

Sunday 19 November 2023

The Second Sunday before Advent



Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

Prayers of intercession © [Lay Anglicana](#) (adapted slightly).

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 Teach me my God and King

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The Welcome

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

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Jesus says, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand’.

So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ,
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for the Second Sunday before Advent

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son was revealed
to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope,
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of the Prophet Zephaniah

Be silent before the Lord God!

For the day of the Lord is at hand;
the Lord has prepared a sacrifice,
he has consecrated his guests.

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who rest complacently on their dregs,
those who say in their hearts,
'The Lord will not do good,

nor will he do harm.'
Their wealth shall be plundered,
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the Lord is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter,
the warrior cries aloud there.
That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the Lord,
their blood shall be poured out like dust,
and their flesh like dung.
Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the Lord's wrath;
in the fire of his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed;
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-end

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians

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. *1 Thessalonians 5:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Turn your eyes upon Jesus

[\(please click here\)](#)
[\(Celtic version\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus said], 'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

“Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, “Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

‘And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, “Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

“Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, “Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.” But his master replied, “You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”.’

Matthew 25:14–30

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

What would you do if you won the Lottery? If you won a huge sum of money—say, ten million pounds? That much money is hard to even imagine, but really, what would you do with it? Would you pay off all your debts? Buy a new house, with a massive garden? Go on an extravagant, once in a life-time holiday with the family?

Now, another question, slightly different ... what would you do if you were given ten million pounds, not as winnings or a gift, but as a trust? What would you do if you had someone else’s money in your care, and you were responsible for handling it on their behalf? How would you treat that money knowing its rightful owner would be coming back for it later?

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus tells a parable—often known as ‘the Parable of the Talents’. A talent was a unit of money in the ancient world equivalent to tens of kilogrammes of silver. It was clearly a lot of money, the kind of money no ordinary person could ever earn or would ever hold in their hand. Think of winning the Lottery or holding one of those oversized novelty cheques you see on *Children in Need*, written out for million. But, in today’s parable, the slaves are not given this money as a gift, but to hold in trust until their master returns.

In the parable, when the master does return, things take a bit of a dark turn. The first two servants used the money they were given to earn even more—they each return double what they received. The last servant had buried his talent in the ground, where it retained exactly its original value. This last slave is thrown into the outer darkness. The master says, ‘To all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.’

This is another one of those parables, last time it was the parable of the wedding banquet where at the end, it doesn’t feel comfortable to just agree because it’s unsettling, even upsetting. These parables demand more from us. Especially if we are the servants and the master is God, then what is this parable saying? That God will take away from those who have nothing? That God punishes us if we don’t earn a good return on investment?

Really, Jesus? This parable doesn’t sound like it came from the same guy who gave us the Beatitudes. It doesn’t sound like the Jesus who turned the tables on the money changers in the Temple or who told us not to worry about what we will eat, drink or wear, because God will provide for us. This parable seems to go completely against the idea that we should care for ‘the least of these,’ when the master takes away what little the third servant had.

If this is a parable about money, then it’s a terrible lesson. Take financial risks, don’t play it safe, or else God will punish you.

Some of us may have heard a different interpretation of the parable, that it’s not about handling money, but about handling our abilities. This is actually how we got the word ‘talent’ in English. The meaning of the parable then becomes: what are your talents, your skills, your abilities, and how are you using those things?

I don’t think it’s a bad idea to think about how we’re using our God-given abilities, just like I don’t think it’s a bad idea to think about how we handle our money. I want to offer another way of looking at this parable today. It’s not telling us how to handle money. It’s not telling us we should use our skills, however humble. Rather, the talents—the treasure entrusted to us—represent the gospel itself. It’s the good news of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Matthew ends with the Great Commission: the risen

Jesus instructs his disciples to go out into the world. 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.'

Jesus, their Lord, their master, is going away—ascending into Heaven. He has entrusted them with a great treasure, and they are supposed to go out into the world to proclaim the good news, baptise, and teach. When he was with them, Jesus told his followers, 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.' Or, as many of us learned it, 'This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.'

If you light a lamp and hide it under a basket, it does no good. Hiding the light defeats its purpose. If you bury your money in the ground, sure, it won't lose its value. But if that talent in the parable is really a message of good news, then hiding it actually does harm. Jesus tells us to let our light shine. Jesus tells us to proclaim the good news. If we go out and share the message we have been given, then it can multiply and spread beyond what we can imagine. There's no point keeping the good news to ourselves. In fact, it would be counter-productive to hide our message from the world.

So, let your light shine. Go out and spread the good news we have received: the good news of God's love in Jesus. Don't hide it under fear of being rejected, don't bury it in cultural baggage or social expectations. Go into the world and boldly tell the story. If you share this good news, it will grow and multiply and affect the lives of others, beyond what you can imagine. Let your light shine for all to see. Amen.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

The Lord does not change, therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, and though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea. *Malachi 3:6*

The Church of Christ O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, we ask you to look favourably on your whole Church. May the world feel and see that things which were cast down are being raised up and things which had grown old are being made new and that all things are returning to perfection through him from whom they took their origin, Jesus Christ.

**All O unchanging Lord, guide us as we undergo great changes:
in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority Lord of lords, and king of kings, we pray for statesmen, leaders and rulers. May they be quiet in spirit, clear in judgement, and able to understand the issues that face them. Grant them patience, grant them courage, grant them foresight, and grant them great faith. In their anxieties, Lord, be their security. In their opportunities, be their inspiration. And by their plans and their actions, may your kingdom come, your will be done.

**All O unchanging Lord, guide us as we undergo great changes:
in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

The local community Lord, we pray for the places where we work, and we give thanks for our homes, and those whom we love. Make us mindful that all our lives depend on the work of others, and we pray that we may live thankfully and in unity as members of one human family. And as fellow members of the Body of Christ, help us to share in the joys and sorrows of our neighbours as if they were our own.

**All O unchanging Lord, guide us as we undergo great changes:
in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Those who suffer Give strength, Lord, to all caught up in disasters, all those suffering from famine or flood, storms or earthquakes. Give courage, Lord, to all who are ill, and all who are afraid for their future. Knowing that you are our strength and salvation, we commend to your loving care all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. In your goodness and mercy, grant them health of body, soundness of mind and peace of heart.

All **O unchanging Lord, guide us as we undergo great changes:
in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

The communion of saints Lord, we pray to you for those whom we love, but see no longer. Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the holy purpose of your perfect will.

All **O unchanging Lord, guide us as we undergo great changes:
in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,

All **accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

To crown all things there must be love,
to bind all together and complete the whole.
Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.
And the peace of the Lord be always with you.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All **And also with you.**

HYMN 3 **Take my life and let it be
Take my life and let it be
Take my life and let it be
Take my life and let it be**

(please click to hear the hymn)
(different version)
(rock version)
(different modern version)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below:

The Dismissal

God the Father,
who has given to his Son the name above every name,
strengthen you to proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord.

All Amen.

God the Son,
who is our great high priest passed into the heavens,
plead for you at the right hand of the Father.

All Amen.

God the Holy Spirit,
who pours out his abundant gifts upon the Church,
make you faithful servants of Christ our King.

All Amen.

And the blessing of God the Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 [10,000 reasons](#)

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with the Holy Innocents and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Gracious Lord,
in this holy sacrament
you give substance to our hope:
bring us at the last
to that fullness of life for which we long;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.