



Worship at Home—29th November 2020

First Sunday in Advent

Worship Leader **Grant Gordon**
Scripture Reader **Helen Galway**

Good morning and welcome to our worship wherever you may be joining us from, whether that be Currie or somewhere in Edinburgh, Scotland or anywhere in the world. You are indeed welcome. On this the first Sunday in Advent I am delighted that Suzanne and Jennifer will be joining us for the lighting of the Candle of Hope on our Advent Wreath. But let us first come together in our Call to Worship.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Today is the beginning of Advent, the celebration of God's coming to us in Christ Jesus. Advent offers us another way to see our world, to become aware of the presence of God's rule all around us, to acknowledge once again that God is in charge of history. So let us worship God, who calls us out of the darkness into his marvellous light

Lighting of First Advent Candle, The Candle of Hope

Let us Pray: Lord as we look to the birth of Jesus, may the light of your love for us help us to become lights in the lives of those around us. Prepare our hearts for the joy and gladness of your coming, for Jesus is our hope. Amen.



HYMN—*Make way, make way, for Christ the King*—CH4 279—words on separate sheet.

Prayer of Approach, Confession and Thanksgiving

Creator God, this is the earth's quiet season, the season of waiting, the season of Advent when we turn our hearts and minds towards the light that broke into the world's darkness, the light that has changed everything. It is the time of watching, waiting and praying, a time when a familiar flame is ignited, the flame of hope.

Heavenly Father, as we draw near to you in this time of on-line worship we remember and praise you that the soles of your feet touched this ground when you came among us over 2000 years ago. And so we praise you again for this season of Advent, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, coming for outcasts, coming to confound the proud, coming to surprise with joy those who are sad. Open our hearts to all that you would say now, and help us to listen.

Lord God, your eyes are open day and night watching over us; your ears are always ready to listen to our prayers. And so we come to you now asking you to forgive our wandering ways as we so easily lose sight of the message of Advent. We look at ourselves and regret our shortcomings. Forgive us when our pride and ego rise up, help us instead to model our lives after the humble example of Christ. Forgive us too for all the things we do and say that are somewhat less than glorious, we're sorry. For the thoughts that paint gloomy pictures when, in front of us is a canvas of light and wonder, we're sorry. Lord, lift us out of preoccupations with our own needs and help us to see you with eyes of faith, to hear what you would say to us.

And so today, meet with us through this time of worship, through your living Word, through the fellowship we share and through the risen Christ. Hear these our prayers, which we bring in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

READINGS from Isaiah 64: selected verses from 1 to 9 and Mark 13: selected verses from 24 to 37 read by Helen Galway—see separate sheet.

WHAT ARE WE WAITING, WATCHING AND HOPING FOR?

Let us Pray: Breathe on us, O God, that we may be filled with your Spirit and led by your living word. Bless the words of my lips and the meditations of all our hearts. We ask this in your name. Amen.

The clocks changed last month, and now the days are often dark and wet, the trees are almost bare, geese frequently fill our skies as they migrate south to warmer climes, the heating is on and all around says winter. And in these shorter days and longer nights we spend much of our time just waiting and hoping.

Waiting for a letter or a telephone call;
Waiting in the cold for the bus;
Waiting for the results of medical tests, perhaps fearing the worst;
Waiting for another Christmas which for many will be unlike any before;
Waiting and hoping for Covid 19 to be finally defeated so that we can see our family and friends again without any restrictions.

And in this waiting and hoping sometimes we find ourselves yearning for the past, for the good old days, when all the newspapers had 'good news' and there were very few reports of murders and robberies and corruption in politics. And we respected our politicians, and they deserved that respect! And then there were the times when students respected teachers and children respected parents. Oh, and do you remember the days of full churches, when all families came, all the members of all the families, children and the teenagers! And oh, oh the singing! However, many people would say that, while the good old days had some positives to commend them, the world has moved on and, in general, these sentiments represent a false nostalgia and that instead there are many positive new and exciting opportunities just waiting for us to grasp.

Be that as it may, despite the myriad of tensions with which we must live, and perhaps because of these tensions, we come again to hear God's promises and to commit ourselves to them. We commit ourselves to the belief that God's power will be revealed in God's own ways and in God's

own time. We come to commit ourselves and our lives to the ways of God as revealed in that first Advent for which we hope, the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

The season of Advent looks back to a time when people of faith yearned for a Saviour; a time of hope in the midst of hopelessness. Like the prophet who penned the passage from the book of Isaiah, we too cry out to God to come down, to fix the problems, to make the world a better place, to let everyone know “who is boss”. We hope for that which is “too good to be true”, a new and unique expression of God’s promise to save a world that has ‘gone wrong’.

In Advent we also celebrate fresh beginnings. We celebrate the grace of a God who does not give us what we deserve, but instead acts in love and grace. Much like a loving parent will try over and over to show love and compassion to both a faithful and a wayward child. The image used in this passage from Isaiah is that of a potter, fashioning and refashioning the vessel until it is just right, not being satisfied at imperfection.

And so we are to go about our day to day tasks, open to the presence of God, watching for opportunities to proclaim God’s grace, open to the many ways in which God’s grace is made known to us: in the smile of a baby, in the hug of a grandchild, in the kindness of a stranger, in the words of a hymn or a passage of scripture. It’s not about watching so that we can have superior or special knowledge but so that we can be instruments of God’s grace in the world.

On this first Sunday of Advent, we are preparing to meet the Christ child in the manger, now only a few weeks distant. We proclaim that God is about to do a new thing in our midst, but sometimes that is so hard to see.

The passage from Isaiah seems to have been written by a person very tired of waiting. “Oh that God would tear open the heavens and come down” – RIGHT NOW. Wouldn’t it be nice if God came and made things right, TODAY. Wouldn’t it be nice.

But wait! Wait! Not surprisingly then, the word of God has a lot to say to us about hope. But the Bible often speaks of hope in a way that the world does not. So often when we speak of hope what we’re really talking about is “wishful thinking.” We hope, we desire, we eagerly yearn, that something would come to be.

As children we hope we get that special toy we’ve been wanting as a Christmas or birthday present. As adults we hope for long, vital, trouble free lives, lasting friendships, good health and as our death approaches we might hope the passing from this life to the next will be quick and pain free. The refugee living in the squalor of the Refugee Camp may hope and dream of a safe return to their home or those trying to escape persecution and victimisation in their homeland may hope for asylum in a welcoming country. We hope for so many things! Even when we’ve had a bad day we hope that tomorrow turns out better. But, none of that is hope as the Bible speaks of hope. We fervently wish that things will come to pass as we have desired, yet we know full well that at some point in our lives those hopes may be completely, and perhaps irrevocably, destroyed. We will experience heartache, tragedy, and sorrow in our lives and, as time passes, we come to exchange our fickle hopes for tarnished reality. Our hoping is so often nothing more than wishful thinking. Circumstances overcome wishes on a daily basis but biblical hope is something far more.

For God is familiar with our world. He too hears the cry, generation by generation, of those who find faith in a God impossible because they are overwhelmed by the sorrows and tragedies screaming at them. But ultimately, as Christ has already shown us on the cross, and in his risen life, it is good that triumphs, and God's harvesting at the end of time will be a glorious celebration of all that is just, right and loving. This is not wishful thinking but hope, in all its integrity.

But the true measure of God's influence is not only in the lives of the Saints but also in the good works quietly done by millions of men and women, young and old, day in and day out down through the centuries. And these works are carried out in response to the promises that Christianity itself holds out in regard to the future—a future of hope, of fulfilment and of God. From time to time we need to be reminded of this promise and as we start out on our advent journey we know that the child who is God fills the empty crib with dignity, paints the empty sky with stars, fills the lonely hearts with love and raises all our spirits and hopes. This is the child who grew into adulthood knowing that the future was bright, who looked through death to resurrection, through pain to healing, and who saw good in everyone no matter how they seemed to themselves or to others.

So as we begin our preparation for Advent, look down the road, and with heads held high walk the road towards the approaching kingdom in prayer and in hope, in righteousness and in love, knowing that as so many of the promises of God were fulfilled by the birth of Christ, so too the rest will be fulfilled. So be it. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Lord of all hope, hope that shines like light in darkness we come before you, thankful for the hope you bring us and so with confidence we bring to you our hopes and fears, ready to be transformed in our thoughts and actions.

Lord God, we pray for those who have been deeply affected by the Covid pandemic. We think of those who have lost loved ones; those whose jobs and income have disappeared; businesses on their knees because of restrictions; cabinet rooms and leaders making tough decisions; lonely front rooms, where people only have televisions or radios for company. We think of the lost opportunities, the changes in life direction, the unsettling of assumptions.

We give thanks for all who staff our hospital wards and care homes, all fighting against an unseen virus. Bless the scientists and research laboratories that have delivered a vaccine to counter Covid-19 and which in the fullness of time will see the virus defeated. We pray, Lord, that as restrictions are relaxed for a short time over Christmas we will not place our own selfish interpretation on what we can and cannot do. Loving God we also think today of the many who do not feel the joy of this season. We think of those who have recently lost a loved one; of those who have received bad news instead of good news; of those who are healing and recovering from illness or recent medical procedures; and for those who feel alone, afraid and isolated particularly dreading the darkness of the long nights. We pray for all of these remembering that even if this Advent Season doesn't feel particularly happy that it can still be filled with joy and promise for that is the gift that the Christ Child brings—comfort and joy, peace and love, steadfastness and hope.

For the leaders of the world, still divided, still unable to see God's face in the poor. May they be roused from their sleep to work untiringly for a world where all are fed, sheltered, healed, and at peace. As our leaders try to make Brexit decisions that will impact us for generations to come, give them wisdom and a true capacity for discerning a future that heals relationships, delivers justice and respects the earth. May the wellbeing of all be at the forefront of people's minds, not political advantage. Lord, in so many ways we struggle to make sense of the world that surrounds us.

Gracious and loving God we all have people and situations that are a concern to us, in the silence we bring them before you now.....

Into your loving hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abundant grace and mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour who taught us to pray saying:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

HYMN—*Come, thou long expected Jesus* – CH4 472—words on separate sheet

BLESSING: Loving God, lead us out into the world, renewed in faith and in hope as we celebrate this Advent Season. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, this day and evermore. Amen.

CHRISTMAS CARD INTIMATION

As intimated last week, Christmas Cards are being printed for distribution to the Parish of Currie. If you are able to help with delivery please can you email/phone Nina who is coordinating the streets and let her know which street(s) you are able to deliver to. The Office is closed but your bundle of Cards will be delivered to you once ready. The aim is to have the Cards delivered throughout the Parish before the first Sunday in December and if you have time to help this would be greatly appreciated.



Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!
As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!
For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.
Since ancient times no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.
You come to the help of those who gladly do right,
who remember your ways.
But when we continued to sin against them,
you were angry.
How then can we be saved?
Yet you, LORD, are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD;
do not remember our sins forever.
Oh, look on us, we pray,
for we are all your people.



“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.

THE DAY AND HOUR UNKNOWN

“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 rooster 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!’”

THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD. THANKS BE TO GOD. AMEN.

Nina is working from home but can be contacted:

Telephone 451 5141; email: currie_kirk@btconnect.com

And the link to the website: [//www.curriekirk.org](http://www.curriekirk.org)

where you will find links to all the organisations.

CH4 279—Make way, Make way, for Christ the King

Make way, make way, for Christ the King
In splendour arrives;
Fling wide the gates and welcome Him
Into your lives.

