United Parish

@Home Sunday Services



November 2026

The United Parish of Chinnor, Sydenham,

Aston Rowant and Crowell

The ministry team offer you these services, particularly if you find you are unable to attend church.

Our prayer is that these services will help you still feel connected to, and loved by, your church family.

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Sunday 1st November
All Saints Day

Opening prayer

Lord, in the noise and clammer of a noisy world, let me set this time aside for you. Direct my thoughts and prayers, lift up my heart to worship you in spirit and in truth through Jesus Christ. Amen

Psalm 34 vs 1-10

I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
My soul will boast in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
Glorify the Lord with me:
let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
Those who look to him are radiant;
Their faces are never covered with shame.
The poor man called, the Lord heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.
Fear the Lord, you his saints,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Prayer of confession

Since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, looking to Jesus in penitence and faith.

Father God, we have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and humbly repent for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us; that we might delight in your will and walk your ways to the glory of your name. Amen

Collect All Saints Day

Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all virtuous and godly living
that we may come to those inexpressible joys
that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen

Bible Reading Matthew 5 vs 1-12 *(Jesus gives the Beatitudes)*

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up the mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:
Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those that mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Reflection *(by Margaret)*

All through the year we celebrate the saints, and today we remember all of them, together with all those unknown but known to God for their special friendship. The readings for All Saints show us that these ordinary people, were extraordinary by their openness to God and their dependence on him.

In Jesus' teaching from our Gospel reading, he reveals again to his disciples, and us that the kingdom of God is back to front and upside down. These contradictory statements are profound if we listen to them carefully. They are a prescription for a blessed life- a saintly life. A manifesto of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus talks about eight personalities: the poor, the mourners, the meek the hungry and the thirsty, the pure, the peacemakers and the persecuted. Most of these people at the time of Jesus were not given the time of day in society.

People in pain, people who work for peace instead of profit, people who exercise mercy instead of revenge. In Psalm 34 the psalmist reflects that those that go to the Lord God for help will have everything good, and the saints would agree.

Then in the reading that is set from the book of Revelation *(7:9-17):* we find them utterly filled with joy and peace as they lose themselves in worship and praise.

Describing heavenly things in earthly language is naturally difficult, but this passage gets close to touching the heavenly in us, and draws into a sense of heaven's fulfilment, where there is no more pain or hunger and all tears are wiped away for ever.

Hence, we read about the reward that we can gain through knowing God through the Beatitudes, a reward in the sense that it is the natural outcome of living so knowingly dependent on God's goodness through his guiding love.

We are all called to be saints as we draw closer to God on a daily basis. There are many that reject God because they do not know him as we know him. And if they did know whim like we do, they would have a very different response. There are others who live such lavish lives believing that this is what will make them happy, that believing in God to them is treated with suspicion.

The wonderful thing about our God is that he searches us out, wherever we are. It doesn't matter if we are lost, broken and hurting. If we turn to him and rely on him, he will be there in our everyday lives, through our success and failures, just as he was there for all the Saints.

Our hope is that we will know for ourselves that we accepted by God's grace as members now of his family of saints- with our membership guaranteed not by what we have done for him, but by what he has done for us.

We are challenged to live out this truth of our lives- that we are children of God – as a response to what Christ has done for us, knowing that our present experience will be one of struggle, but encouraged by the future hope of glory. Amen

Prayer

Blessed Lord, your Son turned expectations upside down by offering the Kingdom to the poor and the persecuted. Give your Church faith to trust in you and not in riches or trappings of power.
Strengthen all who suffer for following you.

Blessed Lord, you called peacemakers your children and honoured those who hunger with thirst and righteousness. Bring in your justice and equity in our hurting and troubled world.
Guide all in political office to walk in your mercy and truth.

Blessed Lord, you show yourself to the pure in heart.
Give us contrite hearts for all that blurs our vision of you in our busy lives.
Forgive us the sins that separate us from one another and from you.

Blessed Lord, we will always bless you.
Give us voice to always praise you in the darkness and the light in our lives.
Revive us, O Lord, and make us whole.

Blessed Lord, you comfort all who mourn and give cause for rejoicing.
Be with all those whom we know who grieve at this time.
Salvation belongs to you and you wipe every tear from our eyes. Amen
A time for personal prayer

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.
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

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure;
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine;
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God:
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Prayer and Blessing

We give thanks, our God and Father, for all those who have died in the faith of Christ; for memory of their words and deeds and all they accomplished in their time; for the joyful hope of reunion with them in the world to come; and for communion with them now in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

May God, who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints,
pour upon us the riches of his grace.
May he give us fellowship and a share in his praises.

