you cope with change?

**What do you seek
to be constant?**

Jeremiah 33:14-16

"The day will come, says the LORD, when I will do for Israel and Judah all the good things I have promised them. "In those days and at that time I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will do

what is just and right throughout the land. In that day Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this will be its name: 'The LORD Is Our Righteousness.' *New Living Bible*

The prophet Jeremiah lived in a time of uncertainty, with the constant threat of war, famine, disease, and political and social turmoil. Around this time, the Jewish people were taken into exile and the temple in Jerusalem destroyed. The world, and their lives, were constantly changing. They found hope in the promises of God's presence and faithfulness, and the anticipation of a coming Messiah who would renew and restore the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

During Advent, we too remember these promises of God's presence and faithfulness. Amidst change and uncertainty, we know that Christ has already come, and is with us. However, we anticipate Christ's coming again to renew and restore. When we look around our world and see darkness and distress, it seems like we might be waiting for ever. However, our hope in Christ is a vision that one day the kingdom of God will be fully realised in our world, when we, and the whole of creation will be reconciled to God.



Luke 21:25-36

"And there will be strange signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. People will

be terrified at what they see coming upon the earth, for the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with power and 2

great glory. So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near!" Then he gave them this illustration: "Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near. I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things have taken

place. Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear. "Watch out! Don't let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man." *New Living Translation*

We shudder at signs we see.

Anxieties bombard us.

Our hearts are afraid.

Lord,

Let us be vigilant, hold our heads high.

**Make us an Advent people
with hope as our stronghold.**

Jesus,

You once came into our world with all its sorrows.

**Keep us awake and alert to your presence
in the midst of our struggles now.**

Tell us again that your love will triumph.

~ Anne Osdieck <http://liturgy.slu.edu/>



The first followers of Jesus felt sure that He would come again during their lifetime. When this did not occur, they felt uncertain and afraid. Each of us is encouraged to consider

how we live in times of uncertainty, living out the kingdom of God here and now, while longing for a time when the brokenness of our world will be transformed into the fullness of God's reign. 3

Advent is a time of waiting, filled with hope, for the One who is to come. When we live in love and act in hope, we live out God's kingdom of justice and righteousness, knowing that Christ has come, and will come again, and that the promises of God's presence and faithfulness remain ours today.

With hope,
we can find our way
even through
darkness.
But without it,
we lose our way
in daylight.

Prayers



Name out loud people and situations around the world who seem to experience distress and darkness, uncertainty and turmoil. Pray that they may know the presence of Christ with them, bringing hope in changing times.

Psalm 25: selected verses

O LORD, I give my life to you. I trust in you, my God! Show me the right path, O LORD; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you. Remember, O LORD, your compassion and unfailing love, which you have shown from long ages

past. The LORD is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray. He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way. The LORD leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands.

New Living Translation

*My hope
is in you
all day
long*

PSALM 25:3

Closing

May we see the grace that surrounds us.
May we know the love that holds us close.
May we find the peace for which we yearn
May we live in God's way of hope. Amen.