

Order of Service 22nd November 2020

Waiting for a King

Intro week for Advent series of services

Today's service is led by Mr Neil Graham and the material and theme for the service come from engage worship and their new "Worship in the Waiting" church service pack. It is an Advent journey written by Sara and Sam Hargreaves.

Christ Church Woodley will be using this material for Advent 2020 and the series commences this week, the week before Advent.

There is an accompanying book of Personal Devotions which is written to compliment the worship series more details at <https://engageworship.org/store/product/worship-in-the-waiting-personal-devotions>

Pre Service

From Advent week 1 onwards there will be an Advent Ring lighting liturgy (based around "The Holly and the Ivy") and poem from our worship series to launch that week's theme.

Intro Week – Waiting for a King

Intro Poem

Wake up! Get ready! Line the streets to shout,
anticipate the coming of your King!

Rehearse the anthem, put the bunting out,
and rouse the neighbours with Advent carolling:
Wake up! Get ready! Line the streets to shout!

His rule will end the reign of suffering,
so come with your despair, depression, doubt -
anticipate the coming of your King.

Wake up! Get ready! Line the streets to shout,
anticipate the coming of your King!

Text © Amy Scott Robinson – This will be in the form of a video for those joining us on Zoom or watching the YouTube recording of the service.

Call To Worship

The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure. Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity. The seas have lifted up, LORD, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves. Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea— the LORD on high is mighty. Your statutes, LORD, stand firm; holiness adorns your house for endless days.

Psalms 93 NIV

A Gathering Prayer

God, we have been a scattered people,
roaming, looking for places to call home.
You have called us home, gathered us in,
given us a land of belonging where all are welcome.
You have sought us out, brought us in,
and held us in this great story.

Amen

1st Hymn – “We Wait With Great Expectancy”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ke18fFDNmU>

This is a hymn for our Worship in the Waiting series. It is set to a familiar tune (GOD REST YOU MERRY) and unpacks the themes of waiting for Jesus.

We wait with great expectancy
to see your Kingdom come.
We trust your word to be fulfilled
and pray your will be done.
So in our world of ache and loss
we're calling out, as one:

*Come Lord Jesus,
we hunger and we yearn
for your return.
Come Lord Jesus,
oh we pray for your return.*

You came to us so long ago
and you will come again.
We long for heaven on the earth,
an end to grief and pain.
Lord, may our lives anticipate
and usher in your reign.

*Come Lord Jesus,
we long to know you here,
come and draw near.
Come Lord Jesus,
oh we long to know you here.*

So lead us in your patience, Lord,
and help us match your pace,
to walk the straight and narrow road
in rhythms of your grace,
and may this Advent way of life
all hurriedness replace.

*Come Lord Jesus,
and teach us how to wait,
you are not late.
Come Lord Jesus,
help us worship as we wait.
Come Lord Jesus,
help us worship as we wait.*

To the tune of GOD REST YOU MERRY, public domain.
Words © Sam Hargreaves, admin. Jubilate Hymns Ltd. copyrightmanager@jubilatehymns.co.uk
Please remember to report any usage on your CCL license. CCLI # 7162773

Prayers of Approach, Praise, and Thanksgiving

We come to you,
people who are hungry,
people who are thirsty,
strangers, imprisoned, exposed,
knowing that you have come to us, too,
in these same guises.
In our brokenness, welcome us.
And open up our defences as we come to you,
O Lord of many guises.

Amen.

Yours is the earth and all in it.
The valleys, mountains, seas and spray;
the land, the pastures, the trees and fauna.
All around us, we see stories of your bounty,
your exuberant goodness, your flourishing provision.
You have made us to live here,
nurtured by this earth, and by work.
We find joy in this vocation, to be your people,
living, working, resting, supporting.
We thank you for the gifts of living,
and for these gifts of bounty all around us.

Amen.

God, you come in disguises:
in a friend asking for a chat, ? in a person asking for help,
in all calls for assistance.
May we take the time to hear you,
knowing that when we respond to one person,
we are responding to you –
who always responds to us.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Today I ask you to stop and pause as you say the Lord's prayer, if like me you learned it as a child then you likely say it by rote most the time. So please stop and pause with each line and think about what you're saying.

Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need,
and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
And don't let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one.

Amen

New Living Translation (NLT), Matthew 6:9-13

Children's Talk – in the form of a poem (video)

New King

We've heard that a new King is coming,
announce it with fanfares and tweets.
Tell every nation with anticipation
to stay on the edge of their seats.

We've heard that a new King is coming,
more famous than William and Charles.
His power is greater than Megan on Insta,
his might more than Swedish King Carl's.

**But this King is not found in a palace,
this King is not found on our thrones,
our King can be found in an animal stall,
in the everyday mess of our homes.**

The prophets announced his arrival,
predicting a new boss in town,
this guy's got more thump than old President Trump,
more pull than Beyonce's next gown.

The angels declared that he's landing,
and turning the world upside down,
the poor and the lonely are his Kingdom homies,
while mighty ones sulk, grump and frown.

**'Cos this King is not found in a palace,
this King is not found on TV,
our King can be found with the weak and the small,
and washing feet, down on his knees.**

Our King he was born a minority,
a refugee, paying the cost.
Bullied and beaten, he started his Kingdom
by dying a King on a cross.

But broadcast it: this King is living!
Yes he came and he's coming again.
Tell all of creation, with great expectation
he'll make it all right in the end.

**'Cos our King is not found in a palace,
he's not even confined to our church.
Our King knows no limits, he's free by the Spirit,
and coming to make new his earth.**

Text © Sam Hargreaves, engageworship

JC prayers and introduction to their choice of Hymn

2nd Hymn JC Choice "Be Bold, Be Strong" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJPcs-pCVzs>

Prayer for the young people as they prepare to leave us

Sorry this prayer will flow at the time and has not been pre written, here and now please hold in your prayers all those that work to learn about God, be they our young people, or children, young adults and older ones too from all around the world. We are tasked to spread the Good News and make Disciples of all, so please prayer now for a few moments as the spirit leads you.

Prayers of Confession

Where I say "I" please substitute in your head you for me, so as you read this it's "I" as in you.

Sometimes I am tired,
or I'm preoccupied with other demands.
Help me take time, help me make time, for kindness,
so that rush can take its lower place,
and kindness can rise up.
Because you had much to do –
but made time anyway.

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the broken
and have not been moved to compassion.

Truly, we say to you that we have heard people mourning
and have not given them our time.

Truly, we say to you that we have witnessed oppression
and have not raised our voices.

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the stranger
and not said a word.

God, hiding in all strangers, all around us,
we are truly sorry for what we have done,
and what we have not done.
And we ask you to deepen your welcome in us,
so that we might deepen our welcome around us.

Amen.

Advent With Jesus – Reflection Prayer Session

Let's close our eyes and take a couple of deep breaths. As part of a time of contemplative prayer now, I invite you to use your imagination to engage. If you know that you struggle keeping thoughts in your mind, it might be helpful to use a pen and paper to doodle as you imagine and as you pray.

Imagine that you walk up to a door. Paint a picture of the door in your mind - it could be any colour and size. Notice its texture and then imagine a door handle. Imagine that you take hold of the handle to open the door. What does the door handle feel like in your hand? Is it cold or warm? Smooth or textured?

You open the door and stand on the threshold of a new room. Let's imagine that this room is your Advent season this year. Bring to mind what these next few weeks will contain for you - perhaps you have events planned, or perhaps you have an empty calendar? Perhaps you have a long list of tasks in your mind or people you hope to see or talk to. Imagine all these things that you expect to see and do during Advent, and picture them in the room you are facing. Perhaps you imagine the people you will see waiting in armchairs, or a notice board with tasks pinned up? You might imagine large pictures hanging on the walls like in a gallery, depicting the Advent you are anticipating. Spend some time creating a picture of this room in your imagination.

[pause]

Now that you have your Advent season in this room, look from the position of standing on the threshold, and explore how you feel about the different things in the room. What are you looking forward to? Are there things in there which you expect will bring you joy? Perhaps there are things in the room which make you feel stressed, sad or worried?

