

Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit

Worship at Home

Brought today by Deacon Nigel Perrott

2ND Sunday in Advent

**Grace, mercy, and peace from God the
Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

On the second Sunday in advent we remember that God shares good news through prophets and preachers and people who simply share good news around us. As Methodist people we are called to worship, to pray and to look and listen for God in scripture and in the world. In churches and at home, we light a candle to commit ourselves to the things that Methodists have always used to help people grow in faith: lively worship, faithful prayer, regular bible reading and looking for the Kingdom all around us.

An Advent Prayer

God who comes in Jesus, we thank you today for the prophets amongst us. We thank you for the promise of new beginnings and the challenge of your words which call us to radical discipleship. As we look towards Christmas we commit ourselves to a life that is full of praise and trust in your eternal promises. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer, Jesus saviour of all, come to us again
Amen.

STF 180

- 1 O come, O come, Immanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear :
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*
- 2 O come, O come, O Lord of might
who to your tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe :
- 3 O come, O Rod of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny ;

from depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave :

- 4 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home ;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery :

- 5 O come, O Day-spring, come and
cheer
our spirits by your advent here ;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight :

Latin, 18th century, based on the ancient *Advent
Antiphons*
translated by John Mason Neale (1811–1866)
Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words
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Prayers of Praise & Confession

Lord God Almighty, King of glory and love
eternal, you are worthy at all times to receive
adoration, praise, and blessing; we praise
you now

We praise you for your promise that is
spoken in the psalms of David, in the words
of the prophets, in the dream of Joseph. Your
promise is spoken, Lord, and takes flesh at
last in the womb of the virgin.

May Emmanuel find welcome in our hearts,
take flesh in our lives, and be for all peoples
the welcome advent of redemption and grace.
We ask this through him whose coming, for
who we wait, for who's Day draws near:
you're Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever and ever Amen.

And a prayer of confession

Loving God, in this time of Advent, we
confess we can so often be distracted by the
busyness, by other things, and even
sometimes putting our own traditions ahead
of the true meaning of Christmas.. Forgive us
for all the times we have missed seeing You
in our midst, for all the times we have
doubted Your presence. Pour peace into our
lives and let us be bearers of your peace to
others. Remind us that this is a season of

waiting and preparation for the greatest Gift of all. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Reading: John 1:1-9

Reflection

Light always overcomes darkness

So here we are, in the Second Sunday in Advent. As I sit at my desk here in Ripon, I have to admit that I struggled a little with what my reflection was going to be. There is so much going on in the world at the moment. I always try to bring something that says something to us today, in the here and now. I knew that we would be looking at this passage from John's Gospel, and though written so long ago, it has a message for us right now.

This rich, almost poetical passage speaks of light overcoming darkness and the message from John that a saviour was coming. As I was praying about this, my mind went back to the time I lived in Middlesbrough. I had written a short reflection on Christmas in the town. Sadly the town is in the top ten of everything that is not good: Child poverty, debt, unemployment, addiction and family breakdown. However, just after Halloween, the town begins its Christmas frenzy, the trees go up, the decorations are out and Christmas cards are exchanged. The expectation that "he will come again" is in the air, yes SANTA will return again this year! For its part the consumer monster often feeds

this frenzy, by telling people in order to get the most out of this season you need to "buy stuff". This year is very different, the consumer monster still lurks in the background, but the onset of this year brought something more sinister in the form of Covid19.

Of course, I no longer live in Middlesbrough and Ripon is a very different place, it has its pockets of problems but cannot really be compared. There is however, this year, something which ties not only Middlesbrough, but the rest of the world into a common ground. This of course, being the virus. This year, we have had to change in so many ways and people look for ways to escape the drudgery and oppression of what is around them. Although consumerism has been at the forefront over the years, the real, and often misunderstood reasons for excitement over the Christmas season has been escapism, the real need to have something to look forward to.

