

# twelvebaskets



## ADVENT SUNDAY C

A complete Sunday service ready to use  
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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**Advent Sunday - Year C**  
1st December 2024



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**165 STF – Advent candles tell their story OR**

**174 STF – Light a candle in a darkened place**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**169 STF – Come thou long-expected Jesus OR**

**185 STF – Sing we the King who is coming to reign**

Readings: Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

**Hymn:**

**170 STF – Darkness like a shroud covers the earth OR**

**177 STF – Lo, he comes with clouds descending**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**242 STF – A new commandment OR**

**507 STF – O for a heart to praise my God**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**550 STF – Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go OR**

**457 STF – Author of Faith**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on [www.theworshipcloud.com](http://www.theworshipcloud.com).

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## Call to worship

The season of waiting begins,  
The new lectionary year starts,  
The advent of Jesus' coming is upon us,  
And we gather, we turn aside from busy streets and shopping,  
From cooking and getting-ready,  
To worship at the manger-side.  
Come, by your Spirit, Lord Jesus

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

165 STF – Advent candles tell their story OR  
174 STF – Light a candle in a darkened place

## Opening Prayers

O come, all you faithful, the day is coming.  
Come, those who are in their own bleak midwinter or in dulci jubilo.

We come to worship the King who was born far away, in a manger, the meek and mild baby who brought peace on Earth and good will to all people.

Thank You, God, that in our waiting, we know you fulfil your promises of peace and joy to the world. We praise you for the gift of your son, who came, Emmanuel, to be God with us.

We confess to you, when we have flocked to the ways of the world, honouring our desires for gossip, money, recognition, or vengeance, instead of reflecting the light of your glory.

Heavenly Parent, we're sorry.

*[Pause]*

Thank you, that you have forgiven and accepted us, just as we are.

Today and as we journey through this Advent, open our hearts to you, Lord God. Renew, once again, our awe and wonder of the baby born in the little town of Bethlehem.

We come, with our adoration, to exalt you, to be enraptured once again by the baby born on the holy night, the first Noel.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## We say together the Lord's Prayer

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<sup>1</sup> Call to worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Phoebe Parkin

## All Age Talk

Today's all age talk was written by former Methodist Youth President James Carver. Let's listen to his words now...

Who here likes Christmas Presents?

I do. They're great. In fact when I was younger, I used to sit around the living room, with my Argos catalogue which was bigger than the Bible, just circling everything I wanted. From a small toy dog – to the very best and brightest in gaming paraphernalia – The DS Lite! (Yeah, I was that cool).

However, coming from a family on a limited income, sometimes I would be surprised to receive what was on the list and other times, I'd be slightly disappointed when I'd receive a substitution – unfortunately, I did not receive the DS Lite that time, instead receiving a Gameboy Advance. However, this disappointment did not last long, as I soon came to love the Gameboy and sat quite merrily on long journeys playing the games in between the streetlights that so inconsiderately came just slow enough for me to be defeated by the boss every time.

Similar to the Argos catalogues, are the prophecies of the coming of someone so great, that we cannot start to comprehend what was to be expected. Jesus. Some people had him as this mighty warrior. Some a teacher of a certain populace. And some as a Servant. Well, spoiler alert. Like me with my Gameboy Advance, they received all and nothing of what they asked for. Jesus was this great warrior, who decided to use words instead of violence. He was also a teacher, but for all. And finally, he was a servant, but he was also a great king.

As we go through the service today, I want you to pretend that you have never heard of Jesus. But there have been prophecies saying someone will come in the year 2024 to put all that's wrong with the world to rights. What will you be expecting?

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### Hymn:

169 STF – Come thou long-expected Jesus OR

185 STF – Sing we the King who is coming to reign

**Readings:** Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

### Hymn:

170 STF – Darkness like a shroud covers the earth OR

177 STF – Lo, he comes with clouds descending

### Reflections on the readings

And so it begins, Advent. The season of waiting, of preparation, of looking ahead to The Big Day – Christmas. Ticking off to-do lists (have you bought the turkey, where is all that wrapping paper you bought last year, how many mince pies do 14 people eat on Boxing Day?). ~~Of course,~~ there are the seasonal highlights too – watching the neighbourhood

<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by James Carver

slowly start glittering as more houses put up their lights, singing carols with rowdy delight, feeling the air crisp and fresh.

We do a lot of waiting in our lives. Sometimes it's in the supermarket queue or for the bus. Maybe some of us are waiting for hospital appointments or diagnoses. Some are waiting for the Christmas period, which can be a painful reminder of loneliness or loss, to simply be over. Many will be waiting to see where their next meal will come from. More globally, with 2024 having been the biggest year for democracy in human history, many citizens have been waiting with bated breath to see who will have the keys to their equivalent of Number 10 Downing Street. We all waited to see who would be sat behind the desk of the White House. Refugees from Gaza, The Sudan, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Ukraine, are all waiting to know when they can return home. Asylum seekers are waiting to know when they'll be granted safety, or waiting for the next attack on where they live. Pacific Islanders wait to see when their homes will be drowned.

Sometimes waiting has an end point. We wait for Advent, knowing that Christmas is just a few weeks away. We wait for the celebration of Christ's light coming into the world. Within the darkness of winter, it is this light which gives us hope, motivates our preparation, makes the waiting more bearable. But what happens when there is no end in sight? Waiting for when the missiles will stop dropping, waiting for when drought or flooding don't kill the harvest, waiting for when the ends do meet at the end of each month. So, in our Advent reflections, as we think about what it is to wait, to prepare, to anticipate, what does Advent mean 2024 years later?

