

Churches Together in Kenilworth & District Advent Taizé Worship

Sunday 29 November, 6.30pm via Zoom and YouTube

Welcome by Jim Perryman

[introductory instructions about the video omitted]

Welcome to our Taizé service for this Advent Sunday. It's good to have you with us. We're going to begin our time together with the lighting of the Advent candle. Please join in the words in the bold type.

People of God awake!

The day is coming soon when we shall see God face to face.

Remember the ways and the works of God.

God calls us out of darkness to walk in the light of His coming.

We are God's children.

Lord, make us one as we walk with Christ today, and forever.

Amen.

Chant: The Lord is my light, my light and salvation; in Him I trust

Readings

[Val Whiteman:]

Romans 13:11: Now is the time to wake out of sleep. For now, our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

[Felicity Hawke:]

And verse 12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Meditation 1 (Being Ready)

[George Jones:]

Ready? Get set! Go! I wonder if like me you enjoy watching international athletics? If I have a bit more time on my hands, and indeed we could go out to these sort of things. I often went to watch live events, ideally top class internationals, but the number of times you would hear in the sprints those words I used, "Ready, get set, go!" And sometimes somebody wasn't ready and didn't go, left in the blocks, looking distraught. As Christians, we can't afford to get left in the blocks. Are we fit for the race? Is our mental attitude right? Is our preparation planned. Are we ready for the go? Yes, it's the end of times, as it always has been: the end of this time, and the beginning of another. A time urgency, of immediacy, of novel emergency. Don't imagine things will go on or revert to some way they've been. This is the day to make things a new beginning with yourself. And yet, not to make, but to be made. Begin the end here. Let yourself in. Let your sun, darken, your stars fall. Give yourselves up to God, who will say, in the darkness, "Let there be light!" Ready? get set! Amen.

Readings

[Val:]

Isaiah 52:9: Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people.

[Felicity:]

Psalms 24:7: Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted up, you everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Meditation 2 (Being Hopeful)

[Christine Flood:]

We've just heard, "Lift up your heads." Today we can be bowed down by our own concerns, not always seeing consequences of actions or a future, the pandemic and environmental issues, [as] examples. But God is familiar with cries of those who find faith hard because of sorrow and tragedies. Through Jesus, we can know He knows our situation. And He will be the source of our recovery. Don't we feel better talking to someone who's been through something we are? Real understanding and being watchful, hopeful is through looking after others, helping them look ahead with hope through His love given to us. It's not confined within the church, but reaches out beyond. As Jesus' resurrection shows, it is good that triumphs. We might like to have the last word. But Jesus is the first and last Word. In His love for all, we too, like advent calendars, can uncover signs for when God will keep His promise and gather up, like a harvest, every good thing we've ever done. God wants all of us to be saved. So let's raise our heads. We shall see our hope realised, our certain hope, that is Jesus. Amen.

Chant: Prepare the way of the Lord, and all people will see the salvation of our God.

[sung as a 'round']

[Silence]

Intercession with Chant Response Maranatha! Alleluia!

[Peter McManus:]

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid we pray to Jesus.
Come to your Church as Lord and judge.
Help us to live in the light of your coming
and give us a longing for your kingdom.
Maranatha!

[Keith Grierson:]

Come to your world as King of the nations.
Before you rulers will stand in silence.
Maranatha!

[Peter:]

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter.
Break into our lives,
where we struggle with sickness and distress,
and set us free to serve you for ever.
Maranatha!

[Keith:]

Come to us as shepherd and guardian of our souls.
Give us with all the faithful departed
a share in your victory over evil and death.
Maranatha!

[Peter:]

Come from heaven, Lord Jesus, with power and great glory.
Lift us up to meet you,
that with all your saints and angels
we may live and reign with you in your new creation.
Maranatha!

[Keith:]

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay;
give new courage to your people, who trust in your love.
By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom
on earth as in heaven,
where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.
Maranatha!

Chant: Wait for the Lord whose day is near

[While the chant is sung, a soloist sings words based on Isaiah 40,
Philippians 4 & Psalm 70, Isaiah 40 again, Psalm 38, Matthew 6 & 7:]

Prepare the way for the Lord.
Make a straight for God.
Prepare the way for the Lord.

Rejoice in the Lord always.
God is at hand.
Joy and gladness for all who seek the Lord.

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed.
All the earth will see the Lord.

I waited for the Lord.
God heard my cry.

Seek first the kingdom of God.
Seek and you shall find.