[pause]

As you stand on the threshold of Advent, you have a choice. You could rush in, and move through the season without much thought or prayer. Or you could invite Jesus into the season, commit to walk with

him, at his slower pace, commit to hearing him and being guided by him. You can allow the Advent prayer "Come King Jesus" become your own prayer.

[pause]

I want to encourage you to invite Jesus to join you on the threshold of Advent. Imagine making space from him to stand next to you and look in with you. Take a moment to imagine what it feels like to make space, to feel Jesus' presence next to you.

[pause]

Jesus is looking with you into your room which symbolises your Advent season. What do you think he feels about the different things that you're looking at together? Which things make him smile? Which things do you think he's looking forward to enjoying with you if you let him? Are there things that Jesus may express concern about? Things that may not be the best for you?

Take a moment to listen to what God might be saying to you through your imagination.

[pause]

In light of inviting King Jesus to journey with you through Advent, are there things you need to change or adjust in your room? Perhaps you need to make more space for him by removing something?

[pause]

Now, imagine stepping into your room. Turn towards Jesus, still on the threshold and invite him in.

"Come, King Jesus."

Text © Sara Hargreaves, engageworship

3rd Hymn StF 175 "Light of the World" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MmRGSEG2LM>

1 Light of the world,
you stepped down into darkness,
opened my eyes, let me see
beauty that made this heart adore you,
hope of a life spent with you.

*So here I am to worship,
here I am to bow down,
here I am to say that you're my God,
and you're altogether lovely,
altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.*

2 King of all days
oh so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above.
Humbly you came
to the earth you created,
all for love's sake became poor.

So here I am to worship ...

And I'll never know how much it cost
to see my sin upon that cross.
And I'll never know how much it cost
to see my sin upon that cross.

So here I am to worship ...

Tim Hughes

Introduction to the Readings

Whilst you listen to the readings please think about the following questions and a piece of paper and something to write with might be useful here.

In what way was Jesus a different King of Kings than expected?

In what way is Jesus' kingdom different?

How can we live our lives in the light of Jesus being the true king?

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

⁹ 'As I looked, 'thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all

ablaze. ¹⁰ A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. ... ¹³ 'In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Colossians 1:11-20

¹¹ ...being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Matthew 25:31-32a

³¹ 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

³² All the nations will be gathered before him...

Sermon: Waiting for a King

Next week we enter the season of Advent. The word "Advent" means "coming", and when something is coming, we wait for it with anticipation. What are you waiting for this Advent? Parties, presents, gifts and celebrations? Perhaps you are just looking forward to some time off, or a peaceful end to a challenging year? I know I am looking forward to the first Christmas since I have been with Helen that I am not working right up to Christmas and then the gap between Christmas and the New Year Holidays. This strange year has meant the usual 10 annual leave days I give to scouting has not happened and I am able to take some time off at Christmas. Of course I have no idea what one should do in that time if one is not working.

In the midst of all this, Advent asks us to listen for a deeper whisper, echoing down through history, radiating across the world:

"A king is coming. A king is coming."

The wisdom of the church having seasons such as Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas is that we can worship differently as we travel through the year. We can engage with different postures and emotions as the seasons change. Some worship, like at Easter and Christmas, is full of celebration and praise. You may have noticed that Lent is quite different - it tends to be about things like simplicity, confession and sacrifice. Advent has an even more mysterious character. It is about yearning, waiting, anticipating. The prayer of Advent is – "Come, Lord Jesus. Come, King Jesus".

Today we don't talk so much about kings, but we do long for new rulers, for changes in authority and power. In recent years we have seen a rise in political activism, engagement and protest. Just look to what's happened recently in our own country with Brexit and then across the pond to the USA with the first black President in Obama and then the massive following that led to President Trump, and now another chapter is due to start with President elect Biden.

In the aftermath of the controversial US elections, former President, Barack Obama, says the USA is a deeply divided nation.

Our PM, Boris Johnson, is embarking on a 'reset' after divisions in the Cabinet Office resulted in the departure of key advisors.

Beyond politics, we are also aware that our lives are shaped and controlled by other unelected influences - business, media, technology; I won't single any particular company out but maybe can be forgiven for picking on the one I work for. I work for Fujitsu and we say we touch your lives from Cradle to death. Certainly in most parts of your daily life you will use technology we are behind, and if we look even deeper we see the insidious authority of what the Bible calls the "kingdom of this world" or "principalities and powers" or the "dominion of darkness".

