

Ardoch Parish Church
Sunday 29th November 2020

Rev Mairi Perkins welcomes everyone to this
1st Sunday in Advent



The decision has very reluctantly been made that Ardoch Parish Church will not open for worship at this time.

However, that does not mean Advent is cancelled and that God's word is not heard. Let us all share the light and bring the outside in, by following the Advent story through Mairi's words both written and recorded.

Our first hymn is
"O Come O Come Emmanuel"

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, O come, Thou Lord of Might
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height

In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud, and majesty and awe, refrain
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, refrain
O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight, refrain
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, refrain
O come, Thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things, far and nigh

To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go, refrain
O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind

Bid Thou our sad divisions cease
And be Thyself our King of peace, refrain

Mairi leads us in Prayer followed by the Lord's
prayer

Reflective Prayer

Courtesy of Spill the Beans

*Close your eyes, and think of a time
when you were waiting for something:
for the results of an exam or a medical test;
for a message or a phone-call;
for someone to arrive... or to leave;
for a train, or a bus; a birthday or Christmas;
for holidays to begin, or lockdown to end;
waiting for a birth...or a death;
or just waiting, not sure what for.
Remember what waiting feels like:
the pacing up and down, not able to settle;
checking the time, looking out the window;
the anxiety... and hopeful expectation.
And now, with the butterflies flitting prettily
around in our stomachs, let us pray:*

Advent God,
this is the church's time for waiting:
not yet time for carols and celebrations
(too much could still go wrong),
but hope is in the air.

There is no special star yet in the night sky;
nothing to rouse the shepherds from their slumbers
or distract the wise ones from their calculations,
but something is definitely in the air.

Gabriel is plotting his flight path to Nazareth;
the heavenly host are doing vocal warm-ups,
and the world is waiting.

The hungry are waiting to be fed,
the blind are rubbing their eyes,
and the lame trying on new trainers.

The poor are waiting, desperately, to be lifted up,
and the mighty have no idea that they will soon be toppled
from their thrones.

God, we are waiting too, with a mixture of excitement
and resignation.

May our hope prevail over our fear.

May we do what we can do,
and trust you for what we cannot.

May we work, and rest, and be ready,
and be first in the queue to welcome you when you come in
glory.

Let us say together 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for
ever. Amen

Pat Duncan reads from Mark Chapter 13 v 24-37

Pat introduces the next hymn which is

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord”

Mairi's Reflection is Share the light and bring the outside in

Psalm 121

¹ *I rejoiced with those who said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'*

Do you find the first verse of this psalm challenging?

Do you 'rejoice' when it's time to join others for worship?

Do you wait longingly for Sunday to come round each
week?

Do you prepare for coming into God's house knowing all are welcome?

Are you excited about who might be there old friends or strangers?

I know that so often on a Sunday morning I'm rushed and stressed trying to be ready on time, checking emails to make sure nothing has happened overnight in my parishes of Ardoch and Blackford, checking the BBC news to ensure no world events impact on what I say and pray. Sometimes all my careful planning is gone in the blink of an eye and that is because it's never my agenda, it's always God's agenda and you must always leave that space to allow God to shine through

Our time of Advent then becomes about more than just remembering a miraculous birth in the past or anticipating future judgement. It invites us to reflect on what we mean when we say "God is with us"—not then, but now. It challenges us to look for signs of God's presence in the midst of all this Covid chaos, and whatever else we might expect, to be ready and willing to expect the unexpected. If God can appear among us with the vulnerability of a child or the power of a divine superhero, invisible and silent or heralded by wonders in the heavens, nothing can be ruled out as to where and how the next encounter might be. What is required of us, as it was for the characters in the Christmas stories and for second generation Christians, is to be ever vigilant, ever watchful and ever ready.

