

Service for Fourth Sunday of Advent



St Laurence Church, Downton

20 December 2020

Preparation

Call to Worship

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall call his name Immanuel.

He will be holy;
he will be called Son of God.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Team Rector introduces the service

Hymn: Long ago, prophets knew
(St Martin's Voices)

Long ago, prophets knew Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new;
bear his People's burden, freely love and pardon.

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!

Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!

When he comes, when he comes,
who will make him welcome?

God in time, God in man, this is God's timeless plan:
he will come, as a man,
born himself of woman, God divinely human.

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!

Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!

When he comes, when he comes,
who will make him welcome?

Mary hail! Though afraid, she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb, God is laid:
till the time expected, nurtured and protected,

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes, when he comes,
who will make him welcome?

Journey ends! Where afar Beth'lem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar.
unborn Son of Mary, Saviour, do not tarry!
Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
Jesus comes! Jesus comes!
We will make him welcome!

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000) © 1971 Stainer & Bell Ltd Amen.

Travelling Crib:

Jesus says: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news". *Mark 1:15*

Mary and Joseph must now find a place where they can prepare for the birth of Jesus - just as we too need to make ourselves ready for the coming of our infant Saviour. Yet, we are told, there was no room for them at the inn. They will need to hunt diligently before they can find somewhere to rest.

May the blessings of God be upon us all, as we remember Mary and Joseph preparing for the coming of their son. So may we prepare for the coming of Jesus into our own lives and into the world. **Amen.**

Advent Wreath:

Holy One, healer of the world,
shed your light upon this world.

Holy One, healer of brokenness,
make us bold to share your light with others.

Holy One, healer of the world, we offer our prayers,
Lead us to wholeness

Make us shine with your light of healing love,
as we light a candle in hope, peace, and joy.

We light the fourth candle on our Advent Wreath.

God our Father,
the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary
that she was to be the mother of your Son.
Though Mary was afraid,
she responded to your call with joy.
Help us, whom you call to serve you,
to share like her in your great work
of bringing to our world your love and healing.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the Light who is coming into the world. **Amen.**

Praise:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed;
**the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.**

He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,

The promise made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

**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.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Readings:

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

Luke 1:26-38

After each reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Music: Magnificat from Three Choirs Service
(Bob Chilcott and the Oxford Choir)

Prayers

We are led in a time of prayer

This response is used:

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is said:

Awaiting his coming in glory,

let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

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.**

Conclusion

The Collect

God our redeemer,
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary
to be the mother of your Son:
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,
so we may be ready to greet him
when he comes again as our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing:

May starlight guide your steps towards this place of wonder
May angels sing their news as you travel to the manger
May promise fill these days as we watch at the edge of birth
and may faith tell you, Emmanuel will be with us soon;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The mystery that was kept secret for long ages
is now made known to all.

Romans 16:25-26

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.