



‘Worship at home’ November 27th 2022



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 world.
Lighting a candle reminds us of the presence of Christ
in our world, and in our lives.

Opening

On this first Sunday of Advent,
we anticipate the celebration of Christmas:

Christ has come.

Signs of hope and new life surround us,
sometimes unexpectedly:

Christ is with us.

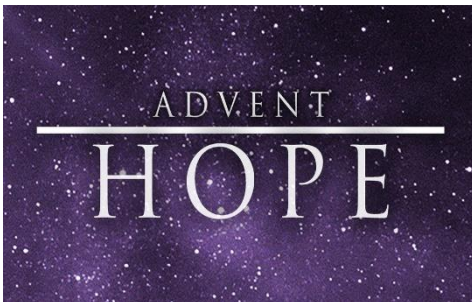
We are called to live as a people of hope
to bring hope to others:

Christ will come again.

Come, and fill us with hope.

Amen

In Advent, hope is more than a wish list of things we want for Christmas, or that Christmas lunch will turn out ok. The hope of Christ is a promise that we and the whole of creation will be reconciled to God, through Christ; that one day all will be well: for us and for all people.



**Reflect on a time when you
hoped for something to
happen, and it did.**

**How was it similar to what
you anticipated?**

**How was it different from
what you anticipated?**

The ancient Israelites had long hoped for a King, a Messiah who would free them from the rule of their neighbouring countries and bring in God's kingdom of justice and peace. Jesus was not the King they were expecting... so often God's ways are different from ours.



The word 'advent' comes from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning 'coming', or 'arrival'. The season of advent is a time of waiting and preparation for the celebration of the coming of Jesus at Christmas. However the Latin *adventus* is also a translation of the Greek word *parousia*, which describes the expectation of the second coming of Christ. The first followers of Jesus expected his second coming to be imminent, within their lifetime. They were warned to be ready, because even though that event was anticipated, it's timing was unknown. Sometimes there are events that we might anticipate, but they still occur unexpectedly.

Matthew 24:36-44

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the

other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

New International Version



We are called to stay awake and be ready. This is not as a defensive posture, but as an awareness of what God is doing in our world. We are to live our whole lives attuned to the signs of God's presence and God's action in, around, and through us.

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for Christmas. This is not simply about buying gifts, sending cards and organising food for a family gathering. It can also be a time of spiritual preparation as we seek the presence of God who breaks into our lives in surprising and unexpected ways, if only we make time and space to see it.

**Unexpected joy bursting in
birthing new beginnings
creating love
renewing life
All will be well
God is here**

- Rev Sue Ellis

The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life.
Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord

Henri Nouwen

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In Advent we recall again that Christ has come, that God's grace in Christ is present in our own lives, and that God has yet more work to do in us. We are called to live our lives knowing that God is with us now, but we also anticipate and look forward to an even more glorious future, as God continues to reveal himself to us, reconciling us and all creation.

The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before ... What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God's [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon. ~ Jan L. Richardson

Prayer

God of great love and hope,
we are reminded that your kingdom has come,
that it is growing among us now,
and that the time will come
when it fills the whole world with justice and peace.
And so we pray for your coming;
we seek to be faithful to you,
to make a difference in the world around us,
and to open ourselves to your Spirit working in our lives.
We pray that we might bring hope to those around us.
We pray for those for whom pain, grief, and suffering
make your kingdom seem unreachable.
May your love and justice reign,
your coming be something we hope for,
but also something we experience, here and now.
Amen.



Closing

May we know God's peace
that passes all understanding,
may we bring the love of Christ
to those around us,
and may we be open to
the moving of the Holy Spirit
as we anticipate Christmas
and all it brings.
Amen.

God of hope, I look to you
with an open heart and
yearning spirit. During this
Advent season, I will keep
alert and awake, listening
for your word and keeping
to your precepts. My hope
is in you.

Matthew Kelly