

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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ADVENT 1

Sunday, November 28, 2021

First Sunday of Advent

November 28, 2021
8:30 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Processional: *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* #88 HB

THE GREETING: Rev. Alex Hewitt

Celebrant: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Almighty God,

All: **to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you 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.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

First Sunday of Advent Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Celebrant: Today is the first Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Hope. The prophets of Israel all spoke of the coming of Christ, of how a Saviour would be born, a king in the line of David. They spoke of how he would rule the world wisely and bless all nations.

People: **On Christmas day the Christ of our hope was born.
On Good Friday the Christ of our hope died.
On Easter day the Christ of our hope rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.
On the last day, the Christ of our hope will come again to establish his kingdom over all things on earth.**

Celebrant: As the follower of Christ, we await his return.

We light this candle to remember that as he came to us as humbly in the manger at Bethlehem and gave light to the world, so he is coming again in power to deliver his people.

We light this candle to remind us to be alert and to watch for his return.

Light the First Candle of HOPE

Celebrant: Let us pray:

People: **Loving God, we thank you for the hope you give us. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming. Bless our worship. Help us live holy and righteous lives. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem. Amen.**

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY: (Prayer of the Day)

All: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility, that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise, I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

PSALM: 25:1-10

Celebrant: To you, O LORD,

People: I lift up my soul.

Celebrant: O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame;

People: do not let my enemies exult over me.

Celebrant: Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;

People: let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Celebrant: Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

People: teach me your paths.

Celebrant: Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;

People: for you I wait all day long.

Celebrant: Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD,

People: and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Celebrant: Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

People: according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

Celebrant: Good and upright is the LORD;

People: therefore, he instructs sinners in the way.

Celebrant: He leads the humble in what is right,

People: and teaches the humble his way.

Celebrant: All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,

People: for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE

People: Glory to You Lord Jesus Christ

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

Sermon: Dr. Amy Pauley

Happy Advent! Advent is waiting, watching, being alert for God. We wait for Christmas Day – for Jesus who was born 2,000 years ago. We watch for Christ who will return. From scriptures, we learn that God is present – present in the past and in the future. Where is God now? Are we alert, watching, waiting for God's presence?

Are we waiting for a sign? In the gospels, Jesus is asked about signs of God and of the end of time. It is understood that at the end of time God would deal out justice. There'd be punishment for the wicked and rewards for the righteous. Signs are understood to be evidence of God's presence. Seeing is believing.

Jesus is very reluctant to give signs of God on demand, especially for the end of time.

When asked in Mark's gospel, Jesus responds by "[sighing] deeply in his spirit" and he says, "*Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation*" (Mk.8:12). When asked about the last day in Matthew's gospel, Jesus says, "*But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father*" (Mt.24:36). In Luke's gospel, Jesus warns his followers not to be led astray by people who claim to know the signs and who call themselves messiah. He tells us that we will know the end. We will know as sure as we know that Summer is coming when a fig tree sprouts leaves. God and only God will reveal the end – at the end.

I think Jesus is reluctant to perform or predict signs on command because his followers are missing the point: God is here and now. We can't demand that God be present. God is not in this sign or that sign. God is – always – eternally present. The God of Life says, "*I AM WHO I AM* (Ex.3:14)." We are reflections of God. I am. We are. We are from God – alive. We don't understand living. We are living. God is the source of life – here and now. I am. We are.

In all the gospels, Jesus tells us to keep watch for God. In today's gospel, Jesus says, "*Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day [the last day] does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap*" (vv.34-35). Live as though the master, the king, the Son of Man will return at any moment. Imagine goofing off at work and the boss catches you. As Christians, our work is to not fall asleep – to stay awake for God. Jesus tells us not to "*faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world*" (Lk.21:26). To faint is to lose consciousness, fall asleep, be knocked out and down. Jesus tells us to stay awake and wait for God's presence – even in the tough times, the worry times, the boring or hectic times. "*Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down...*"

But what are we waiting and watching it out for now? What if I told you that there is 27 days until Christmas? 27 days until Christmas – just now, where did your mind and heart go? Do we want to faint from "fear and foreboding"? Are we looking forward to the worries or to squandering our time with distractions? You know, in booze or in frivolous merriment? Or are we ready to stay awake for the gift of God's presence?

From one angle, Advent is 27 days of endless tasks on a check list. In peak stress, each item on the list becomes a worry to get through – an errand, an event, talking with people. We’ve got to get through it and move on. And then waiting becomes frustrating – the checkout line, the meeting running long, the gifts arriving after Christmas. And then what happens when Christmas Day comes and its over? There’s more work and worry – we got to get through it all as quickly as possible. Life can become an endless worry list of unsatisfying things.

Without presence to the here and now, we are never at peace. Without surrendering to the divine moment, we will never be satisfied. What are we waiting for?

By God’s grace, we wait and hope for divine presence – here and now. It is a gift to be in the presence of God. It’s peace, satisfaction, fulfillment. We can’t make God come to us. We are called to wait for God’s presence, to be alert, to prepare ourselves. We focus on the present and we are present. We wait for the possibility of surrendering to the divine moment, connection, presence. We wait in prayer – alone, silent, and still. We wait in these services – together, voices calling out for God as we sit, kneel, stand. We wait in hope for God to bless our activities, our giving, and our programs. The gift of God’s presence is peace, joy, and fulfillment. It’s worth the wait. But when we are fully present, waiting for God doesn’t feel like frustration. Our full presence is paying attention to the gifts of this life – we’re living, breathing, reaching to the source of life within and beyond us. Calm, peaceful, open to the present.

Our being present to life is a gift. Just imagine a conversation with someone who isn’t really paying attention. They’re preoccupied, maybe on their phone or looking around. Maybe talking to us is an item on their worry list. It happens. We all have work to do. Now imagine being fully present to a person. We’re listening, seeing, receiving the person. We’re waiting for the connections to emerge, for the story to reveal itself, for the presence between us. Being fully present to someone is love – no judgment, no preoccupation, no interest apart from each other’s aliveness and story.

God wants to be fully present to you – to me, to us. God says, *“Abide in me as I abide in you”* and *“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love”* (Jn.15:4,9). We don’t so much as receive God’s presence but awaken to God’s presence. And it is a gift to awaken.

Being awake to the God of Life is its own reward. There’s no striving, no worries, no fear. Christian contemplatives and mystics wait for God in silence. They await God’s presence by clearing their minds and hearts. They don’t will thoughts away or force feelings aside – they watch them float on.

In deep silence, we can awaken to who we are: we are living, breathing, openness to God. But there’s always the return to the world and its worries and distractions. Jesus tells us to stand up, stay awake even among the world’s noise, fears, disasters. We can be awake to life and be present to this moment to wait for God. What are we waiting for?

At the end of time, do we know what God gives us? We’re told in the Book of Revelation. The thirsty get fresh drink from the water of life that flows from the throne of God and the Lamb (Rv.21-22). And this throne is surrounded by the tree of life in the dwelling place of God on earth. And the Son of Man, the Lamb, the Ancient of Days, the Living God says: *“See, I am making all things new”* (Rv.21:5). Do we see it? Do we want life?

When God's living presence is not enough, what can we possibly get that would fulfill or satisfy us? What do we want for Christmas? Imagine getting it. What would we want after that? When we aren't awake to life and waiting for God – desire leads to desire – more leads to wanting more.

But strange and wonderful things happen when all we want is living. The world is made new and brighter when all we desire for the life around us is its flourishing. To see with the awakened sight of life is to seek the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom is the presence of God within us and around us and beyond us.

Bizarre twists of fortune happen when we seek and pray and wait for God's living presence. In the Kingdom, Jesus tells us that the first will be last, the rich will be denied entrance, and the meek will inherit all the riches. The Kingdom always involves a reversal of fortune. Why? Because God's presence is the source of life – and life is the most valuable thing we're given, by far. Because the more present we are to God, the less likely we are to have riches and power and the willingness to hurt others. Because when we're awake to the value of life, it hurts us when life for others is so bloody hard. We are not awake to God's presence in greed, in exclusion, in violence. Rather – the more awakened to God that we are, the more we give to others. Jesus shows us that. He empties himself, lowers himself, gives everything. Stay awake and we'll see the emergence of resurrection and new life.

What are we waiting for? For our eyes to be opened to God's presence, for the power of new sight, for the living God to make all things new. Regaining our sight to see God is central to the story of our faith.

Jesus Christ shows us the way to awaken to God's presence. Beyond the worries of mind and our fears, we wait, we pray, we hope for God's presence. Jesus tells us not to faint, not to fall asleep – be here now. Wait. Do we see? It's always Advent. Jesus says be loving – be present and wait for each other and for God.

