TAMWORTH AND LICHFIELD CIRCUIT WORSHIP AT HOME 22nd November 2026

Prepared by Rev Mark Stennett

For many in society Christmas is already on the high street and in our homes, may be not all the decorations, but it is creeping in. As Christians, we know of course that Advent is it's very own season, and today as we look ahead to advent, first comes the important Sunday 'Christ the King'. This is the Sunday before Advent when we take a moment to remember why we look back to Jesus' coming as a baby, because it's purpose is so that we can be prepared for Jesus' eventual return as King. So how ever we journey through advent I invite us to ponder how best do we prepare ourselves for Christ's return, and what lessons can we learn from Jesus first coming as a baby? All before we get whisked up into advent, and Christmas.

Let us pray: Loving and gracious God, send your Holy Spirit today, to guide us and inspire us during this time of worship, in Jesus' precious name.
Amen

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 30 Jesus stand among us

1. Jesus stand among us
At the meeting of our lives;
Be our sweet agreement
At the meeting of our eyes.
O Jesus, we love You,
so we gather here;
Join our hearts in unity and take away
our fear.

2. So to You we're gathering
Out of each and every land;
Christ the love between us
At the joining of our hands.
O Jesus, we love You,
so we gather here;
Join our hearts in unity and take away
our fear.

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Graham Kendrick (b.1950)

Let us pray:
all-seeing, all-knowing, and everywhere-present, we bow in humble adoration of your perfect wisdom, send your spirit to lead us in worship, to speak to us through your holy word and shine your light through our lives through word and witness.

let us take a moment to give thanks for the many blessings around us, the food on our table, the family and friends, carer and even stranger who we meet in our lives.
<Pause>
As we recognise you and your many blessings, we take a moment to recognise when we haven't always recognised you, when we haven't said the right thing, thought the right thing, or acted accordingly. So let us take a moment to confess our sins.
<Pause>
We thank you that you do not leave us alone to deal with our sin, but instead you sent your son Jesus Christ, that through his life and teaching he showed us how to be in relationship with you, and through his death on the cross he paid the ultimate sacrifice for us all: through the cross our sins are forgiven. We give thanks for Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Through the resurrection you showed once and for all your power over life and death and offer each and everyone of us a hope and promise of eternal life found only in you. May we embrace it this day and always, In Jesus' holy and precious name. **Amen**

Matthew 25: 31-46

The Judgement of the Nations

31 ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will
sit on the throne of his glory. 32All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will
separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the
goats, 33and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34Then
the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my
Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35for I
was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to
drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36I was naked and you gave me
clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited
me.” 37Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you
hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38And when
was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you
clothing? 39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited
you?” 40And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the
least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” 41Then he will say to
those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire
prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I
was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not
welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did
not visit me.” 44Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you
hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of
you?” 45Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of
the least of these, you did not do it to me.” 46And these will go away into eternal
punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’

Reflection:

A number of years ago ‘Undercover Boss’ was a popular TV show where a president or boss of a large company would pose as a new employee in their own business and gain new insight as an entry level worker. Eventually there would be a big reveal and the boss would come clean, and therefore for some of the supervising employees it would lead to disciplinary meetings, organisational changes. For others the boss would see their graft and hard work, and would therefore offer rewards, finance further education or pay off their debt or even buy a house for them. It was an interesting project, and had a spectrum of outcomes: some episodes felt like a vanity project, others – a real education for the company to learn from organisation wide operations, and sometimes, it felt like a real Scrooge turning point- a revolution of seeing worth and value in others.

This Sunday in the church calendar is called the feast of Christ the King: this sets the context for advent and Christmas, that we remind ourselves of how Jesus first coming to earth as a baby so that we can be prepared for when he returns as Christ the King. Just like Undercover Boss, one day there will be a big reveal, Jesus’ return will not be ministry take 2, but instead it will be the conclusion, the finale. And therefore, on the brink of Advent, which is a time of reflection and of spiritual preparation, we are encouraged, we are challenged to make sure that we are still on

track, that we are doing all that we can, to the best of our ability- for that final day of judgement. This is a heavy subject, and often in Christianity it is merely implied rather than talked about. But it isn't here to guilt us into being better, but instead as we journey through advent, Jesus' incarnation is founded in God's love for us, that God calls all sorts of people (whether magi or Shepherd, young girl or carpenter), but whatever our gifts or abilities God calls us to respond to him and act and share his love to the best of our ability.

let us pray: Gracious God we give thanks for the gift of Jesus your son, equip us today to all that you call us to, may you guide us through your holy spirit in our conversations, actions and how we treat others and ourselves, help us to keep on track this Christmas and always. **Amen**

Hymn: Singing the Faith 251 Jesus Christ is waiting

1 Jesus Christ is waiting,
waiting in the streets;
no one is his neighbour,
all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too;
make me, friend or stranger,
fit to wait on you.

2 Jesus Christ is raging,
raging in the streets,
where injustice spirals
and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus
I am angry too;
in the Kingdom's causes
let me rage with you.

3 Jesus Christ is healing,
healing in the streets;
curing those who suffer,
touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too;
let my care be active,
healing, just like you.

4 Jesus Christ is dancing,
dancing in the streets,
where each sign of hatred he,
with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus
I should triumph too;
where good conquers evil
let me dance with you.

5 Jesus Christ is calling,
calling in the streets,
'Who will join my journey?
I will guide their feet.'
Listen, Lord Jesus,
let my fears be few:
walk one step before me; I will follow you.

John L Bell (born 1949) and Graham Maule (1958-2019)
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Let us pray: In joyful expectation of his coming to reign we pray to our Lord, saying, Come, Lord Jesus. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your world as King of the nations. We pray for . . .
Before you rulers will stand in silence.
Come, Lord Jesus. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to your Church as Lord and Judge. We pray for . . .
Help us to live in the light of your coming and give us a longing to do your will.

We pray for . . .
Enfold us all in your love and mercy, wipe away the tears of failure, fear and distress, and set us free to serve you for ever. Come, Lord Jesus. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come to us from heaven with power and great glory,
and lift us up to meet you, where with all your saints and angels,
we will live with you for ever.
Come, Lord Jesus. **Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

(Taken from the Methodist Worship book p.121-122)

Now let us bring all of our prayers together, spoken and unspoken, by saying the Lord's Prayer:
Our Father, who art in heaven
hallowed by 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.

Hymn: Singing the Faith 85

1. Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet your tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
evermore his praises sing.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King!

2. Praise him for his grace and favour
to his people in distress.
Praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness!

3. Fatherlike he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows.
In his hand he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Widely yet his mercy flows!

4. Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face.
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)

A final blessing:
May Christ's light shine upon us,
and prepare our hearts and souls to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit,
be ours, now and always. Amen

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