



Parish of  
**St Peter Woking**  
St Peter's · St Mark's · All Souls'



## Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November Advent Sunday

### Welcome

Leader Jesus is coming:  
**All He is bringing new life.**  
Leader Jesus is coming:  
**All He has heard the cries of the poor.**  
Leader Jesus is coming:  
**All He calls us to keep going,**  
Leader To labour on for life,  
**All And to deliver hope.**



### Hymn 493 O come O come Emmanuel

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.*

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 . . .*

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 . . .*

O come, Thou dayspring, come and  
cheer  
our spirits by Thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of  
night,  
and death's dark shadows put to  
flight.

*Rejoice, rejoice . . .*

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 . . .*

Words tr. by John Mason Neale

## Lighting of the Advent Wreaths – *Light a candle in your home*

Leader God of Abraham and Sarah, and all the patriarchs of old, you are our Father too. Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of David. Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth to make our hearts ready for your Holy Spirit to make his home among us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**



All **Lord Jesus, light of the world, Born of David's city of Bethlehem; Born like him to be a king: Be born in our hearts at Christmas, be king of our lives today. Amen.**

## Advent Reflection

Opening activity *I am waiting...*

## Confession

Leader 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. (1 Cor 4.5)

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us, forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in  
newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.**

## Absolution (we are reminded that God forgives all who repent)

Leader **Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

All **Amen.**

## Collect (Prayer for the day)

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**

This time @Home      *David and Pauline Wilde*

## Hymn    **God so loved**

God so loved, that he gave his Son  
To lay down his life for the sake of us  
He bore the weight  
of our sin and shame  
With a cry he said 'It is finished'  
Christ the Lord overcame the darkness  
He's alive, death has been defeated

*For he made us a way,  
by which we have been saved  
He's the Saviour of the world  
So we lift up a shout  
for his fame and renown  
Praise the Lord,  
praise the Lord  
Jesus, Saviour of the world*

We must spread the word  
of his soon return  
To reclaim the world for his glory  
Let the church now sing  
of this coming King  
Crowned with majesty, our Redeemer  
And He reigns, ruler of the heavens  
And His name is Jesus, the Messiah

*Chorus*

Christ the Lord overcame the darkness  
He's alive, death has been defeated  
And he reigns, ruler of the heavens  
And his name is Jesus, the Messiah

*Chorus*

## Bible readings

*Isaiah 64:1-9 – Rob Moore, St Peter's*

<sup>1</sup>Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! <sup>2</sup>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! <sup>3</sup>For when you did

awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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? <sup>6</sup>All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. <sup>7</sup>No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.

<sup>8</sup>Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. <sup>9</sup>Do not be angry beyond measure, O Lord; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people.

*1 Corinthians 1.3-9 – Tamara Pike, All Souls*

<sup>3</sup>Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. <sup>5</sup>For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-- <sup>6</sup>because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. <sup>7</sup>Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. <sup>8</sup>He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

## **Sermon – Rachel – Waiting**

When I was about 12 I was a mediocre 2<sup>nd</sup> violinist in a youth orchestra so every Saturday morning found me waiting at the bus stop to catch the bus to my rehearsal. And whilst I was waiting I'd be thinking – What if the bus has been cancelled? What if it came before I got here? What if it's full? What if the driver doesn't stop at my stop? And on winter mornings, is the bus going to come before I get frostbite? 12 year old me didn't enjoy waiting however much I was looking forward to my rehearsal.

But we're all waiting for something –waiting for a hug with grandma, waiting to finish a DIY project, waiting for a haircut or a playdate, waiting for a vaccine so we can get on with our lives. And Advent is a season of waiting; we wait to celebrate the birth of Jesus and we wait for Jesus to return. So do you enjoy waiting more than 12 year old me? Do you love the anticipation or does waiting leave you frustrated and anxious?

Like it or not, God's people have always had to wait – wait to be rescued from slavery, wait to find the promised land, wait to return from exile, wait for the Messiah. So it's not surprising that our reading from Isaiah 64 shows the Israelites to be waiting once more. Decades of civil war and exile have left their nation in tatters. They plead for God to act, to restore the glory years, to make His name great again – 'O that you would rend the heavens and come down...and cause the nations to quake before you.' They lament their lack of faithfulness – 'no one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you'. But they also express faith in the God of their fathers – '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*.' History tells them that God is not in a hurry but God is worth waiting for. The Lord acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

So in this season of waiting what does waiting on the Lord look like and feel like?

The Hebrew word for wait, *chakah*, contains a sense of longing or yearning, like a child who longs for Christmas to arrive. And it's a longing rooted in expectation – we direct our longing towards God because we've seen him act in the past and we trust that he will act again. When God's longing for us to be his people is met by our longing for him to be our God then God will act. We see this same sense of expectation in the unpronounceable greek word Paul uses in his letter to the Corinthians; as the Corinthians wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed, they wait *eagerly*, they expect *fully*, they've turned away from what lies behind as they look forward to what's to come. So to wait on the Lord is synonymous with trust and hope in God, who will act when the time is right.

