

# All Saints' Church Thornton Hough



**Service for Advent Sunday**  
29<sup>th</sup> November 2020

## **The Greeting**

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, when the Church prepares to celebrate the coming of Christ on earth as a human being, and also anticipates Jesus' coming again as Lord and judge at the end of time. Our Advent prayer is summed up in one Greek word: 'Maranatha!': "Our Lord, come!"

We light a candle as a reminder that even in the darkest time of the year, the Light of the world is with us and cannot be extinguished.

## **A prayer at the lighting the candle**

People of God: awake!  
The day is coming soon  
when you shall see God face to face.  
Remember the ways and the works of God.  
God calls you out of darkness  
to walk in the light of his coming.  
You are God's children.  
Lord, make us one as we walk with Christ  
today and for ever.

***Amen.***

## **Prayers of penitence**

Heavenly Father,  
you have created a universe of light:  
forgive us when we return to darkness.  
Lord, have mercy.

***Lord, have mercy.***

Lord Jesus,  
you are the light of the world:  
cleanse and heal our blinded sight.  
Christ, have mercy.

***Christ, have mercy.***

Holy Spirit,  
you give us light in our hearts:  
renew us in faith and love.  
Lord, have mercy.

***Lord, have mercy.***

Almighty God,  
who in Jesus Christ has given us  
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,  
forgive us our sins,  
open our eyes to God's truth,  
strengthen us to do God's will  
and give us the joy of his kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Hymn: Longing for light, we wait in darkness**

- 1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.  
Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people,  
light for the world to see.  
*Christ, be our light!*  
*Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.*  
*Christ, be our light!*  
*Shine in your church gathered today.*
- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.  
Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone has power to save us.  
Make us your living voice.
- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry.  
Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.
- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.
- 5 Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957)

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## **Reading: Mark 13: 24-37**

‘But in those days, following that distress,  
“the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light;  
the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

‘At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

‘Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: as soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

‘But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

‘Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!”’

## **Reflection**

There is something captivating about candle flames. They invite you in, to look carefully. Not to rush, but to be patient, to look and to let go of all of all the cares you might have around you; to simply be caught up in watching, in waiting.

That is what we are called to do in this period of Advent. We are waiting for the Lord’s coming.

This waiting is not simply “hanging around”, getting impatient, imagining all sorts of disasters, or imagining that possibly all this waiting is for nothing.

No, waiting is the ultimate watchfulness. Waiting is costly; it demands our time, our attention, our very selves. But this period of waiting is also hopeful. Hopeful because just as the seasons turn through the year, so we have a deep hope that our waiting is not in vain.

It is joyful, because it takes us away from all the distractions of the world that might drag us astray. It makes us more observant, and in so doing we are joining with so many Christians through the ages who have watched, waited and observed. So we are called to do the same thing; to focus our energies on waiting for God, looking for those small movements, being drawn to that flame of love and grace.

So this Advent, let us take time to watch, take time to wait and let God in.

### **The Collect for Advent Sunday**

Almighty God,  
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
and to put on the armour of light,  
now in the time of this mortal life,  
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;  
that on the last day,  
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty  
to judge the living and the dead,  
we may rise to the life immortal;  
through him who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

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

We pray together with confidence as Jesus taught us:  
***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.***

## Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here,  
until the Son of God appear:  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*
- 2 O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free  
thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell thy people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave:  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*
- 4 O come, thou Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery:  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*
- 5 O come, O come, thou Lord of Might,  
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,  
in ancient times didst give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe:  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

**John Mason Neale (1818–1866)\***  
translated from Latin Advent Antiphons  
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