May he strengthen us to follow them in the way of holiness
and to come to the full radiance of glory.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always
Amen

Sunday November 8th 2026
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

We meet today to remember before God and to commend to his sure keeping:-
all who have died for their country in war
all who suffer as a result of war – the injured, disabled,
the mentally distressed, the homeless and refugees
all those whose faith in God and in all people has been weakened or destroyed
all who mourn their dead
all who live in areas of conflict today.
We give thanks for the work of the British Legion, supporting all those who have been affected by war.

A GATHERING PRAYER
God of the past, present and future
We meet in this moment to remember the past,
give thanks for the present
looking forwards to the future.
Guide us in our listening and learning, for we are your people. Amen.

A PRAYER OF CONFESSION
We confess to God – the sins and shortcomings of the world -
its pride, selfishness, greed, evil divisions and hatreds.
We confess our share in what is wrong -
our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for all.
Almighty God, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE GOSPEL READING – ST. JOHN 15 Vs 9-13
As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.
I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friend.

REFLECTION *(by Joan)*

Anniversaries are not so much about the past but rather what we can learn from the past for the sake of the future. We remember veterans, who may have left conflict behind but whose lives are still torn apart by the traumas they experienced during their military service. We are reminded of past atrocities and we recognise the ongoing need to combat ethnic and extreme nationalism in today's world.

We can all use remembrance -

to let hurts, grievances and arguments fester and grow.

Or we can use remembrance for good purpose.

At Yad Vashem (the memorial to the Holocaust) in Jerusalem, are the words

"Forgetfulness leads to exile

While remembrance is the secret of redemption."

Julia Neuberger challenges us to use the memory of the Holocaust constructively. She writes "It must be a lesson for all of us about what happens when a dictatorship flourishes and human life is no longer important. We remember so that the pain and damage is not buried with the victims but lives on so that their grandchildren, and their grandchildren – can never forget.

As we express our gratitude for those who, literally laid down their lives so that we may have a tomorrow, we seek to find a way forward that will water the seeds of compassion and healing rather than the seeds of anger. Peace begins with each one of us – in the way we look at others, listen to others and speak about each other."

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT AND PRAY

Ever living God – as we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence, may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations

through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

A POEM

All heaven weeps
To see the earth
Abused and maimed by war and strife.
When people hate,
When people fight
And rob each other of life.

When greed prevails
And crushed by power
The poor are trampled on.
The heart of God
Is torn in two
And Christ is crucified again. Carol Dixon.

A BLESSING

May God himself, who is the source of our peace, give you peace at all times and in every way. Amen

SUNDAY 15th November 2026

THE SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT

The Greeting

O Lord, open our lips: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.
O God, make speed to save us: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Praise the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Collect

Heavenly Lord,
you long for the world's salvation:
stir us from apathy,
restrain us from excess
and revive in us new hope
that all creation will one day be healed
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

A Psalm set for this Sunday Psalm 98

1 Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things.
2 His own right hand and his holy arm have won for him the victory.
3 The Lord has made known his salvation; his deliverance has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.
4 He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness towards the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
5 Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth; break into singing and make music.
6 Make music to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the voice of melody.
7 With trumpets and the sound of the horn sound praises before the Lord, the King.
8 Let the sea thunder and all that fills it, the world and all that dwell upon it.

9 Let the rivers clap their hands and let the hills ring out together before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.
10 In righteousness shall he judge the world and the peoples with equity.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen

Confession

Come, Holy Spirit of God,
and search our hearts with the light of Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.
On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

After a period of reflection

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

May almighty God,
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring us his pardon and peace, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Gospel Reading Matthew 25 vs 14-30 The Parable of the Talents

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

14 ‘For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted
his property to them; [15]to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another
one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. [16]The one who had
received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five
more talents. [17]In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two
more talents. [18]But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a
hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. [19]After a long time the master of
those slaves came and settled accounts with them. [20]Then the one who had
received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying,
“Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more
talents.”

[21]His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have
been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter
into the joy of your master.”

[22]And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, “Master, you
handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.”
[23]His master said to him, “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have
been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter
into the joy of your master.”

[24]Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying,
“Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and
gathering where you did not scatter seed; [25]so I was afraid, and I went and hid
your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.”
[26]But his master replied, “You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I
reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? [27]Then you ought
to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have
received what was my own with interest.

