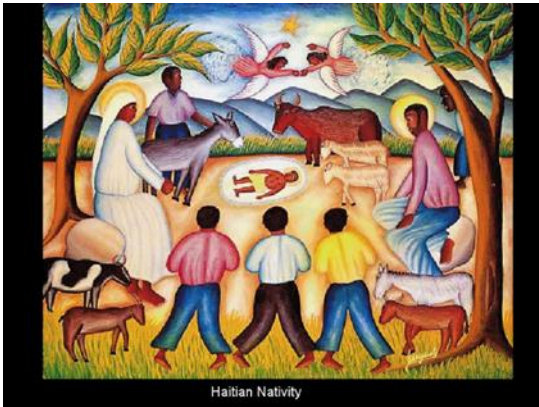


3rd December 2023 with Local Preacher Jenny Brooks

Advent week 1



Call to Worship

As the adventure of Advent begins, let us prepare to meet with God. Let us bring our hopes and expectations, let us prepare ourselves for what God wants of us. Let God find us ready and waiting. Come and worship.

Hymn Singing the Faith 169

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 forever, 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.

Prayers

Bright, shining God, shimmering in the darkness of winter, we approach you today with your light in our hearts.
We wait for you, we watch for you, just as the watchmen await the first signs of morning.
Walk with us throughout Advent, and light our feet as we walk perhaps a little unsteadily,

towards the birth of the 'light of the world'.

A prayer of Confession

Jesus, we have allowed worry and stress to distract us from putting you first. Help us to keep you as the focus of all that we do.

Assurance of forgiveness

God sent Jesus as a living sacrifice to atone for our sins once and for all. Through him our sins are washed clean, forgiven and forgotten.

Lord's Prayer

Reading: Mark Chapter 13 verses 24-37

Hymn Singing the Faith 185

1. Sing we the King who is coming to reign;
Glory to Jesus the Lamb that was slain! Life and salvation his empire shall bring, joy to the nations when Jesus is King

Chorus: *Come let us sing: praise to our King, Jesus our King, Jesus our King: this is our song who to Jesus belong: glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King.*

2. All shall be well in his kingdom of peace; freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase; Justice and truth from his sceptre shall spring; wrong shall be ended when Jesus is King:

Chorus:

3. Souls shall be saved from the burden of sin; doubt shall not darken his witness within; hell hath no terrors and death has no sting; love is victorious when Jesus is King:

Chorus:

4. Kingdom of Christ, for your coming we pray; hasten, o Father the dawn of the day when this new song your creation shall sing; Satan is vanquished and Jesus is King;

Chorus:

Reflection

Advent is a time of reflection and preparation for the coming of Jesus as a human child; Christians call this incarnation. So much of the world around us is pushing us towards

Christmas, it can be difficult to separate Advent and Christmas. However, we all know how important preparation is in many aspects of life; sometimes the preparation can be more enjoyable than the special event. I remember as a teenager, sometimes getting ready to “go out” was more fun than the actual party or trip. We have just had a family wedding and some of the preparation was great fun and spread over a year! (The wedding was also lovely). Athletes prepare by training over long periods for races that sometimes are over in seconds. When we cook, we find ingredients from the back of the cupboard and the tools we need to chop, grate, whisk, mix before we begin to put everything together.

Preparation is what Jesus is talking about in the Gospel reading from Mark. Not that we literally have to stay awake, but we need to “be ready”, prepared for what might be asked of us in our journey with God.

Advent seems to require of us space to reflect on who Jesus is. The material being used by Northampton Methodist Church for Advent bible study is titled “Immanuel: God with us”. We will spend time with each other reflecting on what we understand about Jesus and what that means for our daily lives. This first week of Advent the theme is titled “chosen and anointed”. These are complex ideas from the Hebrew bible that speak of the choosing of kings and prophets, by God and a symbol of this choosing was anointing with oil. Some of this thinking applies to Jesus, as the incarnation of God and some of it applies to us, because we have a part to play in bringing ways of thinking, speaking and behaving, that reflect the nature of God to people around us. All of this takes time to understand and put into practice; we need to decide how we spend our time during Advent.

Hymn: [Singing the Faith 272](#)

1. From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled,
not to be served, but to serve and give your life
that we might live.

Chorus: *This is our God, the Servant King, he calls us now to follow him, to bring our lives as a daily offering, of worship to the Servant King.*

2. There in the garden of tears my heavy load
he chose to bear: his heart with sorrow was
torn, Yet not my will, but yours he said.

Chorus:

3. Come see his hands and his feet, the scars
that speak of sacrifice, hands that flung stars
into space to cruel nails surrendered.

Chorus

4. So let us learn how to serve and in our
hearts enthrone him, each other's needs to
prefer, for it is Christ we're serving.

Chorus.

Prayer

Lord, we begin our Advent,
waiting for you with love and patience.
Help us to remember that you will return for us
and for those yet to know you.
Help us to be patient and alert,
but help us also to be doing and serving
and building your kingdom.
Your kingdom come on earth, as it is in
heaven.

Amen.



Prayers from rootsontheweb.com