

**Sunday 30 November 2025,
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

While the Church Year has turned and we are at the start of our preparations for the coming of Christ at Christmas, in this benefice, at least, we do this while simultaneously remembering Andrew, patron saint of Chew Magna Parish Church, apostle and martyr. Andrew, witness, with his brother Peter, to some of the most important episodes in Jesus' life, and believed to be killed while spreading the Gospel in Greece, is a reminder of the serious implications of Christ's coming. Following Jesus is a radical commitment and we better be properly prepared.

Isaiah proclaims a vision of peace for all peoples and nations, who are drawn together in the light of Jerusalem. He offers an understanding of what God's Messiah is intended to achieve and in doing so anticipates the Lukan depiction of shepherds at Jesus' birth hearing an angelic host pronounce God's peace on earth. Psalm 122 comes from a collection (Psalms 120-134) known as 'songs of ascent' which are praises sung on pilgrimages. Hence, the verses draw us towards Jerusalem, celebrating a divine peace that has the city at its centre – a vision we are still waiting for and so we need, like Andrew, to do our part to help it blossom.

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. It is a summons to vigilance that leads 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 care for others, and creation, more than for own needs or wishes. Andrew believed that the reign of God was to be celebrated, and he demonstrated that the best way to do that was by becoming part of it, giving all people from all nations a chance to be warmed by the light of God's presence.

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