



Iona-style Morning Prayer Advent Sunday, 29 November 2020

Introductory prayer – Iona Community

Here, among our everyday places,
here, among our everyday lives,
is the emerging of grace.
Watch, watch, for the signs of the Holy.
In this time,
in every time,
we hold our breath in awe
for the wonders of the Christ.

Hymn – to listen, click this [link](#) 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.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

An Advent Litany – from the Iona Community

Among the poor,
among the proud,
among the persecuted,
among the privileged,

**Christ is coming.
He is coming to make all things new.**

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In the private house,
in the market place,
in the place of celebration,
in the judgement hall,

**Christ is coming.
He is coming to make all things new.**

With a gentle touch,
with an angry word,
with a clear conscience,
with burning love,

**Christ is coming.
He is coming to make all things new.**

That the Kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the humble might be raised.

**Christ is coming.
He is coming to make all things new.**

Within us, without us,
among us, before us,
in this place, in everyplace,
for this time, for all time,

**Christ is coming.
He is coming to make all things new.**

Loving God,
may we your people seek you in
the quietness and stillness,
in solitude and peace.
Help us to seek you,
as you are always and forever
seeking us
Amen.

The Readings for the day

Old Testament: [Isaiah 64:4-9](#)

⁴ From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.

⁵ You meet those who gladly do right,

those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.^[a]
⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷ There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered^[a] us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸ Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹ Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity for ever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

The Gospel: [Mark 13:32-37](#) **The Necessity for Watchfulness**

³² 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Beware, keep alert;^[a] for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

At the end of the readings:

For the word of God in Scripture,
for the word of God among us,
for the word of God within us,
Thanks be to God.

Reflection – Revd Elizabeth Cathie

An Egyptian monk, living in the desert in the third century, went to the abbot of his community seeking enlightenment. He questioned the abbot eagerly and impatiently, asking many, many questions.

But in response the abbot simply said, 'Just look'.

The monk was very disappointed with this response, 'I'm always looking', he said sulkily.

'No you're not,' said the abbot. 'In order to look at what is here, you have to be here, and you are mostly somewhere else.'

The season of Advent is a time for us to start preparing to meet God, which is a very sobering thought and also a bit of a scary thought. And because of that it's very tempting to think that we have to be always very busy – the world tells us that we have to be very busy.

If we're very busy, we maybe think, then God will notice us and be pleased with us. In these weeks before Christmas we should probably not be surprised if we see Corporal Jones from Dad's Army running around crying, 'Don't panic, don't panic.'

Everyone is, seemingly, very busy and mild hysteria is setting in because somebody has been left off the Christmas card list or the weather or the virus might spoil our travel plans.

But what Jesus said to his disciples, and what the abbot said to the impatient monk, was not keep busy, but 'keep awake and be prepared.'

Keep awake and be prepared because you do not know when your God is coming.

During the prophet Isaiah's lifetime, people came to see the world as being empty of God and that's how many people view our society today – as empty of God, because they don't think they see God active and busy doing great things.

But God is at work in our world whether we see that happening or not. And the seeming inactivity of God is an example for us to follow in the season of Advent. The people who are rushing round with no time to spare and with a huge list of things to be done by December 24th may not be the ones who are really seeing the coming of Christ – because they are so busy being always somewhere else.

'What I say to you' says Jesus, 'I say to all, keep awake.'

'In order to look at what is here', said the abbot, 'you have to be here. And you are mostly somewhere else.'

Amen.

Our Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.

We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayers for Advent – from the Iona Community

We bless you, our God, for your great gifts to us;
for creation – fragile and fascinating,
for scripture – revealing your truth
for your forgiving love shedding light in our darkness.

We pray for those caught up in wars around the world;
civilians, soldiers, refugees, and those who hold fast to the reasons for fighting.

(Silence)

We pray for homeless folk – often excluded from what the rest of us are doing, cold, hungry, struggling to keep a hold of who they are.

(Silence)

We pray for people who are ill, coping with pain, fearing the worst, and for those in the caring professions who fear for the future.

(Silence)

We pray for those who are bereaved, in their isolation, loneliness and sadness.

(Silence)

In the mess of this world a fragile child will come to live among us; the child in whom we put our hope and trust – our God.

Our God is with us and our hope is re-born.

Amen.

*Rejoicing in God's new creation,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray*

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.**

Hymn – to listen, click this [link](#) ²

O come, O come, Emmanuel
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear
*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny
from depths of Hell Thy people save
and give them victory o'er the grave
*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
shall come to thee, o Israel.*

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O come, Thou Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home
make safe the way that leads on high
and close the path to misery
*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
shall come to thee, o Israel.*

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might
who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height
in ancient times did'st give the Law
in cloud, and majesty and awe
*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
shall come to thee, o Israel.*

Mark 1:14-15

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying,
*'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in
the good news.'*

A blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.
As we await our coming Saviour,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.
