

Sunday 1st December 2024: Advent Sunday

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.



Theme for today is “Advent hope”

Our call to worship: We come to worship the Lord who surrounds us, does good to us, invites us to trust and reminds us to follow scripture to lead the life destined for us.

Hymn: StF 169 H&P 81 Come, thou long expected Jesus

Prayers

We have not known you as we ought, nor learned Thy wisdom, grace and power;
The things of earth have filled our thought, and trifles of the passing hour:

Lord, give us light thy truth to see, and make us wise in knowing Thee

We have not feared Thee as we ought, nor bowed beneath Thine awful eye,
Nor guarded deed, and word, and thought, remembering that God was nigh:

Lord, give us faith to know Thee near, and grant the grace of holy fear.

We have not loved Thee as we ought, nor cared that we are loved by Thee;
Thy presence we have coldly sought, and feebly longed thy face to see;

Lord, give a pure and longing heart to feel and know the love Thou art.

We have not served Thee as we ought; alas the duties left undone,
The work with little fervour wrought, the battles lost or scarcely won!

Lord, give the zeal, and give the might, for Thee to toil, for Thee to fight.

When shall we know thee as we ought, and fear, and love, and serve aright?
When shall we out of trial brought, be perfect in the land of light?

Lord, may we day by day prepare to see Thy face and serve Thee there. AMEN

Eternal Father, whose son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord. Keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace. Bring the whole created order to worship at his feet, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The importance of advent:

A friend of ours in Yorkshire is pregnant and had her first scan yesterday, and by the end of the day, Karen and I were sitting in Norfolk looking at the image of the baby in the womb, amazing! I can take a picture on my mobile phone and see the image immediately, when I was a child, my mum would take pictures when we were on our holidays, then we would finish the film at home, take the roll down to the chemists in the village, wait a week and then pick up the finished product and relive our memories. We seem to have lost the need to wait, everything is instant, we want, we get.

I believe that Christmas is divided into three very distinct seasons, Advent is that time of waiting, preparing, longing, anticipating and is a season that should not be rushed, which makes the occasion all the more important and appreciated when it comes. Christmas (in my opinion) begins when the final till closes on Christmas Eve and I hold firm to the twelve days of Christmas, we tend to rush along in the world and even in our Christian calendar far too quickly, a good meal should be savoured and appreciated and Christmas is no different, this is the most significant birth in the history of humankind and I object to presenters on the telly announcing that Christmas is over on Boxing Day! Twelfth night marks the Epiphany and then we start to move on to the wise men and the importance of the message being for the whole world, not just the Jewish people.

Hymn: StF 177 H&P 241 Lo, he comes with clouds descending

Bible readings: Jeremiah 33: 14-16. 1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13. Luke 21: 25-36

A message from a Circuit Friend

‘Be on your guard’

A long time ago, one of my Church members was chatting with me at a coffee morning and he said, “I haven’t heard a sermon about the second coming for years, do you think that we’ve forgotten about it today?” I always see comments like that as a challenge and consequently I have never shied away about preaching about the second coming since then. Two thousand years have now passed and there are some people who say that Christ’s second

coming was when the Holy Spirit came upon the early Church, are they right? Some say that he might have come and that we are so busy being Church that we haven't recognised him, are they right? Or are we still waiting?

The prophecy of **Jeremiah** promises that God will raise up a mighty leader and our Bible studies remind us that the Jewish people eagerly awaited the promised Messiah. I always feel that it is sad that when God came in the form of an infant in the world and influence the world to the degree that two thousand years later a third of the population of the world would claim to be followers, yet the Jews saw him as threat to their very being.

In our gospel lesson Jesus is very clear in what he says, there will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars, there will be distress among the nations, and there is a dramatic scene of the universe being shaken and Jesus descending on a cloud, they way he had been taken up into heaven.

- Do we believe this?
- Has scientific proof rendered this untrue today?

Jesus warns "be on your guard" life must be lived in the eyes of Jesus as a preparation for the Day of the Lord.

Saint Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians reminds them of the importance of being prepare for the day when the people will see Jesus face to face and the world will be restored to God.

- Have you given up on the second coming?
- What do you think will happen when Christ comes again?
- Will you be ready when that happens?
- Or will you be so caught up in the business of life that you don't see what is before you?

From Rev Derek Grimshaw Circuit Superintendent.

Hymn: StF 228 H&P 125 Hail to the Lord's anointed

Prayers

Over all the earth, you reign on high, Every mountain stream, every sunset sky. But my one request, Lord, my only aim Is that you'd reign in me again. Lord, reign in me, reign in your power over all my dreams, in my darkest hour. You are the Lord of all I am, so won't you reign in me again? Over every thought, over every word, may my life reflect the beauty of my Lord; 'cause you mean more to me than any earthly thing, so won't you reign in me again? Lord, reign in me, reign in your power over all my dreams, in my darkest hour. You are the Lord of all I am, so won't you reign in me again? Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Jesus, Servant King, teach us we pray, to be your servants in the world, to hear and respond to the cry of the needy oppressed and forgotten. Teach us to be practical in our response to human need. Teach us to be very tender with those who are especially weak and vulnerable. We pray for this in the decision making of those in authority and in our own decision making. Help us to always make time for kindness and care. May we ever look to you our, Shepherd King. Almighty God, ruler of all, so, rule our hearts and lives that we might by your grace be found amongst those whose need is greatest. We pray this day for all who are suffering in body, mind and spirit. We pray for all who exercise authority in Church and State. We pray this day that we might ever look to Christ as our ultimate model of compassion, care and service. Amen.

Reflect for a moment on the people and situations that concern you today and offer them to God.

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 185 H&P 244 Sing we the King who is coming to reign

Closing blessing –

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be among you all, now and forever more.

The Blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and ever more. **Amen.**