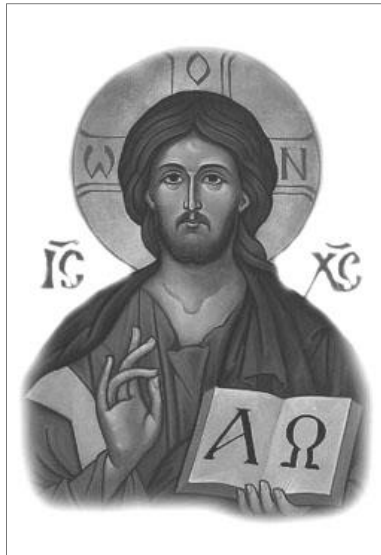


St Michael and All Angels, Sandhurst

ADVENT CELEBRATION



“Surely, I am coming soon!”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:20

ADVENT SUNDAY

1ST DECEMBER 2024

The Meaning of Advent

Tonight's service begins in darkness, with the candle-light representing the hope of salvation which grows with the promise of the coming of Christ, spoken of by the readings, hymns and anthems.

The word Advent comes from the Latin meaning "coming" or arrival". It is a time of preparation for Christmas, when we celebrate Christ's first coming in the Incarnation. But Advent is also a time to think about and prepare for Christ's Second Coming as Judge.

The Bible presents Christ's second coming as the answer to the longing of God's people for deliverance. Christians have seen this promise being revealed in many parts of the Bible, from the Garden of Eden (Genesis chapter 3), through God's promises to Abraham and the messages of the Old Testament prophets, to Gabriel's words to Mary (Luke 1:25f). The promise becomes focussed in the Messiah, the righteous king whom God would send to free his people from oppression and bring in the reign of universal peace.

Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God through his preaching and miraculous works, making it clear that God's promises would indeed be fulfilled in him. But for salvation – deliverance from sin and death – to be possible required his own suffering, death and resurrection. The fulfilment of the Kingdom, which Jesus inaugurated at his first coming, will take place at his second coming.

Advent calls us to look forward in hope the reign of suffering, fear and death will not continue for ever. Christ promises to return to judge the world – a day of reckoning for evil as well as reward for good. While the prospect of judgement is an awesome one, the promise that evil will be finally overcome fills us with hope and confidence to fight our own battles against evil, both in our own lives and in the wider world where wickedness and oppression still reign.

In the meantime, we are called both to wait in hope – a hope made tangible through the presence of the Holy Spirit within us – and to work to put the values of God's Kingdom into effect here and now. The season of Advent calls us to self-examination and action, so that when Christ comes we may be ready to greet him.

"All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure." (1 John 3:3)

Rev John Castle, Rector

The Choir begin the service by singing from the West End of the church the
Matin Responsory

Words: medieval Roman rite; music: Palestrina (c.1525-1594)

I look from afar:

and lo, I see the power of God coming and a cloud covering the whole earth.

Go ye out to meet him and say:

Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

High and low, rich and poor, one with another,

go ye out to meet him and say:

Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep,

Tell us, art thou he that should come?

Stir up thy strength, O Lord and come to reign over thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

Processional Hymn 358: O come, O come Emmanuel

Bidding

It is time for us to wake out of sleep, for deliverance is nearer to us now than it was when first we believed. It is far on in the night; day is near. Let us therefore cast off the deeds of darkness and put on our armour as soldiers of the light.

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

My brothers and sisters, we enter today the solemn season of Advent in which the Church bids us prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ; a coming that we recall in the Child of Bethlehem; a coming that we experience in the gift of his Spirit, in the bread of the eucharist, in the joy of human lives that are shared; a coming we wait for when God gathers up all things in Christ. Let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ who brings light to the world. Let us leave behind the darkness of sin, walk in the light that shines on our path, and renew within ourselves the hope of glory to which he beckons us.

And as we turn towards the light, let us have on our hearts all those who see no light, for whom all is darkness and despair. Let us pray that they too may be illumined by Christ who is our light.

The first candle of the Advent ring is lit.

