

Worship at Home - Sunday 27 November 2022 – Advent 1

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Call to worship

In the last days the nations will worship the Lord God. **Now let us enter his presence.**

In the last days the nations will learn his ways. **Now let us walk in his righteous paths.**

In the last days the nations will seek his peace and justice. **Now let us follow his light.**

(based on Isaiah 2:1-5)

Hymn: StF169 Come, thou long-expected Jesus

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here
[\(45\) Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus \(Tune: Cross of Jesus - 4vv\) \[with lyrics for cngregations\] - YouTube](#)

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.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray together

Ever-living God, without beginning or end, you are the maker of space and the author of time; you are the giver of life: **and we praise you.**

Grace-bringing Word, light of life and revealer of truth, you are the saviour we need and the hope of our world: **and we praise you.**

Free-roaming Spirit, encourager of faith and bearer of wisdom, you are our guide and our power to serve: **and we praise you.**

Into our days and years, into our words and deeds, into our joys and sorrows, our successes and failures: **come, Lord God, Life, Word and Light. Amen.**

A New Testament Reading: Romans 13:11-14

Today's Gospel Reading: Matthew 24:36-44

Time to Reflect

Karl Marx famously described religion as 'the opiate of the people, a kind of spiritual moonshine.' Something to keep us quiet and biddable to the will of the powerful and ruthless. He must not have read either Matthew or Paul.

Jesus, in the Gospels, and Paul, in his letters, are both aware that history is the arena of God's action and purpose. They both live as though time is significant and limited, a gift or tool to be used wisely. Both have a conviction that there is an endpoint to history, a moment when the final whistle will be blown and God will reckon the score.

Today, the beginning of Advent, is a time when we recall that God broke into history in Jesus of Nazareth. We turn our attention to the significance of his birth and life as we look at the people who were around him, their lives intertwined with his, each playing their own part in the drama of God's story with their various and individual yesses to his will.

But our readings today also present us with a powerful conviction that we occupy a finite window of opportunity. The day of the Lord is nearer now and we do not know how long may be left.

We are not meant to know. That is not the point. "No one knows about the day or the hour." We are not meant to use our time trying to interpret the images and indications of Scripture in order to plot the date of the Day of the Lord. "No one knows", nor can they.

Rather, these passages invite us to live our lives for God, to be fully present to each day, to find the opportunities to serve him and bear his love, grace and mercy to those who haven't yet seen that there is more to life than "eating and drinking, marrying and being married", or pursuing the passions of the darkness that Paul describes.

We are encouraged to live as people who are wide awake, clear-sighted, passionately following Jesus, faithful and ready to take each day as the day of the Lord, the day when

his sovereign will is done and heaven comes closer to earth. Wake up. Keep watch. Not to plot a timetable to a final apocalypse, but rather to see that, through all the uncertainties and conflicts of this world, God is still God. And God is with us. Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

We hold before God the world he loves, fragile and vulnerable as it is. We pray for peace for its conflicts, stability for its turmoil, wisdom for its leaders and hope for its peoples.

Light of God: **guide us and heal us.**

We hold before God the Church he calls, fragile and vulnerable as it is. We pray for unity in its purpose, faithfulness for its members, wisdom in its vision and hopefulness for its future.

Light of God: **guide us and heal us.**

We hold before God the communities we serve, fragile and vulnerable as they are. We pray for fairness in their governance, kindness among neighbours, health for their institutions and opportunities for their people.

Light of God: **guide us and heal us.**

We hold before God our own lives and the lives of others, fragile and vulnerable as they are. We pray for love in our relationships, courage in our challenges, healing for our ills and renewal in our rest.

Light of God: **guide us and heal us.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to StF170 Arise, Shine [\(45\) Darkness like a shroud - YouTube](#) or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

Darkness like a shroud covers the earth.
Evil like a cloud covers the people.
But the Lord will rise upon you
and his glory will appear on you,
nations will come to your light.

Arise, shine, your light has come,
the glory of the Lord has risen on you!
Arise, shine, your light has come,
Jesus the Light of the world has come.

Children of the light, be clean and pure.
Rise, you sleepers, Christ will shine on you.
Take the Spirit's flashing two-edged sword
and with faith declare God's mighty word;
stand up and in his strength be strong.

Here among us now, Christ the Light

kindles brighter flames in our trembling hearts.
Living Word, our lamp, come guide our feet
as we walk as one in light and peace
till justice and truth shine like the sun.

Like a city bright so let us blaze;
lights in every street turning night to day.
And the darkness shall not overcome
till the fullness of Christ's kingdom comes,
dawning to God's eternal day.

Arise, shine, your light has come,
the glory of the Lord has risen on you!
Arise, shine, your light has come,
Jesus the Light of the world,
Jesus the Light of the world,
Jesus the Light of the world has come.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

A prayer of blessing

May the God of love protect you like a father and hold you like a mother;
may Saviour Son grace you and lead you;
and may the Holy Spirit empower and inspire you:
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and until Time's end. Amen

Original Materials by Revd. Dave Bonny,

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Local Churches please insert CCCLI No here

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team and will end at the end of 2022.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://The Bible (methodist.org.uk))

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://Singing the Faith Plus (methodist.org.uk))

Romans 13:11-14 Understand the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Matthew 24:36-44 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴²"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.