The human race is waiting, anticipating, yearning for a new ruler; what the Bible calls the true King of an alternative Kingdom.

Waiting for a Coming King

By the time Jesus came, the people of Israel had waited a long time for their promised King. Six hundred years before Jesus' birth, the King of Babylon had destroyed Jerusalem and taken the people of God into exile. Shortly after this, while Daniel is living under Babylonian rule, he has a vision from God:

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14)

Because of this prophesy, Israel had something to hope for, something to wait for. They had a vision of a time when someone sent from God would establish an everlasting Kingdom. This and many other prophecies gave Israel the sense that their new King was coming, that God was sending his Messiah who would liberate them from captivity.

Eventually, the Israelites were released from Babylon, yet they remained for the most part under the oppression of the Persians, and then the Greeks, and then finally the mighty Roman Empire. These Roman Caesars called themselves the "sons of God" and demanded that all their subjects pledged allegiance to Caesar as Lord. Anyone who resisted was crushed under the military weight of the Roman Army.

Six hundred years had passed, and yet for Israel the Messiah establishing his new Kingdom seemed further away than ever.

A Different Kind of King

And then, miraculously, he comes: their promised Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man.

Jesus.

He even uses the Son of Man title to refer to himself, saying in language which echoes Daniel 7:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him." (Matthew 25:31-32)

With this and many other statements Jesus shows himself to be the promised Messiah and King. And yet, there is a twist to this tale. Jesus' idea of "king" is almost the exact opposite to the kind of king that anyone is expecting. Israel was anticipating a powerful ruler who would defeat Rome and establish a political kingdom on earth. But Jesus announces that his kingly rule, the Kingdom of God, will be a paradoxical and subversive Kingdom. When he is being questioned by Pilate, a powerful Roman leader, Jesus answers him by saying:

"My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my Kingdom is from another place." (John 18:36)

The Kingdom of Jesus is an upside-down Kingdom. The first are last, the poor are blessed, outcasts are welcomed, light shines from the darkness, life comes out of death, and victory comes from sacrifice. Powerful and religious people couldn't and sometimes can't accept this kind of King, but the "least", the downtrodden and those whom society rejects come to see that they are invited to be part of this very different kind of Kingdom.

A Different Kind of Kingdom

That is why Paul can tell the very ordinary people of the small town of Colossae that God:

"...has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the Kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son he loves..." (Colossians 1:12-13)

If you are a Christian, you belong to a new Kingdom. You have been set free from the captivity of the "dominion of darkness". Your identity is not primarily about your country of birth, your family, or your politics. You are first and ultimately a citizen of Jesus' Kingdom. This Kingdom is bigger than a political or geographical area, because this King is the one who created politics and geography in the first place!

"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him." (Colossians 1:15-16)

Jesus' Kingdom is so spacious and roomy that it includes all things - you, the church, governments, business, the environment, in fact the whole universe and beyond. The coming of our King Jesus means that we as individuals are healed and saved and brought into his Kingdom. At the same time, it means infinitely more than that: that everything will eventually be healed and saved:

"...through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:20)

What Are We Waiting For?

The King is coming. In fact, in one sense, for us the King has come! The unexpected, upside-down Kingdom of Jesus has burst into our world, and we can be people who declare that coming Kingdom to everyone around us.

Everything we do in our lives - our families, our work, our hobbies, our celebrations, our passions - all of it can be done in the light of Jesus being the true King and his reign breaking out on earth as it is in heaven. Pausing for a moment does that remind you of the work we were looking at as a church a few months ago, well I guess its more than a few months now, but our Mission Shaped Course we did had similar themes in it. It is in our lives, in our actions, that we get to meet others and bring the Kingdom to them, in our work, our hobbies, our celebrations, in our building as they come for other purposes.

So the challenge for us is to make this prayer - "Come, King Jesus" - the center of our Advent this year. To learn what it means to live with expectation and hope for the coming Kingdom of God in our world.

