

St John's

Prayers:

Come to us, Lord our God, stretch out your arm to save. Strengthen our hands to love for the sake of the world that is your own.

We pray for those facing the isolation of illness today, especially those who have asked for our prayers:

Sick: Lolita Alvira, Peggy Aris, Scott Bradley, Mavis Deluce, Ruth Gillespie, Susan Jones and Sue Ralfe.

We also commend to God, those who have died:

RIP: Eric Edwards.

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Contacts

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The Parish Office is closed.

Matthew and Jonny are continuing to say Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer at home. Join them [here](#).

St John's Church

Pew Sheet

29th November 2020

Lockdown 2

The church will be open as follows:

Wednesday 10.30am

Sunday 9.30am

The online service will be available every Sunday.

Please contact Matthew or Jonny if you need any help or support.

**Jesus said,
"What I say to you, I say to all.
Keep awake"
Mark 13.:32**

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk

Please do check our website for future updates

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Advent Sunday (Year B begins)

Collect:

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.

Readings:

[Isaiah 64:1-9](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#)

[Mark 13:24-37](#)

Short Sermon by Jean Orpwood, Licensed Lay Minister

Today is Advent Sunday, the first day of the Church's New Year. Unlike some who start celebrating Christmas on 1st December, the Church invites us to spend these days in prayerful preparation, not only for Christmas, but also to reflect on God's promise to return in Glory. God coming to his people is echoed in all our readings and is the basis of our Hope, both for now and in the future.

From the Old Testament the prophet begs God to come in mercy and save His people from their sins, calling Him to "tear open the heavens" so the nations would tremble. "Restore us, O God: let your face shine upon us", echoes the psalmist, "that we may be saved". So, in His great Love, God came in Jesus as our Saviour, to ransom His people from their sin and restore the lost relationship with God and His people. This is what we celebrate at Christmas; Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us; not only then but also for us in 2020. Knowing the unchanging God is with us gives us the hope and reassurance to rest in His love, especially during these uncertain lockdown days. Good News indeed for all who face difficult times now.

In the New Testament, Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians to continue to grow and be faithful in using their spiritual gifts, as they prepare for the Coming Day of the Lord. Many in the Early Church

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had expected Jesus to return in their own day, so some were reluctant to grow in their faith, hence Paul urges them to keep going.

In the Gospel, rather than answering the disciples questions about when the end will be, Jesus describes how it will be and gives clear instruction always to be on watch for signs of it. He calls us not to waste time and energy puzzling about when these things will happen, but rather to live responsibly in the present and leave the rest to God.

So, the theme for Advent is about waiting and watching, in Hope, for the Coming Day of the Lord, as our first hymn tells us: "Lo, He comes with clouds descending", in power and great glory. Until then, as Paul says, we need to be faithful in using our own spiritual gifts, for the good of all around us and to take time for prayer and study to enable us to grow in our faith.

How do we do that? The Church of England [website](#) offers us an abundance of resources for prayers in every season, especially during this pandemic. Then there are books for study and reflection in Advent, many available online, with just a page or so to read each day. This is a useful discipline for this penitential season. Giving extra time for God to speak to us in these dark days will enrich our faith and encourage us in our service for God. In Isaiah 45, we read that God promises to "give us the treasures of darkness, that we may know that it is the Lord, that calls us by our name".

In our final hymn today, we long for the Light and Truth of Christ to come into our own lives, as individuals and as the Church in this place. This enables us to be Christ's Light, His Voice, His Bread and His Shelter to God's world and to be His servants to one another as we await the coming of His Kingdom. Over these past months, we have seen many people in our communities bringing Christ's light and His love to those in need around us. As we open the windows of our Advent calendars in the days ahead, rather than just reaching for the chocolate that lies inside it, maybe we can find ways to offer some small gift of our own to someone whose need is greater than ours. Alleluia, Come Lord Come! Amen.

*Christ, be our light, shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness,
Christ be our light, shine in your Church, gathered today.*