I guess trust and hope make waiting easier; I'd certainly have found waiting at the bus stop a more peaceful experience if I'd known for sure that the bus was on the way. And it might be easier for us to get through the next few months now that we have the hope of a vaccine. Certainly it's very hard to carry on without hope. But however hopeful we are, the waiting still has to be endured. That's not so bad when the sun's shining and all's well with the world but it's not so easy when you're living in the darkness of slavery or exile or occupation. It's not so easy when you're living with the loneliness and fear and loss of this pandemic. It's not so easy when the waiting might outlast your lifetime. Yet Isaiah 40:31 says 'those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength'. Not struggle or grow weaker or simply endure but renew their strength. Now it could be that Isaiah means God will renew our strength on some future day when the waiting ends but I wonder if there's something about the waiting itself that strengthens us and prepares us for what's to come. I wonder if

the waiting is God's way of giving us space to grow. Because waiting is so very often what God calls us to do and I tend to believe God knows what he's doing.

I mentioned the Hebrew word *chakah* but Isaiah 64 also contains a different word that's often translated as wait – *qavah*. It's in verse 3 – you did awesome things that *we did not expect – that we did not wait for*. And this same word is used in Isaiah 40 – those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. *Qavah* is an interesting word because it carries that same sense of hope and expectation as *chakah* but it has another meaning too – bind together, in the way the strands of a rope bind together to give it strength. So if we bring these two translations together then to wait on the Lord is to bind ourselves closer to the Lord. This isn't passively sitting around until God does something, it's actively seeking God through prayer, through reading the Bible, through fasting, through worship, through fellowship, binding all these strands together as we wait for God to fulfil his purposes. We're strengthened when we actively bind ourselves to God.

Paul builds on this upbeat perspective by reminding the Corinthians that God is at work in them; 'for in him you – the community of faith – have been enriched in every way...you do not lack any spiritual gift *as you wait*'. God has already equipped us with everything we need to endure this time of waiting. And it's important to remember that spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of the whole faith community, to build up the church, to bind us together as the body of Christ, to equip us to bear witness to the gospel and bring light into the darkness. So as we, the community of faith, wait on the Lord, our work is to continue to do God's work.

Today we continue to wait with Isaiah's Israelites for all nations to bow down before God, we continue to wait with Paul's Corinthians for Jesus to return. But 2000 years ago the religious leaders failed to notice that their longed-for Messiah was already in their midst, quietly going about God's work, setting in motion events that would shake the whole earth to its foundations. And I wonder if we're so preoccupied waiting for God to act in ways that 'make the mountains tremble' that we don't notice what God's doing right here, right now. We're waiting for God to act but God is already quietly at work in us, in our church community, in our nation and in the world. God's at work in the way we've been able to worship alongside Marsha in New York and my mum in Wales, God's at work in the way we were able to pray along with our mission partners last week, God's at work in every phone call we make to someone in need and every care package Cherith delivers, God's at work in the new ways we've found for families to learn and worship together, God's at work in every rainbow thanking key workers and scientists for their dedication. If we hadn't



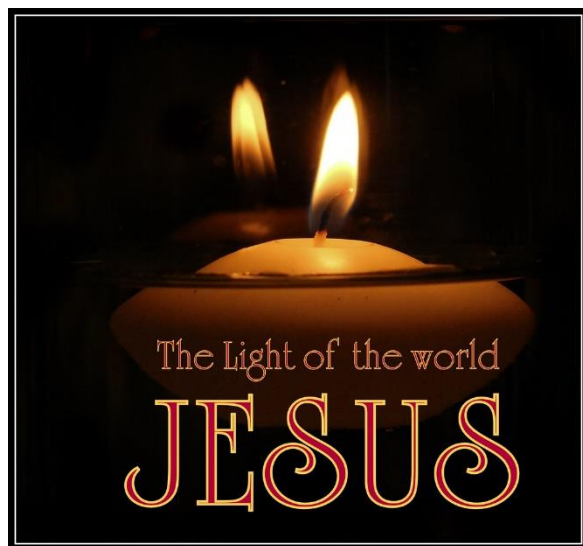
been waiting we wouldn't have had space for any of these things to happen.

Waiting is part of God's plan for us, part of the way he shapes us and grows us into his people. So we're called to wait eagerly, expectantly, hopefully, faithfully. We're called to bind ourselves to each other and to God so that we have the strength to endure. We're called to bring light into dark places even as we wait for the light of Christ to be revealed to all nations. We're called to wait on the Lord, for God acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

### Hymn    **Longing for light**

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.*



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.

*Christ, be our light . . .*

Longing for food, many are hungry.  
Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us Your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.

*Christ, be our light . . .*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless,  
longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us Your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.

