**Morning Praise @ Home Sunday 12th December 2021**

**Advent 3**

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**Opening prayer**

You spoke, Lord, and light penetrated the darkness.

A good light. A strong light. A perfect light.

But we went astray, loving darkness rather than light,

so you sent your prophets, to call us back towards the light.

Yet still we were stubborn and afraid,

so you sent your son, to be the light of the world.

The light shining in the darkness, and the darkness never overcoming it.

You, Lord, are our light and our salvation.

You are our light and our truth. You are our light and our protector.

You are our light and our fountain of life.

Your light continues to shine, in the dark places of our lives, in the dark places of our world

and though things may not be easy, the darkness cannot prevail. **Amen.** *by Dave Hopwood*

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  **Amen.**

### Bible Readings Isaiah 12: 2 – 6 Philippians 4: 4 – 7

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**Reflection from Ruth**

We have grown up with all sorts of time-saving devices, and undoubtedly some of us will receive even more of them at Christmas, perhaps finding under our Christmas trees a waffle maker to save time at breakfast or a bun warmer to make dinner preparation faster. Once we own these devices, then we build bigger kitchens that require more cleaning and more energy to store more of our time-saving devices. All these things will save us time—not! Time is exactly what we do not have. What decreases in a culture of affluence is precisely and strangely time—along with wisdom and friendship. These are the very things that the human heart was created for, that the human heart feeds on and lives for. No wonder we are producing so many depressed, unhealthy and even violent people, while also leaving a huge carbon footprint on this poor planet.

Jesus said it to us quite clearly: “Why are you so anxious? Why do you run after things like the pagans do? What shall I eat? What shall I wear? You are not to worry about tomorrow. Each day will take care of itself” (*Matthew 6:31, 34).*

This is also the message in Philippians when Paul says ‘*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.’*

There is a lot of worrying news about at the moment. The message we are receiving from scripture is to try and put these worries into God’s hands, and allow His peace to fill our hearts and minds.

**Affirmation of faith**

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

**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?

**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? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Prayers of intercession led by Philip**

Lord we come to you together now to present you our hopes, our worries and even our fears.

Father we have all been looking forward to times together over the Christmas period as a community, as a church, as families & as individuals. After such a long period of lock down restrictions it had seemed that we were finally getting the better of Covid thanks to the hard work of of the scientists who prepared the vaccines, the healthcare staff who administered them, and also thanks to the sacrifices made by so many people who did follow the guidance on social distancing.

With the new variant spreading fast, we are now worried that more lives will be lost here and across the world. We are also worried at the potential impact of further restrictions on people’s lives, their livelihoods and their mental health.

We ask for your intervention Lord. We know we live on a crowded planet, that we have misused natural resources, that we have destroyed so much that is good. We ask for your forgiveness but we do ask you to help those that are now trying to fight this virus.

We ask in particular that our young people in schools and universities are protected, but also given enough freedom

We again ask that wealthy countries such as ours do more to share vaccines and resources with those countries that have only basic healthcare systems and limited resources.

We pray for refugees across the world who are travelling many thousands of miles, often paying criminal gangs to help them cross borders, often at great risk. We pray for the families involved, for the desperation the parents must feel as they take children on dangerous journeys. We pray for those who have little shelter this winter as they wait, people in limbo, with little protection or support. As your son was born in a stable as there was no room at the Inn, we think now of all those sheltering under canvas or cardboard as they flee persecution, violence, or famine.

Lord we ask for comfort to all those who are feeling lonely as we approach Christmas. For those elderly who feel isolated, for those in broken relationships, for those who feel they just don’t fit in.

Help us to reach out in friendship and to look out for our neighbours.

We remember any we know who are in need of your healing. Be with them Lord, remind them that they are not alone and help us to do what we can to help and support them.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**