

*A new Church Year begins today. The four weeks of Advent (Latin adventus – coming) are about the coming of God’s Kingdom; God’s values and God’s ways into our world.*

*It is a season of hope in which we look forward to ‘the last day when Christ shall come again’ to establish that Kingdom on earth. We also look back to those who have figured in the unfolding story of God’s coming to rule his people in justice and peace.*

### **Greeting**

May the light and love of Christ be with you.

***And also with you.***

### **Opening Response for Advent**

May the light and love of Christ be with you.

***And also with you.***

As stars to the maker,  
***we are the work of God’s hands.***

As plants to the gardener,  
***we are the work of God’s hands.***

As clay to the potter,  
***we are the work of God’s hands.***



### **Lighting the First Candle on the Advent Wreath**

*The Advent wreath, or Advent crown, is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent in the liturgical calendar of the Western church. The Advent Wreath is traditionally a Lutheran practice, albeit it has spread to many other Christian denominations. It is usually a horizontal evergreen wreath with four candles and often, a fifth, white candle in the centre. Beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, the lighting of a candle can be accompanied by a Bible reading and prayers. An additional candle is lit during each subsequent week until, by the last Sunday before Christmas, all four candles are lit. Some Advent wreaths include a fifth, white "Christ" candle which can be lit at Christmas. The custom is observed both in family settings and at public church services.*

*The ring of the Advent wreath of evergreens decorated with candles was a symbol in northern Europe long before the arrival of Christianity. The circle symbolized the eternal cycle of the seasons while the evergreens and lighted candles signified the persistence of life in the midst of winter. Some sources suggest the wreath—now reinterpreted as a Christian symbol—was in common use in the Middle Ages, others that it was established in Germany as a Christian custom only in the 16th century.*

In this season of Advent, we are here to watch and wait and pray for the coming of the light into the world. We long for the day when the things of darkness - selfishness and greed, suffering and oppression - shall be no

more, and this year, we long for the day when the coronavirus, COVID-19, shall be no more.

The candles on our Advent Wreath will remind us of the story of how, through the years, through different people, and finally in Jesus Christ, God's Kingdom comes on earth.

The first candle is to remind us of the patriarchs (the leaders God sent before Jesus), and so today, we think of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and David who God called to be the founders and leaders of his people Israel.

***Blessed be God for ever.***

Abraham and Sarah were promised that, through their descendants, all the world would be blessed.

***Blessed be God for ever.***

Moses and David, good and faithful leaders of God's people, paved the way for a greater One to follow.

***Blessed be God for ever.***

*The first candle is lit.*

As we light this first candle, we celebrate the faith of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and David.

***Like them we put our faith in God who fulfilled his promises, by sending his Son Jesus Christ to be the Saviour and King of all. Amen.***

## Hymn - One Candle (Frère Jacques)

*[Repeat each line]*

One candle,  
burning slow.  
Advent weeks of waiting,  
four to go.

Mary's waiting,  
Joseph too.  
Waiting for the baby,  
coming soon.

## The Jesse Tree

*The Jesse Tree represents the family tree, or genealogy of Jesus Christ. It tells the story of God's salvation plan, beginning with creation and continuing through the Old Testament, to the coming of the Messiah. The name comes from Isaiah 11:1, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit."*

The Jesse Tree shows Jesus' family tree. Today, we are putting a dove for creation, an apple for Adam and Eve, a rainbow and ark for Noah, stars for Abraham, a ram for Isaac and a ladder for Jacob on the tree.



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## Hymn No. 135 (Veni Emmanuel)

*[Verses 1 - 4]*

1. O come, O come Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,

that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear:

*Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come to thee, O  
Israel.*

2. O come, thou Wisdom from above  
who ord'rest all things through thy  
love;

to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in her ways to go:

3. O come, O come, thou Lord of  
might,

who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,  
in ancient times didst give the law  
in cloud, and majesty, and awe:

4. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free  
thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell thy people save,  
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave:

### **A Penitential Liturgy for Advent**

We live in a world oppressed by sin, a  
world of hunger, pain, injustice.

*We acknowledge that we are part  
of this world*

*and have not always played our part  
in confronting the darkness and  
bringing the light of Christ to  
troubled places.*

We are part of the Body of Christ, a  
Body which is broken by the sin of its  
members.

*We recognize that we belong to the  
broken body of Christ,*

*that our lives are touched by the  
sin of others,  
and that our sin touches their lives.*

We are unique individuals created in  
the image and likeness of God.

*We confess that we do not live up  
to God's dream for us:*

*that where God says: 'Let there be  
light!'*,

*we fear to come out of the  
shadows;*

*where God says: 'You are the salt  
of the earth',*

*we rest content with blandness;*

*where God says: 'Before I formed  
you in the womb, I knew you',*

*we live estranged from him,*

*afraid of the power of God's love  
for us.*

We gather as people aware of the  
shadow that sin casts upon the world.

*[A time for silent reflection]*

*We celebrate as people who are  
healed by the tenderness and  
compassion of God;*

*who are blessed by God's power to  
dispel the darkness of our hearts  
and minds and souls;*

*who are loved, along with all of  
God's children, weak and vulnerable,  
today, and every day.*

*May God hold us in the palm of his  
hand. Amen.*

## The Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God,  
 give us grace to cast away the works  
 of darkness  
 and to put on the armour of light  
 now in the time of this mortal life  
 in which your Son Jesus Christ came  
 to us in great humility;  
 that on the last day  
 when he shall come again in his  
 glorious majesty  
 to judge the living and the dead,  
 we may rise to the life immortal;  
 through him who is alive and reigns  
 with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **The Ministry of the Word**

### The Reading - Mark 13: 24-37

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

26 Then they will see "the Son of Man  
 coming in clouds" with great power  
 and glory. 27 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.

