

## Scallop service for the web - 29th November

Words of hymns subject to copyright may not be reproduced instead we have referenced hymn books\* and supplied links to YouTube videos.

\* *MHON: Methodist Hymns Old & New; StF: Singing the Faith*

*The references in italics can be copied and pasted into your browser so that you can listen or join in with the music if you wish to do so.*

*If you wish to join with others for the service at 10:30 on Sunday morning please contact [marian.blyth@btinternet.com](mailto:marian.blyth@btinternet.com)*

This service has been prepared by Mr Graham Follett

### Call to worship

O people of God, let us draw near to God.

O people who sometimes do not listen, let us listen to God's name and be renewed by the 'Name Above All Names', the name of our maker, who made us, and who shapes us to be vessels of light in waiting times.

Come, let us worship.

Let us worship the 'Name Above All Names'.

**Amen.**

our first hymn is **Here I am to Worship** (StF175)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKQ3ZIFLSF4>

### Let us pray

#### A prayer of adoration

God, your name is Love, and in your great love you have called us into community with each other.

With you, in you, because of you, we are nurtured in love.

Yours is the name that lasts for ever.

Your love reaches into all corners, confirming those who wait for you – that they wait in the name of your great love.

**Amen.**

### A prayer of confession

We have turned our face from you, O God,  
whose face is always turned towards us.  
We have forsaken what we know is just.  
We have ignored what we understand is true.  
We have refused to believe what should be believed.  
We have deceived ourselves in word and deed.  
For this, we humbly repent,  
and we turn our face towards you –  
who waits for us, and makes us ever new.  
Make us ever new now, O restoring God.  
**Amen.**

### **The Reading this morning is: Isaiah 11. 1 – 4**

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—  
and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.  
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,  
or decide by what he hears with his ears;  
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,  
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

Or second hymn is **O come O come, Emmanuel** (MHON 546; StF 180)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xtpJ4Q\\_Q-4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xtpJ4Q_Q-4)

### **Reflection on Advent**

Throughout this unusual year we've all probably tried to make preparations of one sort or another: for birthdays, for holidays, for exams! But the uncertainty of the year has scuppered most of our plans.  
We're not used to uncertainty. If our weather app predicts sun and we get rain, we're annoyed. If the internet cuts out in the middle of a Zoom meeting, we're stressed. In sport they resort to video coverage to determine infringements. In our lives hitherto, we'd got used to knowing what is happening, to making firm plans. And yet for most of human history people had to live with

uncertainty and many of the Bible readings we hear during the season of Advent remind us of this.

The Advent readings from the Old Testament were written by prophets who lived hundreds of years before Jesus, in times of great uncertainty and instability caused by conflict, oppression, famine and, like now, in a times of disease.

For the prophets who lived in these times, things were different. Even when the world wobbled around them, their faith in God provided stability and hope. The prophets listened out for God's voice and when they heard God speak of his love for the world and all its peoples, they became messengers to guide and console others. They reminded the people that, although God may not **prevent** disasters, he will never fail to see us through them.

In that well known Advent reading (see above - Isaiah 11:1-4 ) the prophet Isaiah explains what this would look like in his prediction of a saviour sent by God to lead us.

Since the days of Isaiah there have been others who although surrounded by fear and uncertainty, have seen evidence of God's healing presence in the world. They've communicated God's message of hope and peace to others.

One such person is someone you've probably never heard of. Dr Tamura-Snider. She was ten when the first atomic bomb was dropped on her home city of Hiroshima, in August 1945, killing about 75,000 people outright and obliterating large parts of the city. Amazingly she survived – along with the stumps of several ancient trees.

The scientists who had created the atomic bomb predicted that after the blast nothing would grow in Hiroshima for around 75 years. But six months later, during the spring of 1946, new shoots appeared from the ancient tree stumps. Watching nature return to life helped Dr Tamura return to life too. She'd experienced great trauma and the loss of her parents. But in time her hope grew, so in 2015, she began taking shoots from those few surviving Hiroshima trees, tending them until they grew strong, then sending the saplings around the world so that new Hiroshima trees could grow – as symbols of hope and healing.