[Silence]

Readings

[Val Whiteman:]

Luke 31:36: Watch at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.

[Felicity Hawke:]

Luke 21:28: Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Meditation 3 (Being Confident)

[Alison Baxter:]

Advent is a time of being confident. We often say the word, 'Amen' at the end of a prayer, psalm, or hymn. It's a word that comes after, not before. It suggests a sense of completion. Everything that needs to be said, has been said. It's a word that brings closure. Yet, in Luke's gospel at least, this little word actually comes right at the beginning. In Luke's story of the Annunciation, the angel appears to Mary. She is told that she will bear a son, that He will be called Jesus, and that the Lord will give to Him the throne of his ancestor David. Then Mary says, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me, according to your word." In other words, Mary says to the angel, "Amen." She whispers words of wisdom, "Let it be." And this 'yes' is not an ending, it's a beginning. With this word, Mary signals the beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, and sings with joy of this Good News in the Magnificat.

Mary sees the reality and the truth of what God's salvation means. It leads to the transformation of our relationships, where wrongs are put right, where human beings are valued and loved unconditionally, where the hungry are fed, where the refugee is welcomed, where justice is restored. And it is because she sees all of this being worked out in the face of Jesus Christ, that Mary's 'Amen' is not just an end, but a beginning. When we utter the words 'Amen', we are, in the words of T.S. Eliot, making an end and at the same time a beginning. In uttering this word, we are beginning to acknowledge the reality of God's love and of God's grace to transform us into His likeness, to become the body of Christ. When we utter the word 'Amen', even in the face of the uncertainties we face, amidst all our fears and our anxieties, in the face of the current pandemic, in the face of all the brokenness and injustice of our world, we are beginning to echo Mary's courageous faith and her hope. Amen.

Chant: Jesu Christe, In te confide

[While the chant is sung, two soloists alternately sing words based on Psalm 25:]

To you O Lord, I lift up my soul: O God in you I trust.

In you I hope all day long: Your mercy and love and eternal.

Lead me in your truth and teach me O lord: For you are the God of my salvation.

Good and upright is the Lord our God: The Lord teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love, mercy and faithfulness

The Lord turns to me and shows me mercy: The Lord calms the troubles of my heart.

My eyes are turned toward the Lord: For the Lord frees my feet from the snare.

You hold me, Lord, by my right hand: Your presence never leaves me, Lord.

Who have I in heaven but you? On earth there is nothing I desire more than you.

My flesh and heart may fail: but you, my heart's rock, God forever.

Readings

[Felicity:] Isaiah 7:14: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

[Val:] Revelation 22:20: Our Lord says, 'Surely, I come quickly.' Even so; come, Lord Jesus.

Meditation 4 (Being Joyful)

[Jim:] Isaiah spoke of the coming of a special child. Although on one level, Isaiah's words related to a child who would be born within the royal family of his time, born as a sign to the king of Judah of the truth of God's words, the prophecy carried with it the promise of the coming Christ, not just with a symbolic name, telling that God is with us, but with the embodiment of that truth of his presence. As the birth of any child is normally a source of joy for all associated with the family, so the birth of Christ was and remains a source of joy for all who consider themselves to be part of the family of God. Immanuel, God is with us. Let us be joyful about that truth! He has been born, and is a sign to us of the truth of God's Word, and the faithfulness of God's promises. He will return at the right time to bring the fullness of joy to all his family on Earth. We trust in Him. Let us be joyful in Him, joyful in one another, joyful in ourselves. All the problems of this world are temporary; our joy is eternal.

Amen.

[Silence]

Closing Acclamation

With love and compassion,
come, Lord Jesus.

With judgement and mercy,
come, Lord Jesus.

In power and glory,
come, Lord Jesus.

In wisdom and truth,
come, Lord Jesus.

Chant: Our soul is waiting for God, our hearts find joy in the Lord

[While the chant is sung, two soloists sing alternately these words, based on Psalms 130, 52 16 and 118 and Isaiah 12, and also sing other words:]

My soul is waiting for the Lord; I count on God's word (Psalm 130)

I trust in the goodness of God; for ever and ever (Psalm 52)

Keep me O God, I take refuge in you (Psalm 16)

The Lord is my strength, my song, my salvation (Psalm 118, Exodus 15)

In God I trust, I'm not afraid (Isaiah 12)

[Meditations transcribed with the help of <https://otter.ai>]

[Bible passages are of mixed translations.]