



## Heacham Parish Church



### **5<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – 2nd Sunday of Advent**

This is Heacham Parish Church on-line. You join us for our Service of Worship for the 2nd Sunday of Advent. Although we join this at various times, from various places and in various ways we come together as one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

As we begin a new year, not knowing in so many ways what it will hold for us, there is comfort to be found when we pause to read, pray, and reflect over the course of the Advent season – the time when we eagerly anticipate the celebration of Christ's birth.

This second Sunday of Advent gives us the opportunity to prepare our hearts in faithful waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus and make ourselves ready for his second coming. Today we read, pray, and reflect on the hope that God's plan, which was foretold by the prophets and fulfilled by the life and death of Jesus Christ, gives to each one of us.

In Church, we light the second purple candle of our Advent wreath that is a symbol of faith.

Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
the prophets said you would bring peace  
and save your people in trouble.  
Give peace in our hearts at Christmas  
and show all the world God's love.

**Amen.**

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you.

**and also with you.**

The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

**Let us rejoice and shout for joy, giving God the glory.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

**as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.**

**Amen.**

We meet in the presence of God

**who knows our needs, hears our cries,**

**feels our pain, and heals our wounds.**

Lord, speak to us

**that we may hear your word.**

Move among us

**that we may behold your glory.**

Receive our prayers

**that we may learn to trust you.**

**Amen.**

Hymn: **Hail to the Lord's Anointed (MP 204)**

Hail to the Lord's anointed,

great David's greater Son!

Hail, in the time appointed,

His reign on earth begun!

He comes to break oppression,

to set the captive free,

to take away transgression,

and rule in equity.

He comes with succour speedy

to those who suffer wrong;

to help the poor and needy,

and bid the weak be strong;

to give them songs for sighing,

their darkness turn to light,

whose souls, condemned and dying,

were precious in His sight.

He shall come down like showers  
upon the fruitful earth;  
Love, joy, and hope, like flowers,  
spring in His path to birth:  
before Him, on the mountains,  
shall peace the herald go,  
and righteousness in fountains  
from hill to valley flow.

Kings shall fall down before Him,  
and gold and incense bring;  
all nations shall adore Him,  
His praise all people sing;  
to Him shall prayer unceasing  
and daily vows ascend;  
His kingdom still increasing,  
A kingdom without end.

O'er evert foe victorious,  
He on His throne shall rest;  
from age to age more glorious,  
all-blessing and all-blest.  
The tide of time shall never  
His covenant remove;  
His name shall stand for ever,  
His changeless name of Love.

### **Prayer of penitence**

When the Lord comes,  
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

**Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God.  
Amen.**

May the God of love and power  
forgive us and free us from our sins,  
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,  
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Bible reading** – Luke 3:1-6 read by Lynn

**A reflection** – by Veronica

John, in his sermon last week talked about being ready for Jesus to come, I want to build on that this week thinking about how we can prepare and be ready, focussing on our well-known gospel reading from Luke's gospel and looking at our new diocesan vision:  
Transformed by Christ: prayerful, pastoral, prophetic.

In the Bible reading we read of John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus, going round preaching a baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins, preparing people to welcome Jesus, and be transformed by Christ.

With those wonderful words of prophecy from Isaiah:

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become smooth. And all people will see God's salvation.'

So, John's challenge to us last week was, are we ready? Mine this week is how do we prepare for the Lord? How this Advent and beyond can we prepare and be ready for all that God has in store for us? How can we this Advent and beyond make space to feel, hear and listen to God so that we can be transformed by Christ?

How can we be like John the Baptist? How can we make straight paths for the Lord? How can we fill in the valleys and make the mountains and hills low? How can we make the crooked roads smooth? So that we are all people will see God salvation and be transformed by Christ?

It seems to me the best way we can do this is by prayer, prayer in its fullest, richest, and simplest form.

This is where we turn now to our new diocesan vision: Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, pastoral, prophetic.

Bishop Graham has sent an Advent Letter asking it to be read in all churches in the Diocese of Norwich during Advent (letter attached for those not in church or follow this follow this link to watch Bishop Graham [New resources for the Diocesan Vision and Advent - YouTube](#))

Let us as a church and as individuals open this gift, and journey into deeper prayerfulness, let's open ourselves afresh to God, so we may be transformed.

If you have not yet looked at it the Diocesan digital advent calendar is fab. - do sign up [www.DofN.org/advent](http://www.DofN.org/advent). It pops into your inbox at 5.59 each morning (for me just as I am making my 1<sup>st</sup> cup of tea

of the day!) and has a short reflection from someone in our diocese about a way they pray, with an idea for prayer that day - so far it's been silence (listening to God), exercise (praying as you walk or run), Garden (focusing on God creation), daily Office (using liturgy), and it's only day 4 as I write this.

There are many, many, different ways to pray, 1000's of books about prayer, 100's of apps you can download, more prayer diaries and lists than days of the year. How we pray changes with our circumstances, and I find that I have seasons of prayer. For me, the last few months have been a very tough season, so much of my prayer has been being held by God's hand when words were impossible to articulate. In other seasons prayer takes different forms for me.

Whatever season you are in, I encourage you this (liturgical!) year to deepen your prayer life, to try something new, to open your heart out to God, to be brave, and talk to each other about what helps you to pray... but most importantly let us simply 'just do it!' and pray.

Going back to our Gospel reading, by prayer we can prepare the way for the Lord, make the paths straight, fill the valleys and smooth the crooked roads, we can be ready to be transformed by Christ.