The Christmas story is full of the most unlikely characters. As the story is revealed we see that the unimportant people in society get the starring roles, it appears that the forgotten people are the first to know what has happened. The Christmas story is a story of the unexpected. It is a story that turns the whole world on its head. It's a story that brings the outside in and we journey with the most unlikely people

"God has scattered those who are proud in their deepest thoughts.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones.

But he has lifted up people who are not considered important.

He has filled with good things those who hunger"

We are to live fully in the present, but with an awareness that everything could change at any moment. We are to be ready for God's slipping in among us quietly and unnoticed or bursting into our lives at the most unexpected time and place. We all need to be ready so that we are not caught out, not ashamed or terrified if the baby next door, the Big Issue seller, neighbour or stranger, child or homeless person, turns out to be Immanuel, "God with us".

So join me over these next few weeks as we journey through Advent, meet the people and see how we can shine Christ's light in our village this Advent and bring those on the outside into the story of Christ's birth
AMEN

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Courtesy of Spill the Beans

Creator God,
we bring our prayers from a world
in deep distress.
There are signs and portents all around us,
and no-one to tell us what they mean:
fires and plagues and pestilence;
a shaking up of all we thought we knew;
leaders who are corrupt, or foolish,
or just as helpless as we all feel
in the face of forces we cannot control.
And yet we dare to believe that it is your world.
We go on asserting that you care,
not just because to do otherwise
is unthinkable, but because
the old stories have a hold on us and we hold on to them.
We kneel with shepherds and sages
by the straw-filled crib and we worship.
We listen, spellbound, to the stories
told on hilltop and sandy shore, and we are hooked.
We watch, aghast, as softly
the agony ends, and the final breath escapes.
We grieve and we despair.

We wake early and we wonder
if maybe, just maybe,
new hope may come with the dawn.
God of birth and growth, decline and death,
God of whatever came before
and whatever may come after
the brief, troubled lives that we know,
we commit to your care and keeping
our lives and our loved ones...

Silence

our world and our worries on its behalf...

Silence

We long for you to come and save us.
May we be ready when you do.
Amen.

**As part of our Service today we have two short videos
Preparing in Hope this Advent and Share the light.**

**Also the Hot Chocolate Club members are contributing
each week to a part of The Story and this week's
script is for four voices and entitled Three Pictures
Three Stories**

All these can be viewed on the Church Website

Our closing hymn is "Make Way "

Make way, make way, for Christ the King
In splendour arrives.

Fling wide the gates and welcome him
Into your lives.

Make way! *(Make way!)*

Make way! *(Make way!)*

For the King of kings!

(For the King of kings!)

Make way! *(Make way!)*

Make way! *(Make way!)*

And let his kingdom in!

He comes the broken hearts to heal,
The prisoners to free.

The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
The blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
Who weep and sigh;
With laughter, joy and royal crown
He'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him
As Lord of all.

To have no other gods but him:
Their thrones must fall!
Make way! (*Make way!*)
Make way! (*Make way!*)
For the King of kings!
(*For the King of kings!*)
Make way! (*Make way!*)
Make way! (*Make way!*)
And let his kingdom in!

Benediction

Go with your heart and soul in eager expectation,
awaiting the coming of Good News.

Be a living witness of that hope,
sharing the blessing of God in word and action.

In the name of the Father , Son and Holy Spirit
Amen

Intimations

Church offerings

We have had members asking for the Church's bank details, which for security reasons are not published. As the Church is not re-opening for Sunday Worship in the foreseeable future, it might be a sensible time for us to consider changing our method of giving.

1. using internet banking, transfer directly each month to Ardoch Parish Church..
2. authorising a direct debit mandate in favour of Ardoch Parish Church.

To obtain further details of these methods, please contact Treasurer, Stuart Brannen. Tel.880394 and he will be very pleased to help in anyway.

Collection for the Salvation Army

Ann Spier's official collection date has closed but any gifts still pending can still be left with her. She is so pleased with the response and will send an update soon.

Ardoch Parish Church Scottish Charity Number SC000139

ardochparishchurch.org

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