



Sunday Nov 28th, 2021 The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Gathering & Lighting the Candle

Jesus said, 'Keep awake,
for you do not know on what day
your Lord is coming.'

Come soon, Lord Jesus!
(the first Advent candle is lit)

Jesus is the light of the world.
A light no darkness can ever put out.

Call to worship

It doesn't matter whether or not you have faith;
whether or not you are cynical or despairing,
hope-filled or hope-less: what matters to God is
simply that you are here.

We are entering the time of Advent,
in preparation for Christmas.
Advent reminds us that if God is to be born again
of our world and our lives that we need to
prepare for it. We need to make the space in our
lives where love might be born.

So, welcome to your own tiny corner
of a harsh and dark world. Together with all of us
in our own spaces, let us practice being ready
in the faith that Christ will come.

Acknowledging



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the
land on which we live, the First Peoples of the
nation we now call Australia. We pay our respects
to the elders – past, present, and emerging. As
First and Second peoples walking together, we
commit ourselves anew to be people of the
covenant, to listening, to truth-telling, and to
seeking justice for all.

Singing - Sing out, earth and skies (TiS 181)

Come, O God of all the earth,
come to us, O righteous one;
come, and bring our love to birth,
in the glory of your Son.

*Sing out, earth and skies,
sing of the God who loves you,
raise your joyful cries,
dance to the life around you!*

Come, O God of wind and flame,
fill the earth with righteousness;
teach us all to sing your name,
may our lives your love confess.

Come, O God of flashing light,
twinkling star and burning sun;
God of day and God of night,
in your light we all are one.

Come, O God of snow and rain,
shower down upon the earth;
come, O God of joy and pain,
God of sorrow, God of mirth.

Come, O justice, come O peace,
come and shape our hearts anew;
come and make oppression cease,
bring us all to life in you.

Words & Music by Marty Haugen
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Prayer

God of all blessings, source of all life,
giver of all grace:
*we thank you for the gift of life:
for the breath that sustains life,
for the food of this earth that nurtures life,
for the love of family and friends without which
there would be no life.*



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We thank you for the mystery of creation:
for the beauty that the eye can see,
for the joy that the ear may hear,
for the unknown that we cannot behold, filling
the universe with wonder,
for the expanse of space that draws us beyond
the definitions of our selves.

We thank you for setting us in communities:
for families who nurture our becoming,
for friends who love us by choice,
for companions at work,
who share our burdens and daily tasks,
for strangers who welcome us into their midst,
for people from other lands
who call us to grow in understanding,
for children who lighten
our moments with delight,
for the unborn, who offer us hope
for the future.

We thank you for this day:
for life and one more day to love,
for opportunity and one more day
to work for justice and peace,
for neighbours and one more person to love,
and by whom be loved,
for your grace and one more experience
of your presence,
for your promise: to be with us, to be our God,
and to give salvation.
For these, and all blessings,
we give you thanks, eternal, loving God,
through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

God of justice and mercy,
we know that we have fallen silent
when we should have spoken up.
We have ignored the cries of the innocent
and joined the crowds in calls of judgment.
We have mistaken justice for revenge
and have sought punishment to ease our pain.

Forgive us, God,
for not seeing our own faults, our own sins,
and for not holding ourselves responsible for our
inaction and injustice.

Restore us, God, to the ways Jesus taught us,
to drop our stones and instead seek forgiveness
and restoration.

Call us into the paths
of love and reconciliation,
knowing your mercy extends to all of us,
your grace is a gift,
and there is nothing we can do
to deserve or earn it.
Guide us into living into your forgiveness,
peace and reconciliation,
in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

God has opened our ears and our hearts to know
God's love and forgiveness.
There is nothing we need to do other than love
one another and love God,
for all things come from God's love.
We go forward, knowing we have been forgiven
and we are restored to God.
Live in the way of Christ. **Amen.**

Listening

Read: Jeremiah 33:14-16 & Luke 21: 25 -36

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word:
Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev. Ian Brown

"Hope and expectation,... still!"