Now my reflection is not all doom and gloom! I am reminded when I read these words in John that light overcomes darkness. We have certainly seen a lot of this during the two lockdowns, the acts of kindness and communities coming together. There is light at the end of the tunnel! Especially when we hear the news that vaccines are becoming available and the light is getting brighter. Light always overcomes the darkness, always. Imagine being in a mine underground there is no light, you cannot see your hand in front of your face. The tiniest spark of light will illuminate the space.

I was reminded by a man called Carl Beech, a church leader, who was speaking at the Kings Praise, on line service. We only have to look at the psalms to see that even in the darkest of times we can praise God and he will hear us. Have a read of Psalm 150, and see for yourself!

In times of trial, in those times when we find ourselves feeling low, we can look for that tiny spark of God in our lives. We all need some escapism, we all need a bit of Santa, and some retail therapy! Those things are great, but our gift is knowing that Gods mercies are new every day, not just for

Christmas. The light of the world became flesh and set us free.

I love the words in a song by the band "casting Crowns": *I thought by now that you would have stepped in and saved the day, wiped our tears away, I say Amen, and it's still raining, then the thunder roars, and I barely hear you say, "I am with you" I will praise you in the storm.*

As we journey through this Advent, let us try to see God in the small things, give thanks and share the good news that is certain to come

Amen.

The light shines in the darkness, our next song, written by Graham Kendrick reminds us of light overcoming darkness.

STF 176

Like a candle flame,
flickering small in our darkness.
Uncreated light
shines through infant eyes.

God is with us, alleluia.
God is with us, alleluia.
Come to save us, alleluia.
Come to save us.
Alleluia!

- 2 Stars and angels sing,
yet the earth sleeps in shadows ;
can this tiny spark
set a world on fire ?
- 3 Yet his light shall shine
from our lives, Spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame
of his holy fire.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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Prayers of intercession

Loving God, as we journey on in Advent, we reminded that the coming of Jesus brought hope in a time of darkness. Today we pray for all those who find themselves living with their own darkness:

For those who are hungry, those fleeing conflict, and those with no place they can call home. We pray that as with Joseph and Mary, they are offered a safe place to sleep. We pray for those who take themselves away from their homes to help people in need, the aid workers in Calais, and around the globe. We give thanks that a new vaccine is becoming available and will bring light to those sheltering. We particularly think of those in care homes who have been isolated from their loved ones for so long. We bring before you all those who have had news of a job loss this week. For businesses still suffering in the wake of the pandemic. And Lord for our churches, those inside, and those still home we ask your blessing on them.

Loving and hearing God, may all those written here, and all those in our hearts: know your presence, and feel your peace, all this we ask through Jesus our Lord and saviour
Amen

Closing Hymn

STF 169

Come though Long Expected Jesus

- 1 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.
- 2 Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.
- 3 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
- 4 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) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 169

An Advent Blessing

May the Lord, arouse your sleeping soul and
establish it in Christian watchfulness through
this time of Advent and beyond

Be Blessed in the name of Christ

Amen

**The words from the song I wrote about in
my reflection.**

Casting Crowns- Praise you in the storm.

I was sure by now
God, You would have reached down
And wiped our tears away
Stepped in and saved the day
But once again, I say, "Amen" and it's still
raining'
Well, as the thunder rolls
I barely hear your whisper through the rain
"I'm with you"
And as your mercy falls
I'll raise my hands and praise the God who
gives
and takes away
And I'll praise You in this storm
And I will lift my hands
For You are who You are
No matter where I am
And every tear I've cried
You hold in Your hand
You never left my side
And though my heart is torn
I will praise You in this storm
I remember when
I stumbled in the wind
You heard my cry to You
And raised me up again
But my strength is almost gone
How can I carry on
If I can't find You?
And I'll praise You in this storm
And I will lift my hands

For You are who You are
No matter where I am
And every tear I've cried
You hold in Your hand
You never left my side
And though my heart is torn
I will praise You in this storm
I lift my eyes unto the hills
Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord
The Maker of Heaven and Earth
I lift my eyes unto the hills
Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord
The Maker of Heaven and Earth
(I lift my eyes unto the hills)
(Where does my help come from?)