We are going to affirm our commitment to prayer and transformation this Advent and beyond, by singing together a new diocesan vision hymn, using the words as a prayer.

### Hymn: **Vision Hymn**

Transform, O Christ, your people assembled in this place;  
our longing to be prayerful is gathering depth and pace:  
just as those first disciples, we too make our request –  
'Teach us to pray, Lord Jesus, and lead us on our quest.'

We glimpse you in the gospels before the break of day,  
alone there in the shadows and making time to pray:  
inspired by your example, give us the grace to dare  
to deepen our discipleship through deepening times of prayer.

Who knows how this will change us? What challenges await?  
Who knows where prayer might lead us? What love might come  
from hate?

So, light the fire within us, stir us afresh to pray;  
we're frail but long for faithfulness: transform us, Christ, today!

We long for peace and plenty where all we see is war;  
we long to feed the hungry, to change the global law  
which keeps the poor from thriving and elevates the rich;  
we long for holy justice: teach us to pray for this.

We long to heal the forests, protect the suffering seas,  
to halt the melting ice-caps, increase the hum of bees;  
we know our need for wisdom (so close to the abyss),  
for unity, humility: teach us to pray for this.

Transform, O Christ, your people assembled in this place,  
attune us to your presence, still us in your embrace:  
then grace us as we listen, hearts opening until,  
with boldness and with vision, we're nerved to do your will.

### **Affirmation of faith**

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen**

**Prayers of Intercession** - Led by Penny T

Heavenly Father

Thank you for bringing us to another New Church Year. As we make our intercessions for others help us to be more upward and outward looking. At this time of waiting for Jesus Christ Emmanuel give us the vision to look to you. Help us to make time to spend with you and experience the wonderful perspective only you are able to give us. And as we look to you make us mindful of the needs of others. Help us too to use our resources be they time or resources to bring you glory.

Lord in your Mercy... Hear our prayer

Lord Jesus as you prayed for others, help us to pray for the world. At this time, we bring before you the places and people who are in most need. Not just those who have made headlines but those who continue after years of war, climate degradation, and natural disasters.....We remember especially those who are suffering as a result of Covid and not having access to any vaccinations.

Lord in Your Mercy... Hear our prayer

Lord Jesus as our shepherd, help us to be more like you, being more far-seeing and stretching out your love to those around us. Looking out for others in our community, supporting others, and offering ourselves to be more vulnerable and available for you to use. We pray at this time for those suffering long illnesses, life limiting conditions, and all those who care for them. Protect and

give strength to all who are caring in paid or unpaid positions. We also pray for our local hospice and those who work with the dying.

Lord in your mercy... Hear our prayer.

Father God who spoke through your prophets long ago and continue to speak through your Bible remind us how we can come closer to you through reading the Bible. Inspire and transform us we pray through your Holy lifegiving Spirit.

And as we draw our prayers together let us pray the Covenant prayer together:

**I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to prayer. Put me to deepening my life with you by deepening my life of prayer. Put me to the faithful setting aside of time; put me to listening; put me to wonder; put me to holding a broken world in your love; put me to trusting. I willingly expect to be changed by prayer: I freely and wholeheartedly yield to being transformed by Christ. Let me be changed by you and so change the world for you. Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And this covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **Collect for today**

Almighty God,  
purify our hearts and minds,  
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as  
judge and saviour  
we may be ready to receive him,  
who is our Lord and our God.

Hymn: **Great is the darkness (MP835)**

Great is the darkness  
that covers the earth,  
oppression, injustice and pain.  
Nations are slipping in hopeless despair,  
though many have come in Your name,  
watching while sanity dies,  
touched by the madness and lies.

*Come, Lord Jesus,  
come, Lord Jesus,  
pour out Your Spirit, we pray.  
Come, Lord Jesus,  
come, Lord Jesus,  
pour out Your Spirit on us today.*

May now Your Church rise  
with power and love,  
this glorious gospel proclaim.  
In every nation salvation will come  
to those who believe in Your name.  
Help us bring light to the world,  
that we might speed Your return.

*Come, Lord Jesus.....*

Great celebrations on that final day,  
when out of the heavens You come.  
Darkness will vanish, all sorrow will end,  
and rulers will bow at Your throne.  
Our great commission complete,  
then face to face we shall meet.

*Come, Lord Jesus.....*

### **Closing prayers**

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

**The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

The Lord is the strength of my life.

**The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit.

**The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

Restore us, Lord God of hosts.

**Turn the light of your face to us and save us.**

Will you not give us life again,

**that your people may rejoice in you?**

Show us your mercy, O Lord,

**and grant us your salvation.**

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

**Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.**

Lord our God, on the first day of creation

you made the light that scatters the darkness.

Let Christ, the light of lights, hidden from all eternity,

shine at last on your people

and free us from the darkness of sin.

Fill our lives with joy

as we go out to welcome your Son at his coming.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,

make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

**Amen.**

May God the Son, coming among us in power,

reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

**Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,  
joyful in hope and constant in love.

**Amen**

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son & Holy Spirit be  
among us and remain with us always.

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Church Contact:

Rev. Veronica Wilson tel. 01485 570697

Or email: [heacham.vicar@gmail.com](mailto:heacham.vicar@gmail.com)

Rev. Dan Tansey tel. 01553 390615/07928825060

Or email: [dan@churchinthewoottons.net](mailto:dan@churchinthewoottons.net)

Church Office tel. 01485 572539 (answerphone)

Or email: [heacham.church@gmail.com](mailto:heacham.church@gmail.com)

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