Happy New Year! In the Christian Calendar today
is New Year's day. We begin again, looking to the
coming of Christ. There's a lot of Christmas
preparation, but the season of Advent has a very
particular focus. And this year we have a very
particular need for the hope and renewed sense
of expectation the season offers us. I wonder
what preparations you have started?

A few years ago I had the idea - a clever idea, I
thought, that I could propagate some bromeliads
and put them in nice pots as presents. If you
know what a bromeliad is, just nod knowingly
while I explain, they are something like a small,



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colourful flowering pineapple with no fruit and these, with rows of spikes on each leaf, the 'sharks teeth' of the gardening world!

I knew about this - but didn't have much time. I had the pots and the potting mix, I'd divide the clump and put it all together. I incurred a good scratching! - the next day my wrists were red and itching. I knew about what was coming, but I hadn't prepared! The point of Advent is to not be like "Ian in the garden," with the most important things of life!

Luke 21 is about the big picture signs of 'the Son of Man coming';

"There will be signs in the sun moon and stars, nature will be shaken, then you will see the son of man coming in a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to take place stand up and raise your heads because your redemption is drawing near."

It's awesome, vivid and poetic. It's strange, but it shouldn't be ignored! Rather than do something to these words perhaps we should let them do something to us!

Rich with the poetic language of apocalypse, it's a much misunderstood form of writing. It's about the revelation of God; ultimate things, the expected coming of God's reign. That's why we read it at the beginning of Advent.

Apocalypse focuses on ultimate justice and God's victory. Apocalyptic language is something Jesus used when he wanted to shake the foundations; when he saw the need to challenge and change, to jolt a few pews to wake people up. Because ultimately the gospel Jesus brings is radical, powerful and will effect everything and everyone! Changing the energy consumption patterns of the planet – a trifling matter next to this!

Jesus imagines the whole cosmos being turned on it's head. "Pray that you will either be able to escape or stand before him when he comes." Not the stuff of 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild'. It's not the sort of message to make faith seem nice and

rational. If Christianity were that tame it would have died out soon after Jesus. No, this is serious and it makes most of us, who are comfortable, feel very uncomfortable. We mostly benefit from the way things are. Radical change is risky. But those who are on the bottom of the heap, the poor and oppressed of the world, those who have nothing to gain from things staying as they are, tremble with delight when they really hear about what, by God's grace might be.

What do we do to prepare during Advent?

How dramatic is the consequence of Jesus coming in our lives? Perhaps we can be honest about our need for Christ to shake and transform our lives and our world?

Christ is coming, coming to shake things up and set everything right! Coming unexpectedly; hope of the hopeless, healer of the incurable, redeemer of the world! This is the gospel in stark, bold truth. God is coming here, watch-out, TAKE HEED. Hope, Respond!!

May this hope be something we grow to look forward to and respond to more and more. May we prepare this Advent and always. Keep the hope. Amen.

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

Compassionate God, mindful of your mercy and of your steadfast love, be a sustaining presence to those we name on our lips and in silence ...

Be a blessing to those who love and care for them ...

Pour out your Spirit, O God, on all who are weighed down with grief; those whose troubles are known only to you; and be present to those who have no-one ...

In Jesus' name we pray the words he left us:



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The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Offering

God of love and grace, may these gifts we share
in your name remind us of your inbreaking love
for the world. May we bear the love of Christ to
everyone we meet. Amen

Notices

Advent is a time to reflect on and prepare for the
gift of Jesus - God is with us.

Singing - Love divine (TiS 217)

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave:
thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above;
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,

glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

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Blessing

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet
walk with you on the road.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands
stretch out your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart
open your hearts to love.
May you see the face of Christ
in everyone you meet,
see the love of Christ in you.
Amen.

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