

CAVERSHAM PARK
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Holy Communion Service order
(Sunday 3rd December 2023)
Advent - Year B

**Trinity Sunday service with Holy Communion
at Caversham Park URC (Forth Order)**

Opening Hymn: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

(On Screen)

Let us worship God.

This is the day which the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord;
for God's love endures for ever.

Our service today looks at stories from the Bible that teach us about Advent and the coming Baby Jesus.

Today is the start of the Christmas season and the start of New Year in the church, for those of you who follow the lectionary closely we are at the start of year B using track 2, So what do you know about Advent – quite a lot I guess, but let's start by recapping with a poem written by Todd Jenkins called "Twas The Beginning of Advent". It will tell you a little bit about this season we celebrate.

'Twas the beginning of Advent and all through the Church
Our hope was all dying-- we'd given up on the search.
It wasn't so much that Christ wasn't invited,
But after 2,000 plus years we were no longer excited.

Oh, we knew what was coming-- no doubt about that.
And that was the trouble-- it was all "old hat."
November brought the first of an unending series of pains
With carefully orchestrated advertising campaigns.

There were gadgets and dolls and all sorts of toys.
Enough to seduce even the most devout girls and boys.
Unfortunately, it seemed, no one was completely exempt
From this seasonal virus that did all of us tempt.

The priests and prophets and certainly the kings
Were all so consumed with the desire for "things!"
It was rare, if at all, that you'd hear of the reason
For the origin of this whole holy-day season.

A baby, it seems, once had been born
In the mid-east somewhere on that first holy-day morn.
But what does that mean for folks like us,
Who've lost ourselves in the hoopla and fuss?

Can we re-learn the art of wondering and waiting,
Of hoping and praying, and anticipating?

Can we let go of all the things and the stuff?
Can we open our hands and our hearts long enough?

Can we open our eyes and open our ears?
Can we find him again after all of these years?
Will this year be different from all the rest?
Will we be able to offer him all of our best?

So many questions, unanswered thus far,
As wise men seeking the home of the star.
Where do we begin-- how do we start
To make for the child a place in our heart?

Perhaps we begin by letting go
Of our limits on hope, and of the stuff that we know.
Let go of the shopping, of the chaos and fuss,
Let go of the searching, let Christmas find us.

We open our hearts, our hands and our eyes,
To see the king coming in our own neighbours' cries.
We look without seeking what we think we've earned,
But rather we're looking for relationships spurned.

With him he brings wholeness and newness of life
For brother and sister, for husband and wife.
The Christ-child comes not by our skill,
But rather he comes by his own Father's will.

We can't make him come with parties and bright trees,
But only by getting down on our knees.
He'll come if we wait amidst our affliction,
Coming in spite of, not by our restriction.

His coming will happen-- of this there's no doubt.
The question is whether we'll be in or out.
"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."
Do you have the courage to peer through the lock?

A basket on your porch, a child in your reach.
A baby to love, to feed and to teach.
He'll grow in wisdom as God's only Son.
How far will we follow this radical one?

He'll lead us to challenge the way that things are.
He'll lead us to follow a single bright star.
But that will come later if we're still around.
The question for now: Is the child to be found?

Can we block out commercials, the hype and the shops?

Can we find solitude in our holy store?
Can we keep alert, keep hope, stay awake?
Can we receive the child for ours and God's sake?

From on high with the carolling host as he sees us,
He yearns to read on our lips the prayer: Come Lord Jesus!
As Advent begins all these questions make plea.
The only true answer: We will see, we will see.

LET US PRAY - Dear Lord Jesus - help us to see you, to be prepared for when you come again, and help us now, to celebrate this season, with hope and peace, and with joy and love. Amen.

Hymn 2 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

The God to whom we make our confession is the God who loved us so much that God took on mortality, choosing to limit the divine, in order to understand us and be with us. Trusting in that love, let us make our confession, first in silent prayer.

Silence

On screen

We confess, Merciful God, that our lives are burdened by the weight of our sinfulness. We are overwhelmed by the things that we cannot accept and by the expectations that others have for us. We have hurt others by what we have said and not said. We have wounded our sisters and brothers with deeds done and left undone. At times, we have been careless, thoughtless and unkind. We are bold to ask you to lift the burdens of our worry and guilt from our shoulders. Love us and forgive us as we stand in your presence. Amen

We are sisters and brothers in Christ, adopted children of the most High God. Our salvation was purchased by the blood of Jesus our Brother on the Cross. In his name, we have forgiveness and reconciliation with God. We are cleansed and purified by the faith that we have in Christ. **Amen.**

On screen

Thanks be to God

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father:**

receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Reading 1 - Isaiah 64:1-9 (NRSV)

Reading 2 – Psalm 80:1-8 (NRSV)

Hymn 3 – O Day of God, Draw Nigh.

Gospel – Mark 13:24-37 (NRSV)

Sermon – The Teachers Missing

Hymn 4 - Hail To God's Own Anointed

Intercessions

Gracious words

Hear the gracious words of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. *John 6:35*

Anyone who comes to me, I will never drive away. *John 5:37*

The Peace

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Peace be with you.

Hymn 5 – Let there be peace on Earth.

The Narrative of the Institution of the Lord's Supper

Hear the narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper as it was recorded by the apostle Paul.

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as

you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

The Taking of the Bread and wine

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and following his example, we take this bread and this cup, and give thanks to God.

The Thanksgiving (On Screen)

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

With joy we give you thanks and praise, Almighty God, Source of all life and love, that we live in your world, that you are always creating and sustaining it by your power, and that you have so made us that we can know and love you, trust and serve you. We give you thanks that you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life.

We praise you that through his coming, your promises given by the prophets were fulfilled, and that the day of our deliverance has dawned; and, as we look for the triumph of his kingdom, we exult with holy joy.

Therefore, with all the company of heaven, and with all your people, of all places and times, we proclaim your greatness and sing your praise.

(On Screen)

Holy, holy, holy Lord

God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy Lord God, by what we do herein remembrance of Christ we celebrate his perfect sacrifice on the Cross and his glorious resurrection and ascension; we declare that he is Lord of all; and we prepare for his coming in his kingdom. We pray that through your Holy Spirit this bread may be for us the body of Christ and this wine the blood of Christ. Accept our sacrifice of praise; and as we eat and drink at his command unite us to Christ as one body in him, and give us strength to serve you in the world. And to you, one holy and eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we give praise and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer (On Screen)

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All 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.**

The Breaking of the Bread

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed
took bread and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way also the cup saying
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.'

If the narrative of the institution has been used earlier in the service, as the bread is broken the minister may say:

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

And as the cup is raised the minister may say:

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Distribution of the Bread and Wine then follows with the following hymn:

Hymn 6 – Here O Our Lord We See Thee Face To Face

The Acclamation (On Screen)

Let us praise the Lord.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Blessing and honour and glory

and power be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

(On Screen)

Most gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. You have fed us with the bread of life, and renewed us for your service.

Now we give ourselves to you; and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom, and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Notices

Offerings

Lord Jesus - we offer these gifts to you. Bless them and us in your service as we wait in hope for your return. Make, we pray, all that we offer fruitful in the work of your most glorious kingdom. Amen

Dismissal and Blessing:

In the power of the Holy Spirit, we now go forth into the world, to fulfil our calling as the people of God, the body of Christ.

Go in peace -love and care for one another in the name of Christ; And may the Lord bless you and keep you, make he make his face shine upon you, may he lift up his countenance upon you and give to you a transforming hope and a joyful faith till the time of his coming in power and glory. **Amen.**

Hymn 7 – O Come, All Ye Faithful