*Make way! (Make way!)
Make way! (Make way!)
For the King of kings;
(For the King of kings)
Make way! (Make way!)
Make way! (Make way!)
And let His kingdom in.*

He comes the broken hearts to heal
The prisoners to free;
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
The blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
Who weep and sigh,
With laughter, joy, and royal crown
He'll beautify.

We call you now to worship Him
As Lord of all,
To have no gods before Him,
Their thrones must fall!

CH4 472—Come, thou long expected Jesus

Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.

All Thy people's consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a Child, and yet a King;
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious Kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit,
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.



November 26th 2020

Dear Friends,

I know that many of us can't wait for 2020 to be over. We put our faith and hope in God, and pray for one another while we remain apart. We are also excited to put our trust and hope in the scientists developing this new vaccine. We pray that soon, in 2021 we might resume the life and fellowship together that we miss so very much.

I am grateful to Grant Gordon for taking this Sunday service at the start of Advent. I was to fly back this weekend but I have been cautioned by everyone—including the Governor of Maryland NOT to travel anywhere because of the Covid spike and the Thanksgiving holiday.

Whilst we are not doing anything for Thanksgiving personally, it is not an ideal time to travel. Yesterday over five million Americans boarded planes in airports, despite warnings and requests from health professionals not to travel. On the news were images of airports mobbed with people heading home for Turkey and trimmings—no signs of social distancing and some not even wearing masks! The news said the footfall at Miami airport was 650,000 people in a single day. The airports in Philadelphia and DC are also mobbed despite pleas from experts to stay home and, of course, the same folk will all be travelling back on Sunday 29th when I am supposed to fly.

I have been so careful not to go anywhere and the last thing I want to do is enter an airport on a weekend that is described as a "Super-spreader." I do not wish to inflict more instances of this disease on Scotland and for Darren, kids and friends to miss more school.

British Airways cancelled two of my previous flights and wanted to reroute me through Chicago or Miami—as that is what Darren was forced to do. As it is they have now rebooked me now onto a direct flight to London from Washington next Sunday assuring a safer, quieter airport and a less busy plane journey.

I want to re-assure you that although leaving Dad will be tough, I am excited to get back to Scotland to be closer to you, even if in quarantine or isolation. These are such unprecedented times and I am looking forward to being back with you. Meanwhile, I will do my best to keep away from Covid and I will work hard to prepare for Advent and Christmas services.

Everyone seems to think this is a wise course of action. Meantime, thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your forbearance and grace in these very odd times. Please feel free to email me or send messages via Gordon or Nina.

God bless and I pray you will all stay safe and that God will encourage you with strength, resilience, and some laughter until we can open the Kirk and Hall once more.

Lots of love,

Easter



Currie Kirk Guild

Our next meeting is this Tuesday 1st December at 10am when our talk will be on “The Boys’ Brigade” which is our chosen charity for this session. If you are not a Guild member and would like to join us, just e-mail me at elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk and I will send you the link.

To date I have delivered 152 advent calendars and 37 selection boxes to the foodbank at Wester Hailes — my dining room is now looking very empty! Angela at the Foodbank and her team would be grateful for tinned goods particularly vegetables and toiletries such as soap, shower gel, shampoo, toothpaste etc in the run up to Christmas. More selection boxes would also be great.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed items. It is very much appreciated. As usual you can deliver to 13, Dolphin Gardens West or phone 0131-466-3472 and I will collect them.

Louise Lamont Guild President

WINNER OF THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF 2020

WELL DONE PETER

Congratulations from ALL at Currie Kirk



Gaining:

- ◆ Star Baker; and
- ◆ A Hollywood Handshake!

You have given us so much pleasure these last few weeks—something to look forward to on a Tuesday evening. Tuesday’s will not be the same again.



From l/r

Lucas; Peter; Finlay; Liam; Duncan; and Mark

Plus Susan in the middle!!

Peter gaining his Queen’s Badge

Christmas Cakes For Sale

I have Christmas cakes for sale, all Covid-free and sealed as usual and delivered in plenty time for Christmas.

