

Sunday 27 November 2022

ADVENT SUNDAY



Are you looking forward to opening the doors on your Advent calendar? The Church also begins getting ready for Christmas today, on Advent Sunday. We don't open doors on a calendar, but we do light candles on an Advent wreath.

Listen to the words the choir sing as the first candle is lit:

"Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors; to you be praise and glory for ever. You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment. May we be obedient to your call and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for you are our light and salvation. Blessed be God for ever."

"Ready and watchful". Advent is a time of waiting, but many people have forgotten how to wait and they are so busy that they lose sight of what Advent and Christmas are really all about. As Christians, we can help people to understand what Advent means and what we really celebrate at Christmas.

Happy New Year! A bit early? No - today is the first day of a new Church year! This is the year of St Matthew. This Church year, we read the stories of Jesus, mainly from St Matthew's Gospel.

Our Gospel reading today is Matthew 24:36-44 and in it we hear Jesus telling his followers they must be ready for when he comes. "Keep awake" he says, "for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming".


As we prepare for our celebrations of Jesus's birth at Christmas, we also give thanks that he comes to us when we receive Holy Communion at the Eucharist, in his Word, when we read our Bible, or listen for the readings at our service, and in his Holy Spirit, who lives in our hearts all the time.

We should also be getting ready for Jesus to come again. There are special people who help us to get ready, by pointing the way and by teaching us about Jesus. During Advent we will learn about these special people as, week by week, we light the candles on our Advent wreath.

§As we light the first candle, we remember the first people who pointed the way to Jesus – the Patriarchs, especially Abraham. Abraham understood that there is only one God, and knew about faith and believing God's promises. You can read about him in the Old Testament – in the very first book of the Bible, Genesis.



Like Abraham, we trust God's promises. We are waiting, because Jesus has promised to come again some day, and all things will be made new. We wait with joy, and hope, and with thanksgiving, as we also wait to celebrate Jesus's first coming at Christmas. That's what Advent is all about!

 Here is a prayer for lighting the first candle:

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.

 You might like to use this prayer during this coming week.

How about writing an Advent prayer of your own in the space below?

You could colour the candles on the picture below week by week as you say the prayers - there will be another one next Sunday.



Be Prepared

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

Matthew 24:44 (NIV)

Based on Matthew 36-44



W S O N Q R C B W A T C H W V
L Z K H E X P E C T S E U O D
N L V Q F E R G J L E M T V U
F M V E M A K N I C G A H R W
Y D H O U S E H Y K M J I W Z
Z F C N O V W G O O W N E R U
X Q R P A N A C T U H J F L V
U Z L E J O G Y M Y R L R H Q
A I H M B E L H K C E W P S R
N M O X I K N O W X J J F R E
G Z X R E A D Y Y T T F C M V
E B V F C P D I H P W O I T L
L C U Q H E Q G W P T T Z E B
S G W Q S Q I C D T Z W M Z R
S I L N T N S D D A Y J B Q B

KNOW
ANGELS
OWNER

SON
HOUSE
READY

EXPECT
WATCH
COME

HEAVEN
TIME
NIGHT

HOUR
THIEF
DAY



KEEP AWAKE

WHAT I SAY TO YOU I SAY TO ALL: KEEP AWAKE

BEWARE, KEEP ALEFT: FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE TIME WILL COME.