

THE CAMEL-ALLEN CHURCHES

WORSHIP AT HOME – SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER 2020



If you have an advent wreath or two candles you might like to have them ready to light during this service

As we come into God's presence let us listen for his word to us today...

Hymn Be still for the presence of the Lord
The holy one is here
Come bow before him now
With reverence and fear
In him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The holy one is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendour he is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant king of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister his grace
No work too hard for him
In faith receive from him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place

We light our candles...

1st candle: We light this candle as a sign that the Word of God is present in the world.

2nd candle: We light this candle as a sign that in the wilderness, the rough places of life, a sure voice rises, calling on us to prepare the way for our God.



Confession and Absolution

God of mercy, we acknowledge that we are all sinners.
We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done,
and are mindful of all that we have failed to do.

For the sake of Jesus who died for us,
forgive us for all that is past,
and help us to live each day in the light of Christ our Lord. Amen

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw us to himself and cleanse us from all our sins,
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Collect

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as
judge and Saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God. Amen



Reading: Isaiah 40.1-11

^{40.1} *Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.*

³ *A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

⁴ *Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.*

⁵ *Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'*

⁶ *A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.*

⁷ *The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.*

⁸ *The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.*

⁹ Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
'Here is your God!'

¹⁰ See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

¹¹ He will feed his flock like a
shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Reading 2 Peter 3.8-15a

⁸ But do not ignore this one fact,
beloved, that with the Lord one day is
like a thousand years, and a
thousand years are like one day.

⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness,
but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to
repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then
the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will
be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it
will be disclosed.



¹¹ Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of
people ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness,
¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of
which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the
elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise,
we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at
home.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to
be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ¹⁵and regard the
patience of our Lord as salvation.

Hymn

Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release,
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before Him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of His grace,
to enrich the humble poor.

Our glad Hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring,
with Thy beloved Name.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia

Mark 1.1-8

¹*The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

²*As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,*

*‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;*

³*the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:*

*“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight” ’,*

⁴*John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism
of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the
whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were
going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with
a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.*

⁷*He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after
me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his
sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with
the Holy Spirit.’*



Reflection

There have been many ‘silver-linings’ to this awful Pandemic in general and lockdown in particular: we have enjoyed the natural world around us; received support from friends and strangers; some have had relationships strengthened by spending more time together, even virtually; we have all been reminded of the importance of social interaction; of family and friends, of a touch, a hug, a smile. What have been some of the silver-linings for you?

However, some of us for much of the time, and, I suspect, all of us for some of the time, have found it a wilderness, a barren desert that is difficult to travel through. It has highlighted weaknesses and vulnerabilities, sorrows and losses. Many have been anxious, stressed, perhaps depressed and sometimes angry: maybe spiritually drained and weary too. Have you experienced wilderness times?

And we have been forced to wait: to wait for announcements and restrictions to wait for decisions and permissions; to wait to do the things we want; to wait anxiously for news of loved ones; to wait, and wait and wait for it all to be over, for help to come and the situation to be resolved.

Advent of course is a time of waiting: of looking forward with hope to the coming of Emmanuel God with us, and of being still through the tough times as we wait for the coming again of Jesus, Lord and King, when he comes to bring all things to resolution, as God has planned from the beginning.

Advent is also a time of preparation; of making a smooth path for God to come. As our hymn says, ‘Then cleansed be every breast

from sin: make straight the way for God within, prepare we in our heart's a home, where such a mighty guest may come.'

Advent is also a time to know that God is with us in the wilderness and offers comfort and strength to get through.

This year with a Christmas far from normal, we perhaps have a unique opportunity to truly take some time and space to prepare for the coming of the Light into our sometimes dark experience of life. Where do you need his light to shine? What rough places need to be smoothed in preparation for his coming? In other words what can you do to prepare, and what do you ask him to do in you, and for you this Advent time?

Affirmation of faith

(from Philipians 2)

Though he (Jesus) was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Hymn

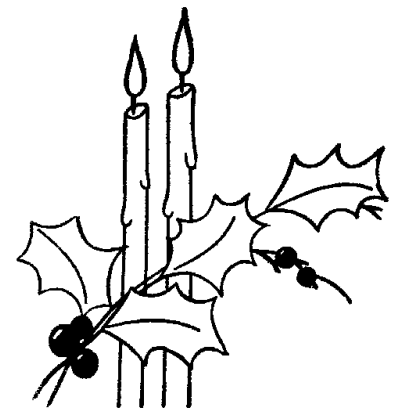
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh.
Awake and harken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every breast from sin:
make straight the way for God within,
prepare we in our heart's a home,
where such a mighty guest may come.

For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward.
Without thy grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out thine hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee
whose advent dost thy people free,
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Ghost for evermore.



Prayers of intercession

God of cleansing and liberating power, give us the courage and perception to see ourselves as we really are, and come before you for forgiveness and renewal.

O come Emmanuel: come and live in us.

God of wisdom and truth, we pray for the world's leaders and all in authority, nationally and locally, that they may lead and govern wisely, especially at this time of such crucial and difficult decisions, may they work without bias and for the common good.

O come Emmanuel: come and live in us.

God of love and faithfulness, we pray for those who are struggling at the moment, especially those faced with the loss of jobs and livelihood may each family and individual be surrounded and upheld by your presence, troubles eased and needs provided for.

O come Emmanuel: come and live in us.

God of wholeness, bring your reassurance and healing, your hope and patience to all who are suffering in body mind or spirit; bring freedom to all imprisoned by hate or guilt, and a change of heart to all who need to forgive.

O come Emmanuel: come and live in us.

God of unending life, bring life in all its fulness to us here, and to those who have completed their time on earth, may they know the freedom and joy of your heaven.

O come Emmanuel: come and live in us.

God of warmth and light, we praise you for your many blessings, and above all for coming to save us and set us free.

(You may like to use the prayer list in the accompanying letter here too.)

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen

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

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me

Closing prayer and blessing

O Lord our God,
make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;

that, when he shall appear,
he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service
and joyful in his praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

The blessing of God Almighty,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Be with us all, evermore,
Amen



Stay safe, don't forget to extinguish your candles!

*Common Worship Services and prayers for the Church of England
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