

27th November, 2022

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing,

the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

Refrain

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

Refrain

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

Refrain

O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode.

Refrain

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.

Refrain

O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.

Refrain



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

Sermon by David Bush: We live expectantly.

Read 1 John 5:13-21 and John 17:1-5

Let me ask you, how do you feel having read this final section of John's letter? Did you understand it, do you get the key point or points in what he wrote? Would it help if we read it again?

I struggled, I'll admit – I don't think it is clear and obvious in its lessons – not don't misunderstand – this isn't a criticism for John or his writing - it may well have been more meaningful to John original readers or listeners – and it may well be a little clearer when taken as whole with the rest of his letter – we do see it a little out of context here.

There is a context for this passage, because it is at the end of the letter we have studied, and in one way or another we should expect it to be a conclusion, a summary, a reemphasis of John's main teachings and concerns. And indeed, I think it is.

But, I'd like to address some of the difficult some of you may have found here because if we can settle that a little for ourselves, it may leave our minds a little more open to the key message (at least as I see it, today!)

And the main question I had is around the words in verse 16, specifically the words:

'There is a sin that leads to death'

and then shortly afterwards the words

'I am not saying that you should pray about that.'

Let's just step back to see the normal context of that verse and it is that if we see others (and I think we can infer from 'brothers and sisters' that John means fellow Christians), falling short of Gods standards, then we should pray for them. Our prayers for other Christians who are falling short is important and is effective. And of course – their prayers for us when we are falling short – we mustn't forget that side!

But there are two parts worth a little exploration:

First, the statement

‘There is a sin that leads to death’

Well, OK – but one obvious question from us is: “Oh, and what is it!”, and perhaps if we drill a little deeper we might ask “Do you mean physical death or spiritual death?”

So John doesn’t tell us what it is, and I am not sure there is a strong consensus I’ve found to answer that.

And the second part needs a second take I think – a bit like those double negative sentences that you have to go back over to make sure you have got it – my take is essentially is he isn’t saying you should, and he isn’t saying you shouldn’t! It’s up to you!!

So if this is a troubling part of the passage for you I wouldn’t let it be!

Much more helpful, I think is to focus on v19 onwards.

Especially as we sit here on Advent Sunday!

(And cheekily I’d like to advertise our Advent reflection series here – a short 5 to 10-minute reading and reflection you can find on YouTube and the Church website each day of advent)

Advent is a time to focus on God’s promises to us, and the Hope, Peace, Love and Joy that comes from our saviour being born as one of us and experiencing the joys and troubles of being human – alongside us. And returning to the Father to intercede for us.

A major theme of this letter from John is that he has been providing us with ways of knowing, proofs if you like, that we are “from God.”

So in the storms of life, and your own weaknesses and failings, KNOW that you are still belong to Him – the one who rules the one who endlessly forgives, the one who loves. battles once again, confident that you will help us to overcome.

Amen.

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)

- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.



Collect: First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Praise: 3pm Sunday Dec. 4th.
- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 18th Jan. at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 25th Jan at 11am in Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.