



Chet Valley Churches
Last Sunday Praise
29 November 2020



Welcome

Welcome to Last Sunday Praise. In this file you will find links to the songs we have chosen for our worship. Click on the links to take you to each song.

Introduction

Our theme for this service at the beginning of Advent is 'Watching and Waiting'. We live in a society in which instant response and instant reward are seen as good things. It is probably no surprise therefore that the season of Advent has almost vanished from most people's lives, with the exception of purchasing gift-filled Advent Calendars. But watching and waiting are part of the Church's preparation to welcome Christ at Christmas. So let's take some time to praise and worship God, starting with three songs of praise to Christ our Lord.

♪♪ All the songs link to YouTube. Just click with your mouse on the link, which will take you to a song with on-screen words. You may have to skip a few YouTube adverts if we have chosen songs that are not currently on the Chet Valley Churches YouTube channel.

♪♪ **Come, now is the time to worship**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USQn4IUmS20>

♪♪ **Blessed Assurance**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuyfIYQvcwY>

♪♪ **From the squalor of a borrowed stable**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YksTeR6IOII>

Pause for thought, and prayer...

Our first song declares that now is the time to worship. Of course it is always a good time to worship and praise God – we can be assured of his constant love and care for us, and this is always something to celebrate. But at the same time we are marking Advent, which is a time of waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus, coming not only as a baby but also as our Lord and Saviour, We are called to wait and to keep watch.

The Collect is a special prayer written for each day. Perhaps you might read the prayer aloud, line by line, stopping to think about each line as you do so.

The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin
to the light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

♪♪ Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yubLGTOcm8c>

♪♪ Lord I come to you

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9_0jiO5ZRM

♪♪ There is a hope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVUfNEwRPno>

Pause for thought, and prayer...

We praise God for the hope that we have in Jesus. We acknowledge that we are impatient, especially just now when worshipping together in church is not happening. We are used to the build-up of excitement as we journey towards Christmas, but this year it's a bit different. Maybe we can more clearly focus on waiting for Christ and preparing to welcome him into our hearts at Christmas.

Perhaps you might like to ponder the following prayer.

A prayer for our lives

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us for the times when we are caught up in all the busyness of life and forget that you're there,

forgive us for the days when we don't make time to listen to you or talk to you,

forgive us for letting our minds wander when we worship, or our eyes droop when we pray.

Teach us the value of waiting for you, that we might be the people you want us to be.

♪♪ Cornerstone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvLxZEU02ul>

♪♪ You give rest to the weary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz_wwrCh2ig

Bible Readings

Psalm 62 . 5 - 8

- ⁵ For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from him.
- ⁶ He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
- ⁷ On God rests my deliverance and my honour;
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.
- ⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us.

2 Peter 3 . 14

Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish.

Talk

David Owen has written this reflection.

How good are you at waiting, or watching, come to that? How many times I wonder have you been asked by someone whether you'd seen a particular thing on the road or on an advert or on the screen. something that the other person vehemently believes no one could miss. And your response - "What thing? I never noticed." Yes if we're honest most of us don't notice much and if the watching requires us to wait for it to happen then the chances are even greater that we'll have missed it.

Advent Sunday is so named because of the Latin word *adventus* meaning 'coming' and a primary theme of the season is that of Watching & Waiting. Over the four Sundays which make up the season the Christian church has traditionally looked at four groups or individuals. All of whom have been noted for their watching and waiting. The Patriarchs, the Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary, the mother of Jesus. So let us look and observe them now.

The Patriarchs:

The father of the patriarchs is Abraham. In his life story which we can read in the book of Genesis we hear of his desire to watch (and listen) to what God wants him to do. His journey from Ur of the Chaldeans not knowing where he was going but obeying the call he'd received from God as recounted in Genesis 12. 1-3. The journey becomes tortuous and he gets impatient. He can't wait. He and Sarah have been promised an heir but they're both getting on in years so rather than continue to trust and wait they decide to do their own thing and Abraham has a child by Sarah's maidservant. What chaos and strife that causes when Sarah does have a child in her old age! Abraham is used mightily by God but he's not perfect - he's impatient.

