**St John’s, Bourne End**

**worshipping together while we are apart**

**Sunday 29th November – First Sunday of Advent**

*I suggest that if there is more than one of you, you choose someone to read the words in normal print and all join in with the words in bold or if you are alone, you silently read the words in normal print and say the words in bold out loud. Try not to rush through the words but allow some time for God to speak to you and you to hear him.*

*Remember, although we may be physically apart, we are together in spirit as we worship God together for we are all part of God’s family at St John’s.*

***Welcome and gathering***

O Lord, open our lips

**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Reveal among us the light of your presence

**that we may behold your power and glory.**

Blessed are you, Sovereign God of all,

to you be praise and glory for ever.

In your tender compassion

the dawn from on high is breaking upon us

to dispel the lingering shadows of night.

As we look for your coming among us this day,

open our eyes to behold your presence

and strengthen our hands to do your will,

that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

***Confession***

A voice cries out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’

So let us listen, and turn to the Lord in penitence and faith.

based on John 1.23

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,**

**we have sinned against you,**

**through our own fault,**

**in thought, and word, and deed,**

**and in what we have left undone.**

**We are heartily sorry,**

**and repent of all our sins.**

**For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake,**

**forgive us all that is past;**

**and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.**

May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son

and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. **Amen.**

**Praise: Psalm 80.1-7**

Hear us, Shepherd of Israel,

you who lead Joseph like a flock.

You who sit enthroned between the cherubim,

shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

**Awaken your might;**

**come and save us.**

Restore us, O God;

make your face shine on us,

that we may be saved.

**How long, Lord God Almighty,**

**will your anger smoulder**

**against the prayers of your people?**

You have fed them with the bread of tears;

you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.

**You have made us an object of derision to our neighbours,**

**and our enemies mock us.**

Restore us, God Almighty;

make your face shine on us,

that we may be saved.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

***Collect***

**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.**

***Pause for Thought***

Today is Advent Sunday, the beginning of a season in which we think about waiting: waiting to celebrate the coming of Jesus at Christmas and waiting for Jesus to come again. How good are you at waiting for things?

***Readings***

**Isaiah 64:1-9**

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,

that the mountains would tremble before you!

As when fire sets twigs ablaze

and causes water to boil,

come down to make your name known to your enemies

and cause the nations to quake before you!

For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,

you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

Since ancient times no one has heard,

no ear has perceived,

no eye has seen any God besides you,

who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

You come to the help of those who gladly do right,

who remember your ways.

But when we continued to sin against them,

you were angry.

How then can we be saved?

All of us have become like one who is unclean,

and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;

we all shrivel up like a leaf,

and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

No one calls on your name

or strives to lay hold of you;

for you have hidden your face from us

and have given us over to our sins.

Yet you, Lord, are our Father.

We are the clay, you are the potter;

we are all the work of your hand.

Do not be angry beyond measure, Lord;

do not remember our sins for ever.

Oh, look upon us we pray,

for we are all your people.

**1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way – with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge – God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

***Talk***

*Revd Rachel Hamilton*

***Praise: Benedictus***

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,

who has come to his people and set them free.

**He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,**

**born of the house of his servant David.**

Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies,

from the hands of all that hate us,

**To show mercy to our ancestors,**

**and to remember his holy covenant.**

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

**Free to worship him without fear,**

**holy and righteous in his sight**

**all the days of our life.**

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

**To give his people knowledge of salvation**

**by the forgiveness of all their sins.**

In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

**To shine on those who dwell in darkness and**

**the shadow of death,**

**and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

based on Luke 1.68-79

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

***Prayers***

This week we are praying for those who live and work in Sharpes Lane and Pix Farm Lane.

*Maranatha is an Aramaic word traditionally translated ‘Our Lord, come.’*

In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid

we pray to Jesus.

Come to your Church as Lord and judge.

We pray for …

Help us to live in the light of your coming

and give us a longing for your kingdom.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your world as King of the nations.

We pray for …

Before you rulers will stand in silence.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to the suffering as Saviour and comforter.

We pray for …

Break into our lives,

where we struggle with sickness and distress,

and set us free to serve you for ever.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to us as shepherd and guardian of our souls.

We remember …

Give us with all the faithful departed

a share in your victory over evil and death.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come from heaven, Lord Jesus, with power and great glory.

Lift us up to meet you,

that with all your saints and angels

we may live and reign with you in your new creation.

Maranatha:

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

*Silence is kept.*

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay;

give new courage to your people,

who trust in your love.

By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom

on earth as in heaven,

where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit,

one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

We gather our prayers together in the words that Jesus taught us:

**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.**

***Closing Prayer***

Our Lord says, ‘I am coming soon.’

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

May the Lord, when he comes,

**find us watching and waiting.**

**Amen.**

***Dismissal***

As we await our coming Saviour, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ, Amen.**

***Now why not make yourself a cup of tea or coffee and ring someone from St John’s for a chat?***