Worship at Home - prepared by Andrew Kelly
29th November 2026 *Tavistock Methodist Circuit*
Launceston Area Methodist Circuit

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We pray that it helps you spend some time with God, knowing that other people are sharing in worship too.

Welcome and Call to Worship

I would like to extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes on this first Sunday of Advent to everyone who receives this service wherever and whenever it is read. Hear God's promise of hope from Jeremiah 33, 14-16:

"The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Opening Prayer

We praise you, O loving God,
who gave your very self in human form,
your majesty born into our poverty,
your love lying in an out-house.
We thank you that amidst Bethlehem's noisy rush,
We find in you
    a focus for our activity,
    a hope for humanity.
    a love for all eternity.

But we confess that
Christ's birth has gone unnoticed.
Now, as then, we have not made room
in our day to day lives.
Now. as then, we have mislaid
your message of reconciling love.
Now, as then, we have ignored
the stillness of your presence.

Gift-giving God, forgive us.
Free us from our self-centredness.
Help us to accept your love so freely given
that we may live
as You have called us to live.
Amen

Hymn: Come thou long expected Jesus

Come, O long-expected Jesus,
born to set your people free!
from our fears and sins release us,
Christ in whom our rest shall be.

Israel's strength and consolation,
born salvation to impart;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born your people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king;
bro to reign in us forever,
now your gracious kingdom bring:

By your own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by your all-sufficient merit
raise us to your glorious throne.

Charles Wesley

The Lord's Prayer

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.
Forever and ever.
Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Spend a few minutes in reflection and prayer, move away from distractions and clear your mind, focus on Jesus and let your heart and mind connect with him. Direct your thoughts and raise them to the Lord lifting to him all the concerns, large or small, that are dear to your heart.

Focus on the Lord and direct your prayers from your heart to the throne of God Lord of all creation our Father who watches over us, and who's always with us, help us to make room in our lives where your holy presence may grow.

Remove from us those things which cause hurt to others and hurt to ourselves. Plant the seeds of advent in our hearts and souls, the seeds of Hope, Peace. Love and Joy that they might grow and prosper throughout this advent season and on into the years to come.

Eternal God, in the darkness of winter, and in the darkness of our broken world, the light of Jesus shines to give us Hope. Peace, Love and Joy.Light up our hearts as we praise you and our minds as we hear your word. Give strength we pray to those who seek to bring your light into the dark places of our world.

We pray that your Holy Spirit will work in us to help us to serve you day by day. Give us eyes to see you at work in our lives and those around us. May the joy of your salvation bum brightly in our soul so that we will be drawn closer to you. Hear our humble prayers that we may serve you in holiness and faith and give voice to your presence among us. These things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our lord and saviour, who lives and reigns forever and ever. **Amen**

Gospel reading: Matthew 24: 36-44

A time of reflection

Today is Advent Sunday and in churches up and down the land a candle is being lit - that candle is the Candle of Hope So if nothing else, know this. that when we have Jesus in our lives and in our hearts we have hope not just now but for all eternity.

Advent Sunday is the church's New Year's Day its name gives a clue Advent means coming but, who’s coming. It's definitely not Father Christmas.

It is so sad that the true wonder of Advent and Christmas is lost in the hype of the celebrity endorsed mayhem that sells an idea that we have to have the oh so perfect Christmas with all the trimmings with the best wine the best chocolates the colour coordinated tree a three bird roast and all that goes with it and amongst all this gaudy excess. The greatest event in human history is dimmed and in a lot of cases completely forgotten.

This event is the birth of Christ in human form. The son of God stepped out of glory humbled himself was born in a stable and was sacrificed that we might be reconciled to sin this is the greatest event in all of history and should rightly be celebrated.We should know why we are celebrating what we are celebrating and who we are worshiping.

At Advent we not only look to towards Christ's birth but also his coming again. Today's reading is in the middle of a two chapter section within Matthews's gospel which form quite a dramatic section. This section highlights the prediction that the Temple will be destroyed foretelling the persecutions desolation and sacrilege as prophesied by the prophet Daniel and finally highlighting the signs of the second coming followed by the parable of the Fig Tree.

We then have today's reading followed by three more parables that are directly related to today's reading

. The Parable of the Faithful and the Unfaithful Servant (24:45-51).
. The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (25:1-13),
. The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30),

This section closes with Jesus' portrayal of the judgment of the nations (25:31-46) in which the Son of Man separates people into two categories, the sheep who helped "the least of these", thereby serving Christ, and the goats, who failed to render this kind of service. The sheep are welcomed into the kingdom, but the goats are condemned (25:41). Christ will come again. His coming will be swift and surprising and we should be looking forward to it but like all the people in the parables we cannot and should not be complacent. Our daily lives should be Christ centred it is only then that we will be ready.

Tonight you will see plenty of warnings on the telly that if you don't buy this or don't buy that the whole of Christmas will be ruined or if you don't have this or don't have that. How many of us spend weeks if not months planning for the event that is Christmas but give little or any thought to the corning of Christ and what it mean to us. We heed the warnings about not missing out on getting our turkeys ordered on time or ordering our environmentally sustainable Christmas trees yet we fail to heed or even give thought to the clear and honest warnings throughout the Gospels.

So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

As we enter this advent season there is no better time to step back and ask ourselves which of the parables apply to me. Ask yourself if you were sat listening to Jesus which parable would he be sharing with you. We should be asking ourselves questions.

Have I grasped the enormity of Christ's mission here on earth?

Am I truly in an all-encompassing relationship with Christ?

Am I actively part of Christ's mission or amI lack lustre and just going through the motions?

Am I getting sucked into the secular rituals to please others?

Am I being dragged along by the crowd?

Is my Christian life being lost in a sea of tinsel and the glitter?

Is the chasing of the perfect Christmas getting between me and God by dimming the most important event in human history?

So this Advent and Christmas forget about the perfect dinner and the perfect present. But be alert, be thankful, and be ready for the wonderful and glorious work we have to do. In Christ's name let our presents this year be presents of Hope. Peace, Love and Joy in the name of Jesus and in doing so make this the best Christmas ever.

Hymn: Worship Song Light of the World

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 lite spent with You

And here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days
Oh so highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above
Humbly you came to the earth you created
All for the sake of love became poor

Here I am to worship. …

Chris Tomlin

Grace Prayer

Wherever we are, we can share the grace together:

> May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.
> the love of God and the fellowship of
> the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore,
> **Amen**

Closing Hymn O come, O come, Immanuel,

O come, O come, Immanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice ! Rejoice ! Immanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

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 ! …

O come, O come, thou Lord of might
Who to the tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe
Rejoice ! …

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadow's put to flight.
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 ! …

18th Century Latin tr J Mason Neal & others

Closing Prayer

To you O Lord we bring our lives. troubled, broken or at ease as a sacrificial offering for you to use.

Take away our selfishness and teach us to love as you loved.

Take away our sense of pride and show us the meaning of humility.

Take away our blindness and show us the world through your eyes.

Take away our greed and teach us how to give as you gave.

Show us your ways and teach us your paths that we might walk with you more closely our hand in your hand, our feet in your footsteps from the baby in a stable to all eternity.
Amen

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