*Christ, be our light . . .*

Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
making Your kingdom come.

*Christ, be our light . . .*

## Nicene Creed

**All**      **We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.**

**Amen.**

## Prayers ~ Clive Boyle, All Souls'

Almighty God as the new day dawns on this Advent Sunday, we give thanks for the first glimmers of the light which remind us of the coming of your Son Jesus Christ. We believe that your light has the power to overcome all our darkness and pray that throughout the Season of Advent we may we share in the mystery of your coming into the world. **Amen**



*As we wait for the first real signs of winter, we remember that we are all part of God's creation and the certainty and reassurance that the changing seasons bring to our lives:*

We thank you Lord for the brightness of winter sun, for winter's work and winter's entertainments, for the warmth of home and all its comforts.



Lord of all times and all seasons, we thank you that there is no season without its satisfactions and that there is no time without its promises. Lord, when we have no light, show us the treasures of darkness. **Amen**

*In this frantic connected world where news, information and communications are so pervasive and instant we remember the value of peace and the opportunity for quiet reflection that enable us to concentrate on communication that really matters. Can we remain in silence for a few moments at the end of this prayer to gather our own thoughts, thanks, worries and fears and bring them to God.*

Let the peace of this place surround you as you pray.

Let the hurry and worry of life fall away from you.

You are God's child he loves you and cares for you.

He is here with you now and always.

Speak to him thoughtfully and allow him time to speak to you.

Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be today, if I forget thee, do not thou forget me. **Amen**

*We pray for all the peoples of the world and their leaders;  
Those in the many countries where there is division and distrust and for those where there is real crisis; where normal life is impossible – disrupted by pandemic, war, civil unrest, insurrection or acts of terror.*

You have called us to be one,  
To live in unity and harmony, and yet we are divided:  
Race from race,  
faith from faith,  
rich from poor,  
Old from young,  
Neighbour from neighbour....

O Lord by whose cross all enmity is brought to an end, break down the walls that separate us, tear down the fences of indifference and hatred. Forgive us the sins that divide us, free us from pride and self seeking, overcome our prejudices and fears.

Give us courage to open ourselves to others.

By the power of your spirit make us one. **Amen**

*A prayer for the sick, bereaved and troubled. We pray for those we know as a Church family or individually who are unwell, or lonely at this time. We pray for Peter & Eileen Bliss, John Hunter, Mary McKinnon, Olive Park, Joy Storkey, Philip Hall. We pray for the family and friends of Peter Wallace.*

Gracious God we raise before you the ill, the lonely and distressed and especially those without hope for the future. We pray for healing, wholeness and hope in their lives and we pray for ourselves. Help us to bring life and love, joy and hope, to those who live in despair.

We remember those who have died and pray for those who are bereaved. May the light of Christ which eternally shines bring hope to their dark places.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

*We pray for the church, for this parish, our mission partners and the whole church family.*

Dear Lord

Look after all the people in your Church throughout the world, especially those in countries where it is hard to be a Christian. We thank you for all who spend their lives helping others to find you. **Amen**

### The Lord's prayer

Leader    Gathering our prayers and praises into one,  
              As our Saviour has taught us so we pray.

**All        Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
              your kingdom come, your will be done,  
              on earth as in heaven.  
              Give us today our daily bread.  
              Forgive us our sins  
              as we forgive those who sin against us.  
              Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
              For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
              now and for ever. Amen.**

### Commissioning of PCC/DCC members

Leader:    Brothers and sisters, the Lord is calling us to work together for him on the Church Councils in the months ahead. Will you seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness?

**PCC/DCCs: I will**

Leader:    Will you follow Jesus the Servant in obedience, humility and sacrifice?

**PCC/DCCs: I will**

Leader:    Will you help make disciples of Jesus Christ by your testimony and ministry, in community and congregation?

**PCC/DCCs: I will**

## Prayer of Dedication

**PCC/DCC:** God our Father, we dedicate ourselves  
to serve you faithfully and to follow Christ:  
Send us out to work and to witness  
freely, gratefully and hopefully,  
in the power of the Holy Spirit,  
and for the honour and glory of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Commissioning of Congregation (*all stand*)

**Leader:** Will you pray for, support and encourage members of the  
PCC and DCCs in their role and seek to follow Christ in  
your daily lives?

**All:** We will

## Notices

### Hymn    **102 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.

Israel's strength and 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 for ever;  
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.

Words by Charles Wesley  
melody by Christian Friedrich Witt

## Closing Responses

**Leader** Lord, may all that you have revealed in promise

**All** Be delivered in hope.

**Leader** Lord, do not stop:

**All** Come into our world to bring new life.

## Blessing

Leader May God the Father, judge all-merciful,  
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.  
May God the Son, coming among us in power,  
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.  
May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,  
joyful in hope and constant in love.  
And the blessing...

Leader As we await our coming Saviour,  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ.  
Amen.**

