

Sunday 29th November 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Loving, faithful God,
As your people of old waited and
watched for your coming in Jesus,
So we wait and watch for your coming
today.
As we come before you now, waiting
and watching,
Fill us with your light and love.
*(If you have an Advent wreath at home,
you may wish to light one candle)*

Hymn: STF 177

Lo, he comes with clouds descending

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or
listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBwOJMdh57k>

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 glorious majesty;
we who set at nought 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.

Sing, amen, let all adore thee,

high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own:
come, Lord Jesus!
Everlasting God, come down!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray together

Loving, faithful God,
We praise you for your faithfulness to
your people down the ages.
They hoped and were not disappointed;
In Jesus they saw you come as one of us,
sharing our life so we might share yours.
We have known your coming in our
lives,
Whether in blazes of glory,
or quiet moments of knowing we are
loved;
and in the power of your Spirit.
We know you will come again in glory,
In light and power that we cannot
imagine,
That one day all heaven and earth will
praise you.

We come to you too, sorry for the times
When we have been too impatient to
wait,
When we have lost heart.
God who comes to us in love,
We know that you forgive all who turn
to you.
Forgive us, renew our hope, turn our
eyes back to you,

So that we may see your coming in our world
And share your joy with others. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Old Testament Isaiah 64: 1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter,
we are all the work of your hand.

Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and do not remember iniquity for ever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 13: 24-37

'But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And

what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

Time to Reflect

"Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down!" So says Isaiah in our Old Testament reading. I wonder how many of us, with what 2020 has thrown at us, would want to say something similar to God, perhaps putting it as "Come on God, get this sorted!" Coronavirus has gone on quite long enough now, many of us are weary, down, fed up.

Isaiah and his people longed to see the coming of God, but were also scared. They feared that the trauma of exile had happened through their own fault- what would God do to them? They go backwards and forwards between hope and fear. In our Gospel reading, we again get a mixed message. "The Son of Man" will return in glory, His followers will share in that glory...but not before some very difficult times. Mark's readers are also warned to be ready, not to be "caught out" by the coming of the "Son of Man".

I wonder if today, we also feel a mixture of hope and fear. We want an end to the virus, and the pain, deprivation, sadness and loss it's brought. We long for a better world, a safer and more peaceful world, for Creation to be healed and restored. Yet we know that living in the way that will build such a world- in God's way- could be costly. It might mean, for instance, living more simply, or reaching out in love to those whom we don't like, or don't like us. We may also struggle to see where God is at

work in our world, or in difficult things that are happening to us personally.

Both Isaiah and Mark, in their different ways, say "Wait- and see." "Wait and see signs of God's coming, at the end but also every day. Be ready for signs of the Kingdom, for God's promptings to work for that Kingdom. Know that you are loved, and show that love to others". This Advent, may we, through whatever we are facing, wait in hope and love. Amen.

Take a time to sit quietly



During this season the Methodist Church is proclaiming "God is with us". God is

with us is more than a statement. It's a reminder that God is always with us. We are encouraged to share our story (and other people's stories) of walking with God in this extraordinary year. How might you share how God has been with you this week? Find out more here <https://www.methodist.org.uk/christmas/>

A time of prayer

Loving God, who comes in Jesus,
We bring to you all who wait for you,
in hope and faith, or in fear and despair.

We pray for all who wait for peace, for justice, for their voices to be heard.

We pray for all who live in fear, of war, violence, abuse or bullying.

We pray that our Churches may wait on your guidance, so we may serve you

faithfully.

We pray for all who wait for test results, news about their jobs, news of loved ones, or for the coming of a child.

We pray for all who are ill, all who are close to death, and all who watch and wait with them.

May we watch and wait with them, be people of peace and justice, and bring hope, comfort and healing, light in the darkness.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to STF 173 Into the darkness of this world

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gsjHf-IX8qo>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

Into the darkness of this world,
into the shadows of the night;
into this loveless place you came,
lightened our burdens, eased our pain,
and made these hearts your home.
Into the darkness once again --
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come with your love
to make us whole,
come with your light to lead us on,
driving the darkness far from our
souls:
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Into the longing of our souls,
into these heavy hearts of stone,
shine on us now your piercing light,
order our lives and souls aright,
by grace and love unknown,

until in you our hearts unite –
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come with your love
to make us whole,
come with your light to lead us
on,
driving the darkness far from our
souls:
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

O Holy Child, Emmanuel,
hope of the ages, God with us,
visit again this broken place,
till all the earth declares your praise
and your great mercies own.
Now let your love be born in us,
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come in your glory,
take your place,
Jesus, the Name above all names,
we long to see you face to face,
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Maggi Dawn (b. 1959)

A prayer of blessing

God of hope, the Dawn from on high,
break upon us, and fill us with light and
hope. Send us out to be light and hope
wherever we are. Amen.

Original Materials by Judith Lincoln

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Due to Covid, services in person are currently suspended

