



Salford Methodist Circuit

Waiting, Watching and Hope - 29th November 2020
John Brocklehurst

Welcome to worship on Advent Sunday,
Let me start with a question:

What is advent?

Video - Advent in 2 Minutes -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC0FGQLBp7w>

Call to Worship

Be with us, lord, in our worship today.
Send your holy spirit upon us,
draw us into your presence and love,
not only to help us to welcome Jesus again into our lives,
but also be ready when he comes in Glory

Advent Candle Liturgy

*Light a candle in a darkened place,
In its flame see hope on every face,
Christ our Saviour will be born,
Heralding a brand new dawn, so let it burn.*

As we light this candle we remember Jesus's coming to this world as a baby,
and his promise that one day he will return.

This flame reminds of the hope we have in Jesus.

Advent God, we thank you that in Jesus you lit a flame of hope for all people,
for all time.

Light of our world, shine upon us this day and every day, as we live in your light.
Amen.

*In the darkness, see the coming light,
Word of God speaks through the darkest night,
Keep a watch, the time is near,
Time for hope and not for fear, so let it burn.*

Hymn: Colours of day, dawn into the mind.

*Colours of day dawn into the mind,
the sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
and let's give the message to the people we meet.*

So light up the fire and let the flame burn,



Salford Methodist Circuit

*open the door, Let Jesus return.
Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.*

*Go through the park, on into the town;
the sun still shines on; it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
the people of darkness are needing a friend.
So light up the fire...*

*Open your eyes, look into the sky,
the darkness has come, the sun came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
but Jesus is living, his Spirit is near.
So light up the fire...*

Prayers

God, with us,
as we enter this season of longing and waiting,
bear with us a little longer;
be patient with our impatience.

You have journeyed alongside us from the beginning of time,
yet still we miss the signs of your presence.

When we are blinded by the brashness of this season:
open our eyes to the glimpses of your glory.

When we want simple answers:
open our minds to the hints of incarnation.

When we are deafened by our own shouting:
Open our ears to the whispers of your grace.

May we share with you in longing for restoration and renewal
and may we be watchful for the light that breaks through
the darkness of our world.

God says 'be patient, wait, watch and hope,
for the time is close at hand.'

Know that you are loved, forgiven and healed.
Thanks be to God.

So may we truly celebrate the advent of your son, and be equipped
To serve him better,
To the glory of your name, amen



Salford Methodist Circuit

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.*

Hymn: Come, thou long-expected Jesus.

*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 for ever,
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*

Video - Advent Worship 2: Hope

<https://skitguys.com/videos/advent-worship-2-hope>

In the verses before our Bible reading, Jesus had just been to the temple and said in answer to a question from his disciples that not a stone of the temple would be left. Obviously this caused the disciples to be curious, so Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives across from the temple and speaks to his followers about



Salford Methodist Circuit

what to expect in days ahead; troubles and persecutions, an awful horror of what all this means then he goes on to speak about the coming of the son of man.

Bible Reading: Mark 13 :24 to 37

*'But in those days, following that distress,
"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."*

'At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

'Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: as soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The day and hour unknown

'But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

'Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"'

Sermon

We come once again to the time of year, the time of year when we start the journey through the Christian year to travel with our Lord Jesus Christ from his birth to the ascension and then ultimately to his coming in glory. At the start of the journey we must ask ourselves: what is advent?

Advent is a time of waiting, watching and hope. And at this time when we seem to be engulfed by darkness, of Covid and lockdown, it comes a time when we start to hope and think about the future. Light at the end of the tunnel. And so we think to our self 'well, how about going on holiday?' And so we make plans to

go to some far, distant land. And generally this may involve taking the plane. So that means going to an airport and milling with all those people.

But if you have ever been told to go to the airport and to meet somebody, someone you've never seen or met before, then you'll know something about waiting, watching, and certainly hope. Because you know where they will appear and you have some idea of when. But you also have to guess which of the travellers coming through might be the one that you are waiting to greet, especially with all those faces mingling and blending into each other. Will they see you? You hope that you will recognise them? Is advent anything like that?

Well, for a start there is no 'arrivals gate' through which God is going to appear – we cannot look at any one specific place. And we have no idea about the timing, Jesus himself says "no one knows the time except the father in heaven". So we must broaden our looking. We have to be ready, waiting, watching and hoping for God to turn up in the most unexpected of places. We need to open our minds to God's presence in places that can surprise, delight or even shock us.

Advent generally, and today's gospel reading is no exception, because it talks about the servants looking after the house while the master is away and them being very mindful that the master could return at any time. And this gospel reading calls us to be active in our waiting and watching. It has the sense of preparing space for when God comes again. Actively waiting and watching is not about sitting around and doing nothing, it is preparing ourselves in body, mind and spirit by creating space in our lives to welcome God when we least expect him. Advent reminds us that our prayer and meditation should be focused on making space for God, both around us – and within us.

Sometimes, when we are actively waiting for something, there may come a point when we feel that it may never happen, we seem to be waiting ages. And so we start to build little pictures in our mind of what could or will be; but we are never completely certain that the 'something' is going to become a reality. Advent calls us to remember that the coming of Christ in the world is not something imaginary, or something that might never happen. It is real. It has happened once in time already. And it happens over and over again in the lives of people all around the world. And yes, it will happen again. It is a reminder, that our ultimate reality is in God, not in anything worldly or humanly contrived.