The Collect for Advent Sunday

Penitential Litany

The response to Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
is **have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Priest

May God, who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour, forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom in the words our Saviour taught us.

**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.**

1st Reading: Romans 8:18-25 *The hope of all creation*

Choir *Let all mortal flesh keep silence*

*Words: Liturgy of St James (4th Century), trans. G Moultrie ;
music: Gustav Holst (1874-1834)*

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

At His feet the six-winged seraph,
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry:
Alleluia, Alleluia
Alleluia, Lord Most High!

Hymn *Long ago prophets knew*

Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew,
Come to make all things new;
Bear his people's burden,
Freely love and pardon.

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes, when he comes,
Who will make him welcome?*

God in time, God in man,
This is God's timeless plan:
He will come as a man.
Born himself of woman,
God divinely human.

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring! etc

Mary, Hail! Though afraid,
She believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid,
Till the time expected
Nurtured and protected.

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring! etc

Journey ends! Where afar
Beth'lem shines like a star,
Stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

*Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing choirs sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes! Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!*

*Words: Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000) ©1971 Stainer & Bell Ltd
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2nd Reading: Isaiah 11:1-9 *The Messiah's future reign of peace*

Choir ***Thou shalt know him when he comes***

Words and music: Mark Sirett

Thou shalt know him when he comes
Not by any din of drums,
Nor his manners nor his airs,
Not by anything he wears,
Thou shalt know him when he comes,
Not by his crown or by his gown,
But his coming known shall be,
by the holy harmony
which his coming makes in thee.

Hymn 98 Come, thou long-expected Jesus

3rd Reading: Luke 1:39-45 *Elizabeth and her baby rejoice at the arrival of the Mother of God*

Choir ***Magnificat***

Words: Luke 1:46-55; music: T Tertius Noble (setting in B minor)

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his hand maiden.
For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with His arm: he hath scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts;
He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and
meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel,
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Hymn 196 Hark! A herald voice is calling

4th Reading: 1 John 4:7-21 *The meaning of love*

Choir ***O thou the Central Orb***

Words by H.R Bramley (1833-1926); music by Charles Wood (1866-1926)

O Thou the central orb of righteous love,
Pure beam of the most high, eternal light
of this our wintry world, Thy radiance bright
awakes new joy in faith, hope soars above.

Come, quickly come, and let Thy glory shine,
Gilding our darksome heaven with rays Divine.

Thy saints with holy lustre round Thee move,
As stars about Thy throne, set in the height
of God's ordaining counsel, as Thy sight
gives measur'd grace to each, Thy power to prove.

Let Thy bright beams disperse the gloom of sin,
Our nature all shall feel eternal day,
In fellowship with Thee, transforming day
To souls erewhile unclean, now pure within. Amen.

Short sermon: Rev John Castle

Choir ***Jesus Christ the Apple Tree***

Words: Anon 18th Century; Music: Elizabeth Poston (1905-87)

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit, and always green:
the tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit, and always green:
the trees of nature fruitless be
compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel;
by faith I know, but ne'er can tell,
his beauty doth all things excel;
by faith I know, but ne'er can tell
the glory which I now can see
in Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
and pleasure dearly I have bought:
for happiness I long have sought,
and pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
'tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,
here I will sit and rest a while:
I'm weary with my former toil,
here I will sit and rest awhile:
under the shadow I will be,
of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
it keeps my dying faith alive;
this fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
it keeps my dying faith alive;
which makes my soul in haste to be
with Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Intercessions

Leader Lord, let your kingdom come
Response **Let your will be done**

Recessional Hymn 307: Lo! He comes with clouds descending

Blessing

*Choir: **The Vesper Responsory***

Music: adapted from Palestrina (c.1525-1594) by Philip Ledger

Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed.
Tomorrow go ye forth and the Lord, he will be with you.
Stand ye still, and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord,
Tomorrow go ye forth and the Lord, he will be with you.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost
Tomorrow go ye forth and the Lord, he will be with you.

Christmas services at St Michael's

You are most welcome to join us to celebrate Christmas.
Please pick up a card from the back of church, or visit
<https://www.stmichaels-sandhurst.org.uk/christmas>