

Sunday 28 November 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Advent 1 – the Advent hope

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

Come soon, Lord Jesus!

The first candle is lit, and this response is used

Jesus is the light of the world.

A light no darkness can ever put out.

Advent 1

<https://youtu.be/p0cZG6dvWIY>

We sing:

*Advent candles tell their story
as we watch and pray,
longing for the Day of Glory,
'Come, Lord, soon,' we say.
Pain and sorrow, tears, and sadness,
changed for gladness
on that Day.*

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Everingham*

Call to worship -Psalm 25:1-2,4-5

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. O my God, in you I trust. Do not let me be put to shame. Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.

Prayers of confession

For the mending of our hearts, torn apart by our unkindness. For the healing of our souls, wasting away from the despair around us.

Holy God, hear our prayer

We seek forgiveness for the sin we have allowed to persist, for the reconciliation of the world, whose division condemns us. We pray for the courage to admit our faults, the strength to amend our actions, and the hope that your grace awaits us. Through Christ we pray. **Amen**

Hymn: StF 172; Hills of the north, rejoice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYi6pKL4i5o>

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

Hills of the north, rejoice,
river and mountain-spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in righteousness and love,
he brings salvation from above.

Isles of the southern seas,
sing to the listening earth;
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
in Christ shall all be made anew;
his word is sure, his promise true.
Lands of the east, arise!
He is your brightest morn;
greet him with joyous eyes,
let praise his path adorn:
your seers have longed to know their Lord;

to you he comes, the final Word.

Shores of the utmost west,
lands of the setting sun,
welcome the heavenly guest
in whom the dawn has come:
he brings a never-ending light,
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

Shout, as you journey on;
songs be in every mouth!
Lo, from the north they come,
from east and west and south:
in Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the universe be blest.

Charles Ernest Oakley (1832-1865) and Editors of English Praise,

Time to Reflect

Luke 21:25-36

25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27 At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29 He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. 30 When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. 31 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

32 "Truly I tell you; this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

34 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come on all

those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Jesus employs a momentous image that suggests effects on the cosmic order expressing an embodiment of threat to humanity, hence calling for immediate response and action. The climate crisis at present is a huge global justice issue the world faces. God's people are called upon in these opening verses of Luke chapter 21 to stand up and lift their heads up. Their voices need to be heard. There is an urgent need for a collective joint action.

More importantly it's worth noting that a few months ago there were extreme weather conditions resulting in many communities around the world being displaced by water or living in severe drought. In some instances, lives have been lost and homes and farms destroyed. According to the Methodist global relationship news, there are several people who continue to be pushed back into poverty and the 'damage on creation is accelerating'. There are many other parts of the world affected by conflict, war and use of biological chemical weapons that severely affect the environment; threatening food security and the health of those communities.

The gospel of Luke welcomes us to contemplate on these emerging threats but with hope and joyful expectation in preparedness for our redemption in Christ's return. Christ loves creation that is restored and in peace. The prayer is then to live in the words of the hymn, "when you come with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!

The central message for this advent is to be watchful and in continuous prayer. When

times decide to be tough and perilous, we are encouraged to surrender to the will of the almighty. In the words of the hymn, will your Anchor hold....

Advent is a time of hope, mixed with joyful expectation. The invite in Verse 27 demonstrates a momentous period of staring up into the gaze of the messianic coming, for liberation which humanity has been waiting for. There will be no secret for the return of Christ. His arrival will be witnessed by the world at large. The things that have happened that have brought about several anxieties will be overshadowed by the joy of advent. God's children will be able to hold their heads up high. I guess that is why Jesus introduces the parable of the fig tree in Verses 29-30 which in my opinion is a powerful theological image of a new world in line with Christ's messianic reign in this fragile world of our time. In such a distressful times Jesus draws our attention to offer us an opportunity to enter more deeply into the joyful mystery that lies at its heart: God becoming human in the birth of Jesus Christ. It is in waiting and in prayer, that we can enter God's presence and ask Him to prepare our hearts the way He prepared all of history to receive the gift of His Son. Ask the father to use this time during Advent to cut away the distractions and make your life a place of warmth and openness; a ray for openness to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Pray for a genuine awareness of God's grace in your life and the humility to extend grace to others. Pray for a passion to pursue justice.

Amen.

Hymn: There is a hope that burns within my heart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_yv5yGZnBc

There is a hope that burns within my heart,
That gives me strength for every passing day.
A glimpse of glory now revealed in meagre part,

Yet drives all doubt away:
I stand in Christ, with sins forgiven.
And Christ in me, the hope of heaven!
My highest calling and my deepest joy,
To make His will my home.

There is a hope that lifts my weary head,
A consolation strong against despair,
That when the world has plunged me in its
deepest pit,
I find the Saviour there!
Through present sufferings, future's fear,
He whispers 'courage' in my ear.
For I am safe in everlasting arms,
And they will lead me home.

There is a hope that stands the test of time,
That lifts my eyes beyond the beckoning
grave,
To see the matchless beauty of a day divine
When I behold His face!
When sufferings cease and sorrows die,
And every longing satisfied.
Then joy unspeakable will flood my soul,
For I am truly home.

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Thankyou Music (Adm. by Capitol)*

Take a time to sit quietly.

A time of prayer

Lord, in a season when every heart should be happy but many are struggling with the heaviness of life, Jesus, we need your peace. When wondering about loss of jobs and worried about the forthcoming bills to be paid, give us peace. When wondering about drug prescription, give us peace. When worried about our children's education and challenges of Covid in schools, give us peace. When worried about the resettlement of the refugees, and the best ways to help, grant us wisdom in our mission engagement. When worried about the future of the work of God and our ministry, Lord give us a new vision and passion. When wondering

when conflict and terror will end and we will find a solution to climate change, Lord hear our prayer. As believers, help us to treat our roles in your Kingdom as crucial and not secondary. As the salt of the earth and its component that keeps it being salt, may we too be the salt and your light in sharing the message of your love. Now as you have promised in your holy word to give rest for the weary, peace for the anxious, and acceptance for the broken hearted, we know that peace on earth can only come when our hearts find peace with You. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father*

Listen to the worship song: *Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me of Glory* (by *CityAlight* :

<https://youtu.be/zundjUFazfg>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May the words we have heard and prayed and shared echo in our minds, stay in our hearts and re-shape our lives. May we know the Living Word of God with us now and always. **Amen**

Original Materials by Francis M'Itiiri

All

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