We encounter - much later Moses - the Hebrew child in Egypt who has been watched diligently by his sister whilst he is sleeping in a basket amongst the reeds. He is brought up in grandeur but recognises that he is a Hebrew and when he commits murder - and is found out - he flees to the wilderness where he watches a burning bush which isn't being consumed and wants to know more only to be told to take off his shoes for the ground he's walking on is holy. He's tasked with bringing the Hebrews out of Egypt and has to be patient in the face of Pharaoh's intransigence. When they are finally allowed to leave

it's not the end but rather the beginning of a very lengthy time of waiting for the fulfilment of their journey to the Promised Land. Waiting caused by the disobedience and reluctance of the people to follow God's call to venture across the Jordan. Then there's David, another flawed hero of faith. as a shepherd boy in his youth and in his flight from King Saul he would have learnt how to be watchful protecting the animals in his care and for his own preservation as a young man. But yet again he is another impatient man in many ways.

From the very beginning there is an air of waiting for the fulfilment of God's promises - to individuals and to communities.

The Prophets:

This is continued through the generations which follow as recalled by the Prophets. The Prophets are those who because they are listening to God are prepared to challenge the leaders of the nation and therefore calling them back to follow in the ways of God, so that they fulfill the commandments which have been given. As Isaiah forth-tells on many occasions about God - "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43.19. Haven't you been watching? Haven't you been waiting expectantly? Surely you've noticed, surely you're ready. The Prophets are those who endeavour to get the people to notice and to act.

This goes on for centuries and throughout there is an ongoing call from the Prophets to watch out and to wait. God will, in due time send his Chosen One - the Messiah - to bring the people back into that right relationship with one another and with God.

John the Baptist:

On the third Sunday of Advent we recall the life and times of John the Baptist. Jesus refers to him as the greatest of the Prophets. Yet throughout his time at the Jordan calling the people to repentance he is keenly watching and waiting. His was not a voice crying in the wilderness but the voice crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord.' The people who came were filled with expectation, Luke tells us, wondering if John was the Messiah. But as we read in John's gospel (John 1.36) John the Baptist has been watching astutely and tells those around him, "Look, here is the Lamb of God." He has been waiting, he has been alert and watchful and he is ready to tell others who they should all be waiting for.

Mary:

The Sunday before Christmas is the one on which we recall Mary, the mother of Jesus. There are several times during her life when we encounter her watching and waiting.

Having been informed by an angel that she is to carry and be the mother of the son of God, she has that dreadful wait before explaining the situation to Joseph. She then has that natural period of waiting expectantly and fearfully for the baby's birth, something all fathers and mothers know only too well. Then as the child grows she will experience all the anxieties that parents have whilst watching and caring for their children. Look through the gospel accounts and one can see this mother watching what her son is doing in his teaching, his healing and his call to discipleship. It culminates with the horrific experience she endures of standing and watching at the foot of the cross as the son she carried, nursed, parented and let out into the world is mocked and crucified.

But finally there is the ultimate waiting she has since whilst we're not told as such but I'm sure that she experiences first hand the waiting of the Resurrection.

All four Sundays recall people who watched and waited. We too are watching and waiting. watching what God is doing and seeking to join in with the activities of God's Kingdom. Waiting for the fulfilment of God's rule in our lives and in the world.

♪ Light of the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYsR49ReAj4>

Time for prayer...

Let's take time to pray for:

- The people we live amongst – family, neighbours, friends far or near, acquaintances
- Our church leaders who have to find a way through the rules about Covid and enable the church to live and grow
- Members of church congregations who are no longer able to worship together, and are finding it tough going
- People we know who are struggling as a result of Covid, either socially or economically or because of long term effects on their health
- Those who have lost touch with society following isolation and are afraid to venture out
- Those who are ill, either with the coronavirus or other ailments that don't hit the news bulletins
- Ourselves, that we might be brave enough to stand out as people of faith

And a prayer for Advent:

Jesus, you came to be light in our darkness.
Jesus, you came to be peace in our conflicts.
Jesus, you came to be joy in our sadness,
And to bring your love in our fears.
May we wait for you in confidence and hope.
Amen

You might want to pray aloud the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples. Use whatever version or language you wish!

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is 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.

♪♪ Christ be our light

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt3Qc04ulOM>

♪♪ Lord Jesus, come

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wFE0muUzw8>

♪♪ These are the days of Elijah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca9LnzJnpjQ>

A blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Amen

Something to make you smile....

Advent in 2 minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S02KOlw7dIA>