

**Sunday 27 November 2022,
First Sunday of Advent**

Collect:

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin to the
light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44

The Church year has turned, and we are now simultaneously both facing away from the Cross and towards it as we focus on our preparations for Christ's coming at Christmas. The readings, especially the Gospel, remind us also to be ready for his coming again, as judge and gateway to God's kingdom.

We begin with Isaiah proclaiming a vision of peace for all peoples and nations, drawn together in the light of Jerusalem, an anticipation, perhaps of the Lukan depiction of shepherds at Jesus' birth hearing an angelic host pronounce God's peace on earth. Psalm 122 continues to draw us towards Jerusalem, celebrating a divine peace that has the city at its centre – a vision we are still waiting for and need to work towards.

In Romans, Paul is urgently calling the faithful to remember that they are living between the ages in a new reality and that strengthened by the good news of Jesus Christ they should be preparing themselves for the end of the present order of society. These lead us into the Gospel, where Jesus is also calling for watchfulness as a new era is birthed. Jesus, and Paul, are also both inviting us to be catalysts for that birth by living in ways that cares for others, and creation, more than for own needs or wishes. The reign of God is to be celebrated, and the best way to do that is by becoming part of it.

O Lord our God,
make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming of your Son our Lord;
that, when he shall appear,
he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service
and joyful in his praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7. 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12
Second Sunday of Advent