Even amid uncertainty, Dr Tamura and Isaiah show us how to prepare for a better future. So far Dr Tamura has planted 35 Peace Trees and spoken around the world about our need to live as one human family.

For Isaiah, the shoot he chose to give attention to signified the birth of Jesus – the stump of Jesse referring to the ancient family from which Jesus was descended. This birth fulfilled a promise God made long ago – that whatever was going on in our lives, God would never leave us. God loves us so much that he became one of us – working alongside us to build a better future – something we can all prepare for, regardless of the uncertainties around us.

So I am proposing a task for us all.

Between now and Christmas, look out for signs of God's constant presence in our life and in our world: in nature; in the smile of a relative; in the kindness of strangers.

Listen out for God's voice in the

encouraging words of a friend; in the lyrics of an inspirational song; in scripture or prayer.

Then communicate the hope these give:

Be missionaries of God's love and share that hope with others.

Do something good with it. Believe you can make a difference.

Help someone who needs a hand.

Pray for those who are out of reach. Share what you can.

Plant a tree!

Or support poor communities around the world to plant trees: all trees represent hope, so you plant hope.

With these thoughts in mind, I'm going to close this reflection with an Advent prayer:

*God of hope, who brought love into this world, be the love that dwells between us.*

*God of hope, who brought peace into this world, be the peace that dwells between us.*

*God of hope, who brought joy into this world, be the joy that dwells between us.*

*God of hope, the rock we stand on, be the foundation of our lives.*

*Amen*

## **Our Prayers of intercession**

(with thanks to Ian Farthing at St Mark's Brickhill on which these are based)

Lord as we come before you today on this First Sunday of Advent we ask you to prepare us for your coming, you promised through your son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith and we bring before you today the needs of the Church and the world

### Lord prepare us for your coming – in the church

We pray for your church today, gathering all around the world in tiny chapels and great cathedrals, in tiny cottages and mud huts and great mansions to praise you and to hear your holy word. Give us a sense of expectation as we come and inspiration as we go.

Help us to put our differences behind us and to unite instead behind the great commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations and all people.

We pray for your blessing on all those who minister to your word as they seek to do your will and guide us through our spiritual and worldly journeys.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

### Lord prepare us for you coming- in the world

Drive away despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice and truth, restore our passion for what is good and right.

Establish your just and gentle rule in Egypt, Syria, Afghanistan, The Yemen,

and other areas of the world where there is conflict and where peace has been powerless and violent people have had their day.

We ask you to govern the hearts and minds of those who lead our nations and for those in authority that they may act justly, with honesty and integrity according to your will.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord prepare us for your coming- in our own community

In our daily life, help us never to forget the supremacy of love. May love motivate our care for our neighbourhoods, may love heal the social ills which sometimes drag us into despair.

May love inspire our citizenship to rise beyond mediocrity, and may we always remember that we are members one of another and that we can never live to ourselves alone.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord prepare us for you're coming - in those in need

On this day we pray for the homeless, the refugees, those families forced into women's refuges, the expelled and forgotten people everywhere, and for those who work to care for them and improve their circumstances.

May they know that your guiding hand is with them in their daily work and tireless endeavours.

We ask you to help us all to use our gifts and our talents to the greater good of all, challenge us to drive away complacency and apathy when we know in our hearts that we can do more to help and sustain those in need.

We pray for others for whom this day will seem long and hard, for those in hospital or ill at home, those struggling with despair or depression, those seeking work, and for those for whom this day will be their last.

And we especially pray for those who have contracted Covid 19, or having to change their lives because of the pandemic, and especially those caring for them. Comfort and heal all who suffer, give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

You turn our darkness into light, so help us to bring that light to all your people.

Merciful father accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

**We say the Lord's Prayer**

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

our 3rd hymn is **There's a light upon the mountain** (MHON 725; StF 188)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuvbW7gVwal>

As we leave this gathering today, Advent Lord come even nearer.  
Come to rejuvenate our faith, come to fortify our social conscience, come to  
widen our eyes of wonder, so that when the Saviour comes he may steal into our  
hearts and find them ready. AMEN

We conclude our service in our usual manner by saying The Grace to one  
another

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with each one of us now and for evermore, AMEN