(Time allowed for Silent Reflection.)

THE APOSTLE'S CREED:

Celebrant: Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,

People: **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (#12):

(In joyful expectation let us pray to our Saviour and Redeemer, saying, “**Lord Jesus, come soon!**”)

Celebrant: O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live.

People: **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Celebrant: O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us.

People: Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more.

People: Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open: come and free the captives from prison.

People: Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness; come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

People: Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires: Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one: come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.

People: Lord Jesus, come soon!

Celebrant: O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us, Lord our God.

People: Lord Jesus, come soon!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION:

Celebrant: Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy; he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table. Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness.

(Silence is kept.)

Celebrant: Most merciful God,

People: we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

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

People: Amen.

THE PEACE

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Hymn: *There's a Voice in the Wilderness*

#106 HB

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS:

All: God of love and power, your word stirs within us the expectation of the coming of your Son. Accept all we offer you this day and sustain us with your promise of eternal life. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER #3:

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Celebrant: Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; we give you thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in the fullness of time came among us in our flesh and opened to us the way of salvation. Now we watch for the day when he will come again in power and great triumph to judge this world, that we, without shame or fear, may rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore, we raise you, joining our voices with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name.

People: 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.

Celebrant: We give thanks to you, Lord our God, for the goodness and love you have made known to us in creation; in calling Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son.

For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, a death he freely accepted, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he 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. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, Father, according to his command,

People: **we remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming in glory;**

Celebrant: and we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ and his blood of the new covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we, made acceptable to him, may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, reconcile all things in Christ, and made them new, and bring us to that city of light where you dwell with all your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

People: **Amen.**

Celebrant: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: **Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Celebrant: Merciful Father, pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. In eating and drinking together may we be made one with Christ and with one another.

People: **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Celebrant: And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People: **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.**

BREAKING OF BREAD #5:

Celebrant: God of promise, you prepare a banquet for us in your kingdom.

People: **Happy are those who are called to the supper of the lamb.**

THE COMMUNION

Communion Hymns:

*O God Unseen Yet Ever Near
In the Bleak Mid Winter*

#52 HB
#122 HB

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

All: God for whom we wait, you have fed us with the bread of eternal life. Keep us ever watchful, that we may be ready to stand before the Son of man. We ask this in the name of Christ the Lord. Amen.

THE DOXOLOGY:

All: Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING:

Celebrant: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

People: Amen.

REMINDERS: Birthdays/Anniversaries/Announcements

Recessional: *When the King Shall Come Again*

#109 HB

THE DISMISSAL:

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

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Assisting Rev. Alex today:

Celebrant:	The Rev. Alex Hewitt
Preacher:	Dr. Amy Pauley
Bread:	Rev. Alex
First Reading:	Maggie Prentice
Second Reading:	Laura Johnson
Prayers:	Margaret Paradis
Gospel:	Peter Beckett
Server:	Beth Steffler
Audio/Visual:	David Paradis
Music:	Gayle Haley
Sidespersons:	Bob Cheesman, Al Lavender
Chancel:	Marie Lemoine, Sharon Zacchigna

This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:

Joyce Antony & Family; Sharron Snider; Darlene Rose & Family; Lisa Marie; Cheryl C.; Peter Hubbard; Mark Ralston; Kim Middaugh; Pam Rees; Farrell & Frances McGinnis; Sophia L.; Jackson; Sally Smith; John & Terry; Marilyn Lloyd; Theresa & Pete; Valerie; Stephen and Martin Bertelsen; Darlene Jessem; Doreen; Adesh; Brenda Jessem; Brenda & Brian; Derek; Jaxon Croft; Sean.

The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:

Alvin Maynard; Dave Lawrence; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jim Tomkins; Sheila Green; Carrie Snow; Sheri Scott; Carl; Mark & Erin; Wally Raymond; Christine; Audrey Moody; Lynda Raye; Garn Mennell; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Michelle Sinclair and mom; Jane & Ron Lewis; Cecilia Mowat; Laura Johnston; Marilyn Foley; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Jen Galicinski; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Fr. Murray; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Bill & Cathy Gray; Wendy Goodyer; Donna Wilson; Gordon Kennedy; Paul & Rose McIntyre; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Igreja Episcopal Anglicano do Brasil

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

St. James Cathedral