

## **Advent Carol Service - Looking for the light**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

In the name of God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and made a place for us in the kingdom of his beloved Son, we welcome you: grace to you and peace.

As we meet to celebrate anew the coming of God's kingdom, we hear revealed the mystery of God's loving purpose for us – how that when we were far off, he met us in his Son and brought us home; how he humbled himself to take our human nature, that we might share his divine glory.

Let us then so celebrate this coming with our carols and hymns of praise, that our lives may be charged with his life; that we may bear witness to his glory and so bring light to those who sit in darkness. So first we pray for those among whom the Christ was born: the poor and helpless, the aged and young children; the cold, the hungry and the homeless; the victims of poverty, injustice and oppression, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; those in despair or in the shadow of death.

Then, as we hear again the message of peace on earth and goodwill among all his people, we pray for the leaders of the nations, that all may be inspired to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace the world over.

And that we may bear true witness to this hope in a divided world, we pray for the peace and unity of Christ's Body, the Church universal, that the whole earth may live to praise his name.

Finally, as we rejoice with the saints in heaven and on earth, we remember all who have gone before us with the sign of faith, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we offer up our prayers for the coming of his kingdom, in the words he himself has taught us, saying:

**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.**

And may the Lord when he comes find us watching and waiting, now  
and at all times.

*All* **Amen.**

### **Reading 1: Genesis 1.1-5 (Stephen)**

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

**Reading 2:**  
**Psalm 13 (Sue)**

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me for ever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long must I bear pain in my soul,  
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?  
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,  
and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed';  
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

But I trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the Lord,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

**Reading 3:**  
**Isaiah 45.2-8 (Linda)**

Thus says the Lord:

I will go before you  
and level the mountains,  
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze  
and cut through the bars of iron,  
I will give you the treasures of darkness  
and riches hidden in secret places,  
so that you may know that it is I, the Lord,  
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.  
For the sake of my servant Jacob,  
and Israel my chosen,  
I call you by your name,  
I surname you, though you do not know me.

I am the Lord, and there is no other;  
besides me there is no god.  
I arm you, though you do not know me,  
so that they may know, from the rising of the sun  
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;  
I am the Lord, and there is no other.  
I form light and create darkness,  
I make weal and create woe;  
I the Lord do all these things.

Shower, O heavens, from above,  
and let the skies rain down righteousness;  
let the earth open, that salvation may spring up,  
and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also;  
I the Lord have created it.

## **Reading 4:**

### **Isaiah 60.1-5a (Fr Andrew)**

Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;

but the Lord will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around;

they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant;

your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

**Reading 5:**  
**Isaiah 9.2, 3, 6, 7 (Stephen)**

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onwards and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

## **Reading 6:**

### **1 Thessalonians 5.1-11, 23, 24 (Fr Andrew)**

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape!

But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

**Gospel:**  
**Luke 12.35-40 (Sue)**

Jesus said:

‘Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

‘But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.’



## **CONCLUSION**

The night is far spent, the day is at hand.  
Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness  
and put on the armour of light.  
Come, O Lord, comfort the soul of your servant.  
**All Even so, Lord, come.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, come  
**All at evening time, with light,**

and in the morning, with your glory,  
**All to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

He who receives our prayers says:  
Surely I come quickly.  
I am the root and offspring of David,  
I am the bright and morning star.  
**All Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

## **THE 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 upon you and remain with you this night and always.  
**All Amen.**