

NAURC Worship for the fourth Sunday of Advent

20th December 2020

Led by Revd Pauline Rate and Revd John Potter

Welcome

Opening responses

In towns and villages

In tents and tower blocks

Jesus is waiting to be born

In private hospitals

In refugee camps

Jesus is waiting to be born

In palaces and shanty-towns

In high streets and back-streets

Jesus is waiting to be born

In the vastness of the universe

In the intimacy of our hearts

Jesus is waiting to be born

In us, in our neighbours

In the world we live in

Jesus is waiting to be born.

Come, Lord Jesus

Come into our homes

Come into our lives

Come and stay.

From 'Winter' and 'Candles and Conifers' Ruth Burgess

Lighting of the fourth advent candle

Christian Aid

We light this candle for all God-bearers,
saying 'yes' to God's challenge,
accepting the pain and joy of an unknown future.

God, as we wait for your promise,

Give light, give hope.

Hymn: It came upon the midnight clear

Prayers of approach and confession

Loving God,

We gather in this season of promise to worship you and sing your praise.

We praise you for your love and for your faithfulness,

for you are the source of all hope and from you all joy springs.

You are the one we expect, but your coming is always unexpected.

You are the one who turns everything upside down and you make all things new.

Advent God of surprises,

we worship you

and we wait for you to awaken our wonder

and astound us with your arrival.

Loving God,

in this season of excitement and weariness open our hearts to your presence,

for we know you meet us and hold us:

in and beyond the busyness

in and beyond the glitter

in and beyond the rush.

When we are tired and frayed,

when we lose sight of what it's all about,

when we put ourselves first and forget that you come to bring love,

come close and restore us and forgive us, we pray.

Loving God, mend our broken hearts

and help us to know ourselves forgiven and loved.

In our thankfulness

help us to wait and to watch for you,

faithfully and truly all our days.

Amen.

From 'Winter' Ruth Burgess

Bible reading: Luke 1. 26 – 38

Luke 1. 39 - 56

Hymn: Sing we a song of high revolt

Tune: Truro LM

Sing we a song of high revolt;
make great the Lord, his name exalt!
Sing we the song that Mary sang
of God at war with human wrong.

Sing we of him who deeply cares
and still with us our burden bears.
He who with strength the proud disowns,
brings down the mighty from their thrones.

By him the poor are lifted up;
he satisfies with bread and cup
the hungry ones of many lands;
the rich must go with empty hands.

He calls us to revolt and fight
with him for what is just and right,
to sing and live Magnificat
in crowded street and council flat.

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Bible reading: Isaiah 11.1 - 10

The sermon

Hymn: When out of poverty is born Tune: Kingsfold Christian Aid

When out of poverty is born
a dream that will not die
a landless, weary folk find strength
to stand with heads held high,
it's then we learn from those who wait
to greet the promised day:
'The Lord is coming; don't lose heart
Be blest: prepare the way!'

When people wander far from God,

forget to share their bread,
they find their wealth an empty thing,
their spirits are not fed.

For only just and tender love
the hungry soul will stay.

And so God's prophets echo still:

'Be blest: prepare the way!'

When God took flesh and came to earth,
the world turned upside down,
and in the strength of women's faith
the Word of Life was born.

She knew that God would raise the low,
it pleased her to obey.

Rejoice with Mary in the call:

'Be blest: prepare the way!'

Words: Kathy Galloway, provided with permission

Prayers of intercession

Loving God, who filled your holy prophets
with visions of grace and peace,
grant us clear sight to see and understand your will for us.
Merciful God, may we be a blessing to everyone we meet.

We pray today for families of all kinds, but especially for fathers and mothers to be – those who are expecting their own children, those who are fostering or adopting children, and those who are becoming step-parents – as they wonder about their new roles and responsibilities and whether they will cope. We hold before you their hopes and fears, the anticipation of pain and heartache and the expectation of joy. May they find reassurance, encouragement and affirmation.

Child of promise, Immanuel, you are with us.

As the Holy Family had to seek shelter in strange places, we pray today for all who seek shelter in our community today. We think of those who are homeless and living on the streets of this city and many other cities, and those who are cramped into unsuitable temporary accommodation. We pray especially for organisations who are seeking to help to provide shelter and warmth and care – for Shelter, the Salvation Army, St. Martin's, Open Christmas and for many groups and individuals working to bring Christmas to those in need.

We pray too for those who are fleeing to other countries for safety and find themselves living in refugee camps, and for those who are not able to escape from conflict and daily face danger. And we thank you for the efforts of organisations like Christian Aid, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and many other aid agencies and donors.

Son of the Most High, Immanuel, you are with your world.

Loving God, we pray today for those known to us who are ill, for those coping with pain or fearing the worst and for those caring for loved ones. We also remember those who grieve the loss of loved ones this Christmas time, and those whose memory of family Christmas is one of pain and sadness. Wrap them in your love and wipe away their tears.

Jesus, Messiah and King, Immanuel, hear our prayers. We rest our hopes on you, for in you alone lies our hope and salvation.

Lord Jesus, make us a people of promise.

Let your kingdom come.

Make us righteous and faithful.

Let your kingdom come.

Help us to be gentle wolves and peaceful leopards;
tender lions and quiet bears.

Let your kingdom come.

May the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord.

Let your kingdom come
as the waters cover the sea.

Son of God, Saviour of the world, you show us the way to the Father, so we say together.....Our Father.....

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Hark! The herald angels sing

The blessing

Christian Aid

We close our time together with a blessing for hope:

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing so that you may abound in hope by the
power of the Holy Spirit'. Romans 15:13

May you abound in the hope of the prophets,
imagining another way

May you abound in the hope of a mother,
singing revolution

May you abound in the hope of an infant,
the incarnation of love

May you abound in the love that builds hope
this day and evermore

And may you have a hopeful Advent and a
comforting Christmas. **Amen.**