[28]So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. [29]For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. [30]As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This is the Gospel of the Lord. ***All*** Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection *(by Tony)*

So is God harsh, reaping where he did not sow, and gathering where he did not scatter seed? Is our faith based on a heavenly examination system that many of us from past experience, feel we'll probably fail?
Well let's step back for a moment and try and work out what's going on here, because surely from other things Jesus said, this picture of God maybe confusing at first reading.
Jesus tells this story during the week after his triumphant entrance to Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, to his disciples on the Mount of Olives having left the Temple where he has addressed the Pharisees in no uncertain terms about the '7 woes'; a series of severe condemnations delivered by Jesus against the scribes and Pharisees.
While Jesus talks of talents, others are plotting his arrest with his death in mind. They are the ones who God has shared the nature of the Kingdom of God with, but they have 'buried' it under a plethora of man-made laws and customs, and turned the Temple from a 'House of Prayer' into a 'Den of Robbers'. The God they proclaim seems to be one who secures their positions of power over the people, so the temple tax is paid and their lifestyle maintained, despite the Roman occupation.
God's anger at those who hide the true nature of his love and compassion for his Creation for their own ends, is surely justified. But that anger and passion for his Creation is channelled through his Son Jesus Christ, God incarnate, to reveal exactly who he is – *"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." John 14:9*

The man with one talent describes the Master as harsh, but no one else in the story gives that impression, and the other two servants seem willingly and freely to use their talents for the benefit of the Master. They are to 'enter into the joy of the master.' And the one who tells this story is 'The Master', 'The Servant King'.
Where God calls people to account it's always with salvation in mind. Jesus said: *' I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.' John 12:47*

Today let's enter into the joy of the Master.

Intercessions

Lord God, we give you thanks for all your gifts to us. For daily food, for health, for each breath we take, for freedom to choose – and for the gifts of your word, your power, and your love.
Our hearts are truly overwhelmed, O God, when we consider all that you are and how you have entrusted so much to us. May we be worthy of that trust – may we be a people who are unafraid to live as fully and as richly as you want us to live.
Lord in your mercy … hear our prayer
Help us O God, as followers of Jesus, to multiply all that you given us, to risk spreading your word and perhaps see it misunderstood, to gamble by loving those whom others think worthy only of hate, to take chances by doing good to those who have not done good to us.
Help us O God to be faith filled and to desire to increase your glory and your goodness in this world. Make us ones who share in both word and deed that which you have given to us.
Lord in your mercy … hear our prayer
We pray, O God, for the church here today – that it may encourage all its members to discover, develop, and use all their gifts, those of nature and those of grace.
Lord in your mercy … hear our prayer
We pray for those who are poor in body, mind or spirit… for those who are oppressed and heavy laden…. for those who are sick or in despair… Minister O God by your Spirit, and by us, to all those for whom we have prayed – and help us walk faithfully in the path of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Lord in your mercy … hear our prayer

Merciful Father,

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

Lord's Prayer

As we pray this familiar prayer, let us bring before God those known to us who are unwell in body, mind or spirit, or those grieving for someone who has died.

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 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:

1. At the name of Jesus
Ev'ry knee shall bow,
Ev'ry tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

2. Humbled for a season
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners,
Amongst whom he came.
Faithfully he bore it,
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious
When from death he passed.

3. In your hearts enthrone him!
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true.
Crown him as your Captain,
In temptation's hour;
Let his will enfold you
In its light and pow'r.

4. Kindred, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again
With his Father's glory,
With his angel train,
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon his brow,

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Gracious Lord, you give substance to our hope:
bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long;
and the blessing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
watch over us and those we love,
this day and evermore. **Amen**

Sunday 22nd November 2026
Sunday next before Advent

Introduction
Today is the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, just before the beginning of Advent. So, today's At-Home service is the last one of the Christian Church year. It is the climax and conclusion of the Church's liturgical journey through the life of Christ and the Gospel message. Its purpose is to celebrate the coming reign of Christ as King of the Earth, His judgement and His completion of the renewed creation that marks the fullness of the Kingdom of God. This is why the gospel reading is Jesus' parable about the sheep and the goats.