28 '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. 29 So also, when  
 you see these things taking place, you  
 know that he is near, at the very  
 gates. 30 Truly I tell you, this  
 generation will not pass away until all  
 these things have taken place.  
 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but  
 my words will not pass away.  
 32 'But about that day or hour no one  
 knows, neither the angels in heaven,  
 nor the Son, but only the Father.  
 33 Beware, keep alert; for you do not  
 know when the time will come. 34 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. 35 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, 36 or else he may find you asleep  
 when he comes suddenly. 37 And what I  
 say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### Hymn - Advent is a Time of Waiting (Westminster Abbey) *Josie Smith*

Advent is a time of waiting  
 for the life that is to be.  
 When the Christ, by prophets  
 promised,  
 sits enthroned on Mary's knee,  
 human in the way that we are;  
 come to earth for you and me.

Choirs of angels are rehearsing,  
 'Glory to our God on high.'  
 Shepherds in the field are watching  
 where their bleating charges lie.  
 Distant magi, waiting, restless,  
 scan the dark mysterious sky.

Hope is all our theme for Advent,  
 hope for all the human race.  
 All our hope on God is founded,  
 God who shows a human face.  
 God who made the Earth and planets,  
 now appears in time and space.

## The Sermon

### The Response *Stand*

A Creed for Advent *by Cally Booker*

*We believe in God,  
 robed in splendour,  
 veiled in mystery,  
 ruler alike of darkness and light.*

*We encounter God in Jesus Christ,  
 who was tortured and put to death,  
 but whose radiance could not be  
 quenched;  
 whose touch brings a blaze of colour  
 to a dull, drab world:  
 reviving the weary,  
 healing the wounded,  
 dazzling the satisfied.*

*We walk with God,  
 guided by the light of God's loving  
 spirit,  
 who enters the shadowed places of  
 our hearts*

*and leads us into truth and life.*

*We wait for God,  
 and for the fulfilment of God's  
 promises,  
 for the time when the darkness will  
 hold no fear  
 and the light will no longer blind,  
 but creation will be made whole  
 once more  
 and God's peace will reign for ever.  
 Amen.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit who  
 loves us and lives in us, so that we  
 can give hope, love and life to  
 others.*

### Hymn No. 119 (Cross of 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.

### Advent Intercessions

As we begin a new year in the life of the Church, let us pray together.

When we pray that your kingdom might come, give us the enthusiasm and commitment to play our part...

O God, keep us awake to you:  
**and alive to your call.**

God, we see signs of hate, distrust and greed in our world, clearly, every day.

May we just as clearly see, the signs of hope, goodness, and kindness; loving service, encouragement, and thanksgiving...

O God, keep us awake to you:  
**and alive to your call.**

We bring to you those who are exhausted with ongoing pain and weakness,  
who are worn out with anxiety and worry,  
who are vulnerable and frail with illness or infirmity or age...

O God, keep us awake to you:  
**and alive to your call.**

We pray for all who have come to the end of their earthly life,  
and for those whose lives feel empty without them.

Give comfort to the bereaved, and eternal peace to all who rest in your love.

O God, keep us awake to you:  
**and alive to your call.**

Let us sum up our prayers and praises in the words which Christ has taught and say:

**Our Father...**

### Hymn No. 135 (Veni Emmanuel)

[Verses 5 - 8]

5. O come, thou key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery:

*Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

6. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight:

7. O come, Desire of Nations, bring  
all peoples to the Saviour King;  
thou Corner-stone, who makest one,  
complete in us thy work begun:

8. O come, O come Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear:

### The Blessing for Advent

We are looking for God in our world.  
**May we see what God wants us to see.**

We are looking for God in our lives.

*May we be who God wants us to be.*

And may God our Shepherd,  
Protector, Awakener, and Holy Spirit,  
bless us through these Advent days.

**Amen.**

### The Dismissal

Be brave, be honest,  
**be awake to integrity.**

Be strong, be gentle,  
**be awake to injustice.**

Be joyful, be humble,  
**be awake to holiness.**

Be steady, be hopeful,  
**be awake to love.**



## Advent Reflections by Zoom

**Tuesdays in Advent**

**20.00 hours**

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020**

This is a series on Christ in the time of strife through the memories of Mary. In these narratives, we will be looking at the Gospel stories of the Nativity in a different order.

The Zoom details are the same for each Tuesday.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86910597531?pwd=TTRsWnE1YnJlTHlvSEpwQU14OURuQT09>

Meeting ID: 869 1059 7531

Passcode: 471837

You can also join by phone:

Dial by your location

(01) 653 3897

Meeting ID: 869 1059 7531

Passcode: 471837

### **Plans for Christmas 2020**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7ba40-guidance-for-religious-services/>

The above is the link to the information that is available so far regarding religious services during Advent and Christmas 2020. There will be further information and clarification provided in the coming days.

Prior to the latest information from the government, both Select Vestries discussed the possible options for services. As further information comes to light, we will discuss matters and clarify them further.

The services next Sunday are:

#### **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

8.30 Holy Communion in St Thomas' Church

10.30 Holy Communion in St Philip and St James' Church (live-streamed)