### Sonder

One of my favourite words is "sonder". It is a noun, defined as "the realisation that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own - populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness - an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you'll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk."

I often experience sonder when I look up to watch a plane traveling overhead, wondering who is on board, where they're going, and why. Biblically, we know that each and every one of us is made in the image of God. God sees, understands, relates with each of us and the breadth and depth of our lives. At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God incarnate. Jesus, who had a life as complex as our own. We celebrate a baby, as in our first reading, born of David's line, because this baby not only represents humanity at its most innocent but because we know the life this baby went on to have. Jesus who understood what it is to be a refugee, what it is to witness the suffering of the sick and outcast, who suffered first-hand the depth of human cruelty. But before Jesus healed, listened, or comforted, he first saw the person who was before him. He saw humanity, not charity. The people who are living these crises are not defined by their suffering. We prepare to greet the baby who broke the divide between humanity and divinity, a baby whose gift of love is for all, who sees worth beyond need.

**Discussion / reflection points:** This Advent, how does our own ministry prioritise seeing humanity, and not charity? When have we failed to see the humanity of others in our church, community, nation, or world?

### Waiting vs. Preparation – active, not passive

In the Psalm, the author is crying out to God for help. But they don't ask for God to simply come and fix their problems, like a benevolent fairy godmother we might see at the

Christmas pantomime. Their prayer is for God's guidance, teaching, and instruction, all relational verbs. Advent is a season of preparation, not simply waiting for Jesus. It is a time for reflection, prayer, learning, opening ourselves up once again to the Spirit. We develop our relationship with God, a relational process.

To be witnesses to those at the edge of society, those who are marginalised, is not to rehash the antiquated framework of the passive poor, waiting for us to do charity unto them. It is to be in relation, to come alongside, to be equal members of the body of Christ. We celebrate the birth of Jesus because he embodies the relational nature of God, a God who came to be amongst us, and not simply do unto us.

**Reflection points:** how can we come alongside those who are waiting? How do we prioritise relationships over objectives? What does it look like to acknowledge the dignity and agency of the marginalised?

### Beyond Advent

Part of Advent is not just that we are waiting and preparing for the celebration of Jesus' coming as a baby 2000 years ago. It is a season of waiting and preparing in the knowledge that Jesus will come again. Our final passage reminds us that, just as God fulfilled the prophecies once, God will fulfil the promise that Jesus will return. Whilst Advent is a great opportunity to practise kindness and love to others, our faith doesn't call us to serve merely for a season, but as part of our wider Christian living, beyond Advent.

The light of the world is a hope and a message which withstands the test of time. We are called to be witnesses of this light beyond Advent, to work because we believe there is hope and that suffering will not endure. Although we may not be able to fix all of the world's ills, our faith calls us to reflect a little of God's light to a world in desperate need of hope. To refute the nihilistic rhetoric of the media, to see the worth of each and every person (including those who don't look or sound or behave like us), to turn over the tables in the face of injustice, and live out the gifts of the Spirit.

**Reflection Questions:** how can we implement the practices of Advent in our daily life and spirituality? What would it look like if we were preparing for the arrival of Jesus the whole year? What comforts you when you are in turmoil? How could you bring a little light to those who are waiting in your community?

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

242 STF – A new commandment OR

507 STF – O for a heart to praise my God

### **Prayers of intercession**

God of time, we think of people across the world, some just waking up now, some gathering for dinner, some deep in slumber. Thank you for watching over each of us, in the business of our days, wherever we are in your good creation. We pray for those who feel like time has stopped in grief, suffering, or fear. May they know your boundless love, which is constant today, yesterday, and tomorrow.

God of healing, we think of those who are awaiting diagnoses, treatment, or are recovering. In particular, we pray for those whom a cure isn't possible or who cannot access treatment. Thank you for medical staff, emergency services and aid workers. We pray for the places

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Phoebe Parkin

where hospitals are not a place of sanctuary or safety. We also think of the healing that is needed where there is conflict and oppression. May your peace bring out our humanity and lay down weapons.

God of patience, grant us the grace to wait in the uncertainty. We pray for those who do not know what tomorrow will bring or those who are awaiting news. We think of those in power, navigating peace deals, budget decisions, and everything in between. May they have the patience to listen, the grace to forgive, and a heart for justice to build a better world. Give them the wisdom to free the oppressed, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and protect the vulnerable.

God of hope, in the darkest corners of your creation, may your presence be known. Where there is weeping, may You bring dancing, where there is sorrow bring joy, and where there is apathy bring faith. Turn battlefields into bridges and give us the strength to pursue justice, not revenge.

God of compassion, God of love, God of all. Thank you that you hold all of this, all of us, and you do not abandon us. As we watch and wait for you, open our eyes and hearts to what Christmas means this year, where you are calling us, and the kingdom you are building.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

### **We will now take up the offering.**

Lord, in this season of gift-giving, we have received so much.

This day, help us to be thankful, and help us to use our gifts – including the gifts of money we have donated to this church today – for the building of a world where all are safe, all are welcome, and there is peace on earth.

We bring these, and all our prayers, in the name of Jesus,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

### **Hymn:**

550 STF – Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go OR

457 STF – Author of Faith

### **Blessing**

Let us go forth, in the name of the one who loves us,  
By the grace of the one who came to live amongst us and makes himself known to us,  
even today,

And by the power of the Spirit – God with us.

Let us go forth, an Advent people.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Phoebe Parkin

<sup>6</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker