

*Christ Church New  
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

*28 November 2021*

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Welcome

Give thanks to the Lord Almighty  
**because he is good  
and his love is eternal.**

Jeremiah 33.10

Song: 1 O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in its ways to go. Refrain

3 O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,  
unto your own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. Refrain

5 O come, O Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe for us the heavenward road  
and bar the way to death's abode. Refrain

6 O come, O Bright and Morning Star,  
and bring us comfort from afar!

Dispel the shadows of the night  
and turn our darkness into light. Refrain

Song: Jesus, hope of the nations  
Jesus, comfort for all who mourn  
You are the source of Heaven's hope on  
earth  
Jesus, light in the darkness

Jesus, truth in each circumstance  
You are the source of Heaven's light on  
earth  
In history You lived and died  
You broke the chains, You rose to life

*You are the hope living in us  
You are the rock in whom we trust  
You are the light shining for all the world to see*

*You rose from the dead conquering fear  
Our Prince of Peace drawing us near  
Jesus our hope, living for all who will receive  
Lord, we believe*

Reading: Psalm 25.1, 4-10

**25** To you, O Lord, I offer my prayer;  
**2** **in you, my God, I trust.**

**4** Teach me your ways, O Lord;  
**make them known to me.**

**5** Teach me to live according to your truth,  
**for you are my God, who saves me.  
I always trust in you.**

**6** Remember, O Lord, your kindness and  
constant love  
**which you have shown from long ago.**

**7** Forgive the sins and errors of my youth.  
**In your constant love and goodness,  
remember me, Lord!**

**8** Because the Lord is righteous and good,  
**he teaches sinners the path they  
should follow.**

**9** He leads the humble in the right way  
**and teaches them his will.**

**10** With faithfulness and love he leads  
**all who keep his covenant and obey  
his commands.**

*Reading: Jeremiah 33.14-16*

<sup>14</sup>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.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup> 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."

*Advent Candle*

Today we remember the hope that God gives us by lighting the first candle.

*All Age Activity: Legacy Leaves*

What are our hopes for the future? Would you like to write down a dream or a hope you have for the future. Write in the leaf you were given as you arrived, and then we can attach it to this branch at the front of church.

Prayer: God of justice and peace,  
from the heavens you rain down mercy and kindness,  
that all on earth may stand in awe and wonder  
before your marvelous deeds.  
Raise our heads in expectation,  
that we may yearn for the coming day of the Lord  
and stand without blame before your Son,  
Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Song: *Our God is a great big God*  
*Our God is a great big God*  
*Our God is a great big God*  
*And He holds us in His hands*

He's higher than a skyscraper  
He's deeper than a submarine  
He's wider than the universe  
And beyond my wildest dreams  
He's known me and He's loved me

Since before the world began  
How wonderful to be a part of  
God's amazing plan

**Sermon: 'The Righteous Branch, Ola Lawal**

**Let us pray**

Faithful God, speak to us on this first Advent Sunday. Open our hearts to receive your Word and our minds to understand it.

**Amen**

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. The first Sunday of Advent gives us the opportunity to centre our thoughts on **Hope**. The much needed hope in a year where many had experienced a great loss. Such as the loss of a loved one, loss of job or loss of security due to a broken relationship. Jeremiah's hope-filled prophecy for this first Advent Sunday is a much needed message for many.

The Jeremiah's hope-filled prophecy of the coming King, a righteous Branch. The righteous descendant of David, today is interpreted as the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. However, the circumstances in which the prophecy was spoken at the time of Jeremiah was different. It was more to give hope to the children of Israel who were facing imminent invasion by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Their king, Zedekiah was already imprisoned. Judah and Jerusalem will soon be decimated and filled with corpses, verses 4-5.

Just as it would have sounded a bit ridiculous to tell someone whose life is crumbling around them, 'don't worry, all will be well and restored, Jeremiah's hope-filled prophecy would also have sounded ridiculous to the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the time, as all they could see is the approaching catastrophe and destruction. Yet, Jeremiah was insistent that God's message to them is hope-filled.

Tragedy may be approaching them for now, but there will be restoration. Not just of daily life but much more. The chief signs of God's favour to His people will be the restoration of David's line. The Root of Jesse is coming soon to renew and restore all things. What an incredible message of hope, safety and unexpected joy. That new life will spring up from what presently looks like a dead stump. As history tells us, the chief tragedies of the Babylonian Exile, was the end of King David's dynasty after nearly four hundred years, of rule. The Babylonians destroyed David's city, burned Solomon's temple, and took David's heirs into exile. At the time the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have felt that God's promise to David, of 2 Samuel 7 verse 16, 'You, will always have descendants, and I will make your kingdom last forever. Your dynasty will never end.' was no longer true. God's promise appeared to have come to an end.

The good news is God's words are true and his promises never fail. This passage, Jeremiah 33 vs. 14 to 16 and Jeremiah 23:5-6, as time went on were interpreted to be speaking about the coming everlasting ruler, the Messiah. The descendant of David who will "execute justice and righteousness in the land". The one for whom we wait in this Advent season. The one whose salvation encompasses not just Judah and Jerusalem, but the whole world.

To a people devastated by loss, Jeremiah's prophecy offered hope: "The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah" (33:14). All might seem lost, but God still is faithful. The house of David might be cut down, but God is able to bring life out of death. There will always be a descendant of David to be king of Israel.

This Jeremiah's prophecy is also for us. We might have been bruised, battered and cut down. All might seem lost, but God is still

faithful. He is still able to bring new life out of what we perceive as lost.

New branches shall again sprout out of a stump as written in Isaiah 11:1. The reason for this is because Jesus, the Messiah, is for us too. He can heal, renew and restore us. We can hang on to the hope that we will rejoice again because He is the 'Lord Our Salvation'. We can hang on to the hope that the descendant of David whom we await in this Advent season will 'execute justice and righteousness in the land'. In all our lands because His salvation encompasses not just Judah and Jerusalem, but the whole world.

Jeremiah was a forthright man who did not mince his words as we noticed in the earlier chapters. He told the children of His Israel they will be sent into exile if they did not change their ways. He was so persistent with the warnings that he earned the name, 'prophet of doom'. The rulers imprisoned him because of his gloomy prophecies.

Yet, amidst Jeremiah's suffering and the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, he saw hope. He saw the righteous Branch that will spring up. The Messiah who will make things new and shared it with the people who were more used to his gloomy prophecies. When faced with difficult situations we similarly struggle to believe anything positive or hold on to any hope.

However we have hope in Jesus, the Sustainer and Healer. No matter what the media is telling us; or what the doctor's diagnosis says; or what the threatening letter from the bank manager says; or the reality of what our present issue may be; Jesus the righteous Branch can resolve it in His own good time and according to His will. Let us trust Him and put our hope firmly in Him at all times and in all situations.

Secondly, like Jeremiah, let us make it our mission to spread hope during this Advent Season. To speak words of hope to the

weariness, the abandoned, the despairing that the righteous Branch, the Lord our Salvation will come again. To tell all that in the midst of darkness, light is about to break, a branch will sprout. Jesus Christ will come again the second time. He will restore and renew us and our world. **Amen.**

### **Let us pray**

Loving God thank you for your Word, Jesus Christ, who will come again a second time. Help us to firmly put our hope and trust in Him. Remind us to speak words of hope and joy in a world often filled with fear and uncertainty, even despair in this Advent season. **Amen.**

Song: Faithful one, so unchanging  
Ageless one, you're my rock of peace  
Lord of all I depend on you  
I call out to you, again and again  
I call out to you, again and again

*You are my rock in times of trouble  
You lift me up when I fall down  
All through the storm  
Your love is, the anchor  
My hope is in You alone*

### **Prayer of Intercession**

When I say '**Lord in your mercy**' – the response is **Hear or prayer**'.

### **Lord in your mercy-Hear or prayer**

Eternal God, Sustainer and Protector,  
In Your hands You hold the gifts of hope and love, joy and peace.  
We thank You for Your infinite generosity and mercy.  
Lord, we bring to you in faith the needs that press upon our lives.  
We pray for the Church to be persistent in faithfulness and graciousness.  
As the world darkens and the days grow short, may our light, Christ's light in us, shine with a steady flame, bringing light,

bringing healing, and bringing hope.

### **Lord in your mercy – Hear or prayer**

God of faithfulness and truth, we pray for the world around us,  
for peoples we do not know, yet whose hurts and afflictions fill the media.  
Those who endure the long days and months of famine and thirst, of war and feud, of corruption and despair. In each hurting place send Your Spirit.  
Change the hearts and minds of those who do have the power to effect the changes needed for peace, justice and the wellbeing of all.

### **Lord in your mercy – Hear or prayer**

In this season of Advent, where many watch and wait:  
Be with those who at this time are waiting and watching for change in their situation.  
Grant your healing to the sick. Comfort the bereaved  
Help all who wait with anxiety to continue in hope, and all who watch with fearfulness to continue with a steady, peaceful heart.

### **Lord in your mercy – Hear or prayer**

For all who are here today and for those known to them.  
We ask your blessings, peace and joy.  
Take away the hurts and gloom blighting our lives.  
Help us to separate our needs from our wants.  
That we may discern where priorities in our ordered lives should lie.  
We ask your wisdom on how to live a joyous life that glorifies you.  
All these we ask in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

As Jesus taught us we pray,

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.

*Song:* How great the chasm that lay between  
us  
How high the mountain I could not climb  
In desperation, I turned to heaven  
And spoke your name into the night  
Then through the darkness  
Your loving kindness  
Tore through the shadows of my soul  
The work is finished, the end is written  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Who could imagine so great a mercy?  
What heart could fathom such boundless  
grace?  
The God of ages stepped down from glory  
To wear my sin and bear my shame  
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven  
The king of kings calls me His own  
Beautiful saviour, I'm yours forever  
Jesus Christ, my living hope

*Hallelujah, praise the one who set me free  
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me  
You have broken every chain  
There's salvation in your name  
Jesus Christ, my living hope*

Then came the morning that sealed the  
promise  
Your buried body began to breathe  
Out of the silence, the roaring lion  
Declared the grave has no claim on me

### **Benediction**

Be people of hope.  
Let hope live in your heart and share the

hope of Christ with all you meet.  
Share hope by noticing someone else's  
humanity.  
Share hope by listening to someone's story.  
Share hope by praying for our world.  
In this Advent season, we need to see, feel,  
and share hope.  
As you go out into the wonder of God's  
creations, share hope with those you meet.  
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**ALL: And May the Grace of our Lord  
Jesus, the love of God & the sweet  
fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us  
all now and for evermore. Amen**