Collect for Christ the King Sunday
Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things in your well-beloved Son, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords: Mercifully grant that ourselves and all the peoples of the earth, divided and enslaved by sin, may be freed and brought together under his most gracious rule; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Psalm 95
1 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. 3 For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Gospel reading Matthew 25 vs 31-46

The Sheep and the Goats

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by
my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the
creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I
was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you
invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you
looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’
37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and
feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a
stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we
see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’
40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of
these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’
41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed,
into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry
and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,
43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did
not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’
44 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a
stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’
45 “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of
these, you did not do for me.’
46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal
life.”

Reflection *(by Brian)*

Our gospel reading for today is an account of what will happen on the day of judgement. It informs us that when the Son of Man comes, all the nations will stand before Him and He will separate them, like a shepherd separates the sheep from goats. The sheep are those are those who fed and watered Him when He was in need whereas the goats are those who did not.

When confronted with a passage like this, I guess our natural inclination might be to try to work out where we are in the herd – am I a sheep or a goat? Either congratulating myself for being a well-behaved sheep or redeeming myself from being an indifferent goat. And yet approaching the parable like this misses the bigger point.

Indeed, if we are honest with ourselves, we already know where we are in the herd - we are a bit of both! It's not as if there is a pass mark to achieve sheep status, it's about our trying to be better. Jesus is calling us to recognise we all need to improve. Perhaps a headmaster would say "could do better." I take encouragement from verse 40 of this gospel reading*: 'Truly I tell you whatever you did for the least of these, you did it for me'.* One of the commentators on this passage sums it up nicely when he says:

> **It is not about where you or I will end up on that last day, it is about where Jesus will find us. Is it in the places of need and those places where we too hunger for new life to grow?**

What a great question to ask as next week we look forward to a new year?

Personal prayer
Let us with confidence present our prayers and supplications to the throne of grace. So, Lord we pray for the needs of the whole world:

We pray for all those in positions of power, that they may govern with wisdom and integrity, serving the needs of their people.
May your reign come; Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the Church, the sign of your reign, that it may extend your welcome to people of every race and background.
May your kingdom come; Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for Christians of every denomination, that together we may come to understand that it is about our common heritage and shared allegiance.
May your dominion come; Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those whose commitment to truth brings them into conflict with earthly powers, that they may have the courage to endure.
May your rule come; Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for this community of faith in Chinnor, that attentive to your word, we may always worship in spirit and in truth.
May your reign come; Lord, hear our prayer.

Loving God, you have taught us that the power of the heart is greater than the power of wealth and might. Hear us as we pray for the fulfilment of your reign. We ask this through Jesus Christ our King; to him be glory and power for ever.
May your reign come; Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, that she may be a voice for those who lack even the basic necessities of life, tirelessly serving them and calling for change.
May your reign come; Lord, hear our prayer.

Finally Lord, we pray for ourselves that we might seek to be better sheep. Show us where you want us to minister to the needy, hungry and destitute.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son Jesus Christ,
Amen

The Lord's Prayer
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.

Hymn – sing or say aloud or in your heart as a prayer:

Loving Shepherd of thy sheep, keep us all, in safety keep;
nothing can thy power withstand, none can pluck us from thy hand.

Loving Saviour, thou didst give thine own life that we might live,
bought with blood and bought for thee, thine, and only thine, we'd be.

We would praise thee every day, gladly all thy will obey,
like thy blessèd ones above happy in thy precious love.

Loving Shepherd, ever near, teach us all thy voice to hear,
suffer not our steps to stray from the straight and narrow way.

Where thou leadest we would go, walking in thy steps below,
till before our Father's throne we shall know as we are known.

Closing Prayer

You are the King of Glory, You are the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. We pray that your Kingdom will reign forever in our hearts and in this world. Lord, we pray for your Kingdom to come here now, bringing a kingdom of justice, righteousness, hope, love, peace, mercy and grace for all. Lord, we ask that you rule in our hearts, lead in this world and govern over your kingdom.

The Grace

Why not say the grace as if we are all together and thus blessing each other? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

Sunday 29th November 2026
Advent Sunday

Introduction
Today is Advent Sunday, the first Sunday of the Church year. So, today is effectively new years day.
Thus, before you start this service, why not spend a few moments in quietness settling yourself and preparing for worship? You could use the time meditating on what this service and this new year means to you.

Opening prayer
Glory to God for the gift of this new day.
Glory to God for the gift of this new year.
Glory to God for life and light as we wake up this morning
Glory to God for time to learn and grow in love.
Guide my thoughts and actions Lord. Teach me to trust in your providence and to accept this new day and new year with hope. Amen.