The coming of Christ – whether once in history, or repeatedly in our lives – comes to bring transformation and change. And it is, or should be, something to be welcomed and embraced. Yet, for many, change brings great fear. The fear of uncertainty, fear of the unknown, fear of loss. When faced with change, we seem hardwired to imagine all the worst possible outcomes. This may be a valid response, but it is also one that we can overcome, because we are aware of it, and if we're aware of it, then we remember and embrace the many positives of change that that transformation can bring to our lives.



Salford Methodist Circuit

Advent is a time of waiting, watching and hope. A time when we must prayerfully be working towards Jesus coming in glory. And the one thing to remember is that Jesus never leaves us to get on with it, for Jesus is our guide on life's journey. Christ comes in our lives, he is with us in all moments, in all places and in all times. On this Advent Sunday, we've lit a candle of hope. As we look at the candle, we celebrate the hope we find in Jesus. Waiting and hoping for God to come, exciting and worthwhile than any earthly gift. If we keep that hope in our minds on this Advent journey then we will be ready and prepared to meet Jesus and we will live in the joy of our Lord. So let's keep on waiting, watching and let's be in hopeful anticipation of our Lord appearing. At this time when we feel the darkness engulfing us we must remember that we are children of light. As we know the light of a candle can reach all the dark corners and it dispels the dark, so we will help dispel the dark around us if we continue to let our light shine in this world by the lives that we lead and as we journey through Advent to Bethlehem and bow down before the Christ of the manger.

Hymn: Sing we the King who is coming to reign;

*Sing we the King who is coming to reign;
glory to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain!
Life and salvation his empire shall bring,
joy to the nations when Jesus is King:*

*Come let us sing: praise to our King,
Jesus our King, Jesus our King:
this is our song, who to Jesus belong:
glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King.*

*All shall be well in his kingdom of peace;
freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase;
justice and truth from his sceptre shall spring;
wrong shall be ended when Jesus is King:
Come let us sing...*

*Souls shall be saved from the burden of sin;
doubt shall not darken his witness within;
hell has no terrors, and death has no sting;
love is victorious when Jesus is King:
Come let us sing...*

*Kingdom of Christ, for your coming we pray;
hasten, O Father, the dawn of the day
when this new song your creation shall sing;
Satan is vanquished and Jesus is King:
Come let us sing...*



Salford Methodist Circuit

Prayers

*O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
when I call, answer me
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
Come and listen to me*

Into our world with all its grieves and glories,
With all its joys and its sorrows,
As you came into Mary's womb
in Bethlehem, 2000 years ago,
Come, Lord Jesus.

O Lord, hear my prayer...

Into the forgotten places,
Into the neglected places,
amongst the marginalised people and places,
Come, Lord Jesus.
Come as you came into the stable,
the place at the bottom of the pile

O Lord, hear my prayer...

Come into the lives of the poor,
on the streets, under cardboard,
in isolated flats or houses,
or at the foodbanks.
Come, Lord Jesus,
bringing hope to those in need.

Come into the lives of the powerful
and those who live only for themselves and what they can get.
Come, Lord Jesus,
bringing caution and a new way to live.

Come into the lives of the weary,
and the ill and the despairing.
Come, Lord Jesus,
brining rest.

Come into the lives of the wise,
and those who have great knowledge.



Salford Methodist Circuit

Give them a restlessness to search out for truth
and to live by it all their lives.
Come into our lives and our longings
whoever we are and whatever our rest state.
Come, Lord Jesus.

O Lord, hear my prayer...

This is the good news of Advent,
Christ is coming, as we saw him in the lowliness of the stable at Bethlehem.
And as he will come, in glory, at the end time,
at the end of time, and of all history.
And blessed are those who wait on the Lord.
Therefore, come quickly, Lord,
Come, Lord Jesus.
Amen

O Lord, hear my prayer...

Hymn: Make way, make way , for Christ the King

*Make way, make way, for Christ the King
in splendour arrives;
fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.*

*Make way (Make way), make way (make way),
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);
make way (make way), make way (make way),
and let his Kingdom in.*

*He comes the broken hearts to heal,
the prisoners to free;
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
the blind shall see.*

Make way...

*And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown
he'll beautify.*

Make way...

*We call you now to worship him
as Lord of all,
to have no gods before him,
their thrones must fall!*



Salford Methodist Circuit

Make way...

Bless to us, O God, the road that is before us.
Bless to us, O God, the friends who are around us
Bless to us, O God, your love which is within us
Bless to us, O God, your light which leads us home.
Amen

CCL: 30925

Colours of Day - Sue McClellan, John Paculabo & Keith Ryecroft

Words and Music: © 1974, Thankyou Music.

Administered by worshiptogether.com Songs, excluding UK & Europe, administered by Kingswaysongs. a division of David C Cook tym@kingsway.co.uk

Come Thou Long-expected Jesus - Charles Wesley

Sing We The King Who Is Coming To Reign - Charles Silvester Home

O Lord, Hear My Prayer - Taize Community

Words and Music: © 1892, 1983 Ateliers et Presses de Taize, 71250 Taize Community, France

Make Way, Make Way - Graham Kendrick

Words and Music: © 1986, Thankyou Music.

Administered by worshiptogether.com Songs. excluding UK & Europe, administered by Kingswaysongs. a division of David C Cook tym@kingsway.co.uk