I'd love you to pick up the Worship in the Waiting personal devotions book, and consider whether you can make this series a central part of your Christmas preparations. You can read the book, engage in the exercises, then discuss with friends, your pastoral group or other small group and here at church as to how the material is speaking to you and how you can live as a result.

Also remember our actions can and should be done in the light of Jesus being the true King and as such everything we do is part of bring his Kingdom here to earth.

Amen.

4th Hymn "Longing for a hope filled morning"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYaNp2kRrYM>

- 1 Longing for a hope-filled morning,
kingdom of the Son, draw near!
Waiting for the day soon dawning,
light of love that casts out fear.
Dayspring, come from heav'n, in lowly birth,
come to warm this cold, dark earth.
- 2 Sorrow through the world is sweeping,
bitter conflict rages still,
heaven hears its children weeping:
price of humankind's freewill.
Come, O Prince of Peace, in lowly birth,
come to mend this broken earth.
- 3 Reaching out through human history,
bring your scattered children home,
such an act of love! What mystery:
God appears in flesh and bone.
Come, Emmanuel, in lowly birth,
show how heaven embraces earth.

Tune: PICARDY
words © Ally Barrett / Jubilate
administered by Jubilate Hymns Ltd
copyrightmanager@jubilatehymns.co.uk

Prayers of Intercession

LEADER: Son of Man, come in glory!

ALL: Come King Jesus.

We bring the world we live in before your throne, King Jesus.
Many nations suffer, their peoples hungry or thirsty, oppressed or forgotten.

When they suffer, you suffer.

We bring these places to you, and call out the names of countries especially on our hearts:

(I will ask people to call out the countries we need to pray for)

Son of Man, come in glory!

Come King Jesus.

We bring our local area before your throne, King Jesus.

Many people are hungry and thirsty, struggling with basic necessities like clothes or housing.
Thank you for people and organisations who work for justice for these people.

When the least are blessed, you are blessed.

We bring these people and organisations to you, and call out their names before you:

(I will ask people to call out the names of organisations we need to pray for)

Son of Man, come in glory!

Come King Jesus.

We bring the people on our hearts before your throne, King Jesus.

We pray for those in debt or in prison, those who are ill or who feel lonely and friendless.

When we feed, clothe, visit and invite them in, we serve you.

Speak to us about how we can make a difference, as we call out names of people in need.

(I will ask people to call out the names of people we need to pray for)

Son of Man, come in glory!

Come King Jesus.

We bring our church before your throne, King Jesus.
Help us serve you as we serve the least.
May we see your face in the broken people of this world, and respond.
Lead us into our Advent journey, to know your rule and reign in our lives.

Son of Man, come in glory!
Come King Jesus.

5th Hymn "When the King shall come again"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y00bCK_y_E

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 When the King shall come again
all his power revealing,
splendour shall announce his reign,
life and joy and healing:
earth no longer in decay,
hope no more frustrated;
this is God's redemption day
longingly awaited.</p> <p>2 In the desert trees take root
fresh from his creation;
plants and flowers and sweetest fruit
join the celebration.
Rivers spring up from the earth,
barren lands adorning;
valleys, this is your new birth,
mountains, greet the morning!</p> | <p>3 Strengthen feeble hands and knees,
fainting hearts, be cheerful!
God who comes for such as these
seeks and saves the fearful.
Deaf ears hear the silent tongues
sing away their weeping;
blind eyes see the lifeless ones
walking, running, leaping.</p> <p>4 There God's highway shall be seen
where no roaring lion,
nothing evil or unclean
walks the road to Zion:
ransomed people homeward bound
all your praises voicing,
see your Lord with glory crowned,
share in his rejoicing!</p> |
|--|--|

Tune: GAUDEAMUS PATITER
Christopher Idle from Isaiah 35
© Christopher Idle/Jubilate Hymns Ltd
7 6 7 6 D Trochaic

Blessing

Our Advent ring, our Kings crown, empty and dark,
Waits for the season to come.
Our Empty hands, prepared to receive
the gift of your will being done.

King Jesus, we open our hearts to you:
O come, O come Emmanuel.
Rule and reign in our lives today,
O come, O come Emmanuel.

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill us with his grace to trust his promises;
And the blessing of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.