Collect for Advent Sunday
God of hope, when Christ your Son appears, may He not find us asleep or idle, but active in His service and ready; through the same Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Psalm 80 vs 1-8
1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, you that led Joseph like a flock;
2 Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim, before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.
3 Stir up your mighty strength and come to our salvation.
4 Turn us again, O God; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
5 O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?
6 You feed them with the bread of tears;
you give them abundance of tears to drink.
7 You have made us the derision of our neighbours,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

8 Turn us again, O God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Gospel reading Matthew 13 vs 24-37

24 “But in those days, following that distress, then the sun will be darkened
and the moon will not give its light;
25 the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’
26 “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.
27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.
28 “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.
29 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.
30 Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.
31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.
The Day and Hour Unknown
32 “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.
34 It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.
35 “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.
36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.
37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!

Reflection *(by Brian)*

In this Gospel reading for this first day of Advent, Jesus is telling the disciples to be prepared – no one (except God) knows what is around the corner. Thus they should **'Keep Awake'**

The context is Jesus is sitting with His inner circle of disciples on the mount of olives. They are looking across the valley at the beautiful and yet incomplete Temple. The disciples pressed Jesus about His earlier prediction of the destruction of the Temple, Jesus warns them about the impending doom and gives them assurance of the Holy Spirits' assistance.

Prophecies and apocalyptic passages like this, in traditional Jewish writings, weave themes together making passages difficult to understand. Here, Jesus is weaving three themes together – the situation at the moment as they look at the Temple, the future destruction of the Temple in AD70 and the end of time when Jesus will come in judgement. This weaving of themes makes this a particularly difficult passage to understand. Two illustrations might help, as follows. (*They are from Canon Paul Harris' commentary 'Season the Preaching*').

These days shops start displaying Christmas goods earlier and earlier implying Christmas is nearly on us. By contrast fig trees coming into leaf are reliable signs of summer. Jesus told the disciples they could be certain these awful things would happen. Ever thing would change but His words would last forever.

Nodding off can be costly. Weary commuters drift off to sleep only to find they have missed their station. People doze off during a film only to find they have missed a key twist in the plot. Jesus wanted His disciples to remain alert and not be surprised by the dangers of the day. The message to His disciples and indeed to His twenty-first century readers is to '**Keep Awake'**. A neat summary for this first day of Advent.

Personal prayer

Why not start your prayers by thanking God for another year of life and what you have you have enjoyed in your Christian life, for the ways God has blessed you? You could then go onto pray for what is on your mind at the moment and pray for those you know who would like to be nourished by Gods spiritual bread.

Amongst other things, why not pray for:

- for Church leaders, elders, pastors, councils and congregations who seek to minister in the multitude of churches, chapels and fellowships across the world. Especially pray for our United Parish, the ministry team and the PCC.
- for your family and friends, your street, for neighbours, for local, national and international leaders and governments.
- for shopkeepers, carers and wardens; for hospitals, doctors and nurses and others in the front line, the NHS.
- for what you have seen on the news lately; the trouble spots of the world and those places and peoples in need.
- for peace and justice to reign in those parts of the world where evil exists in terms of war, oppression and hate.
- for those you know who would love you to pray for them at this time, for the lonely, the sick. the stressed, the bereaved.
- finally, pray for yourself and your situations.
- Why not close your prayers by saying the Lords prayer.

Hymn– sing or say aloud or in your heart as a prayer:

Hills of the north, rejoice; river and mountain spring,
hark to the advent voice; valley and lowland, sing;
though absent long, your Lord is nigh; he judgment brings and victory.

Isles of the southern seas, deep in your coral caves
pent be each warring breeze, lulled be your restless waves:
he comes to reign with boundless sway, and makes your wastes his great highway.

Lands of the East, awake, soon shall your sons be free;
the sleep of ages break, and rise to liberty.
On your far hills, long cold and grey, has dawned the everlasting day.

Shores of the utmost West, ye that have waited long,
unvisited, unblessed, break forth to swelling song;
high raise the note, that Jesus died, yet lives and reigns, the Crucified.

Shout, while ye journey home; songs be in every mouth;
lo, from the North we come, from East, and West, and South.
city of God, the bond are free, we come to live and reign in thee!

Closing Prayer

Lord by your presence, light up the past that we may learn from it with thankfulness. Light up the present that we might live in it with love. Light up the future that we might prepare for it in hope. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The Grace

Why not say the grace as if we are all together and thus blessing each other?
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.