There are a few designs to choose from. If you would like one can you please contact me directly. Still £8 and all profits will go to Currie Kirk this year. 466-1459 / 07584-678990 / fpigott19@gmail.com



Christmas Fair

As you may be aware we have been busy selling goods on FaceBook as part of the virtual Christmas Fair. If you have anything you'd like to sell can you please contact Shona Moyes, Nina at the Kirk office or me for collection as soon as possible. We will be producing a brochure to be handed out and don't want to miss any goods.

Search CK Fair on Facebook.

Thanks,
Fiona

Snack Lunches Donations to Charity 2019-20

Despite having to stop Snack Lunches at the Gibson Craig Hall early in March 2020 due to the pandemic lockdown, we raised the sum of £1,700 for charity.

Restrictions on meetings of large numbers of people meant we have not been able to hold the AGM when volunteers usually discuss which charities should receive a share of the funds. However, I am delighted to report that the five Team Leaders at Snack Lunches have agreed that we should donate this year's funds to the following causes, reflecting needs in the surrounding area at this time of hardship:



- £340 The Currie Benevolent Fund**
- £340 Foodbank at Holy Trinity Church, Wester Hailes**
- £340 Poppy Scotland**
- £340 Edinburgh Food Project, Lairdship Yards, Broomhouse**
- £340 The Beacon Club for Dementia Care, Broomhouse Hub**

With many thanks to all our lunchtime customers and to the hardworking volunteers who supplied and served the delicious home-made soup and baking—till we can meet again!

Viola MacPhail,
Snack Lunches Co-ordinator
449 4664

Waiting, watching, and hoping

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

Prepare yourself...

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means "coming" and it's the time we prepare and remember the real meaning of Christmas. In church we would light candles each Sunday in Advent. The first candle represents hope. You may want to light a candle in your home as you say this prayer together, then leave it lit as you do the rest of the activities together.

(Remember to blow it out at the end!)

Gathered here today, we light a candle of hope,
Knowing that in dark times you are always with us.

Lord of the light, Lord of the darkness,
Lord of the day, Lord of the night,
Call us to you.

Whether we are happy or sad,
Whether we are ready or not,
Call us to you.

Amen.



Question...



What gives you hope?

What are you looking forward to?

Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in Mark 13:24-37 and Isaiah 64:1-9. You can read them in a Bible or find them here: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+13%3A24-37%3B+Isaiah+64%3A1-9&version=GNT>

You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage.



Talk together...



What does it mean to have hope?

What do we hope for as Christians?

Jesus tells a story of servants waiting for their master to return, to teach us how to wait for his return.

Are you good at waiting? Why/why not?

What's the longest you've ever had to wait for something?

How do you think Jesus' disciple's felt when they heard Jesus' warning?

Do you think the verses in Mark are more about hope or hopelessness?

Have you ever tried to stay awake when you were really tired? What did you do?

What does it mean for you to be "ready for Jesus"?

When times are difficult, what helps you to keep watching, waiting and hoping?

Praise together...



My Lighthouse by Rend Collective: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaW_4MWSE6I

Make together...

Lighthouses – [Here's instructions](#) on how to make one, if you don't have all the same materials then improvise! For example: use coloured pens or red paper to make the stripes; use a clear plastic cup for the top; use a kitchen roll tube instead of a Pringles tube. Use what you have available and be creative!



Pray together...

Draw a timeline of the week/months/year ahead. Invite everyone to write on it some things they are waiting for or looking ahead to in the time you've chosen (as trivial or important as they like!). Once done, pray with and for one another about each thing written down. Watch, wait and pray with each other as the time approaches.

Play together...

Back art: You'll need a partner for this game. Have one person sitting or standing behind the other. The person behind should draw a simple shape or object on the back of the person in front using their finger (eg. A circle, square, house, ice cream cone, smiley face) Can they guess what it is? Swap over so both people have a turn of guessing and drawing.