

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Intercession God of glory and light of our salvation, we offer you thanks and praise. By your living Word you called all things into being, breathed into life the desire of our heart and shaped us in your own likeness. Though we rejected your love, you did not give us up or cease to fashion our salvation. You made a covenant to be our God, spoke to us through the prophets, and prepared the way for our redemption. We praise you that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son Jesus Christ. The Lord of eternity, announced by angels and born of Mary, he became incarnate, fulfilling the promise of your salvation. And so we offer you our praise and thanks with all your people on earth and in heaven.

Awaiting Christ's coming to reign we pray to our Lord saying; Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus. Come to a troubled and divided world, bring peace and justice to..... Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus. Come to your Church, in...and all the world; stir us up, bring new life and growth.... Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus. Come to those suffering this day, to the sick, persecuted, oppressed, anxious, lonely and bereaved..... Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus. Come us as we remember those we have shared fellowship with here on earth who have gone from among us especially....help us to be thankful for the lives of those who have influenced us until we come to share with them and all the saints in the fulness of your kingdom in heaven. Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus. Come to us and help us to honour your name by the choices we make, the priorities we have, the words we speak, the deeds we perform and the attitudes we display. As we journey onward help us to shape our lives and our world in accordance with your kingdom values. Maranatha Come Lord Jesus. Amen. **The Lord's Prayer**

Hymn StF 177/ H&P 241 **Lo he come with clouds descending.**

Dismissal: May Christ the Sun of Righteousness 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 the Holy Spirit be ours, now and always. Amen

Darlington District Worship at Home Sunday 29th November 2020

Call to Worship Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed are those who will come from east and west, from north and south to feast in the kingdom of God.

Hymn StF 180 / H&P 85 **O come, o come Immanuel**

Prayers God of all glory, you brought the universe into existence, and raised up witnesses to your greatness and love. We praise and adore you. Grant that by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit we may worship and serve you, and praise your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Lord Jesus Christ said "The first commandment is "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God , the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul ,and with all your mind, and with all your strength". The second is this "You shall love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. "I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another". **Amen. Lord have mercy.**

Let us confess our sin to God trusting his mercy and forgiveness. Holy and forgiving God, we have sinned against you and against each other in thought and word and deed. We have turned from your life-giving word, and ignored the message of those you sent. We are unprepared for the coming of your Son. Have mercy upon us and forgive us, that strengthened by your love we may serve you more faithfully; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

"I am making all things new" says the Lord. This is Christ's gracious word: "Your sins are forgiven". **Amen.** Thanks be to God.

Old Testament Reading [Isaiah 64.1-9](#)

Reading together: **Benedictus** – StF 792

Hymn StF 183 **Praise to the God who clears the way**

New Testament Reading: [Mark 13. 24-37](#)

Reflection “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down....to make known your name” (Isaiah 64.1-2) What’s in a name? In past times, far more than nowadays, a person’s name was really important. It was chosen carefully. It may be that your name was chosen because of a relative who was significant. More common in past times than now, children were often called after previous generations of their family; it is not uncommon for the child to take their parent’s name as their middle name, as I was given. Sometimes it can be more convoluted than that and we might be called after a relative from further back in history - both my grandfathers were named after their great grandfathers, because their mothers held these men in very high esteem.

Sometimes children are named after footballers (sometimes the whole team!) or other famous people or even battles. I smiled recently as I noticed a nineteenth century gravestone in a cemetery - the child was called Horatio Nelson followed by the family surname. I wonder what teasing the boy received at school!

The one for whom we watch and wait in the season of Advent is of course Jesus Christ. His name was announced by an angel according to [Luke 1.31](#) who tells Mary that he is to be named Jesus. She did not get to choose the name herself! And so, when he is named on the eighth day at his circumcision according to [Luke 2.21](#), he is called Jesus and reference is made again to this name being given by the angel Gabriel. When John the Baptist was born there is a dispute about what he is to be called because Elizabeth says his name is to be John and the people are struck by consternation because no one in the family goes by this name, it is breaking with tradition. Zechariah who has been struck dumb is called for and he writes “his name is John” [Luke 1. 59-66](#). This naming unlocked Zechariah’s tongue and caused amazement to be spread abroad.

In an age when being a number, a statistic, is often how people feel about the systems that control our lives, people knowing our

names and calling us by name is important. The Methodist Church’s membership guide is entitled “Called by name” referring back to Isaiah 43. (For a reflection on the theme of the Name of our Salvation see H&P 80 / MHB 93)

Simon, the outspoken disciple of Jesus, after his confession of Jesus’ identity at Ceasara Philippi is given a new name of Peter, the rock, ([Matthew 16.18](#)) with the promise that the Church will be built on this rock. Saul of Tarsus becomes Paul from Acts 13 onwards. Our diverse Christian Tradition includes some traditions where people are given a new name at Confirmation and the tradition of monks and nuns taking new names when they make their final vows. Often these names are to do with saints who have particularly inspired them or it may be simply because someone else already has their name, so they have to choose another! In a more significant sense, anyone baptised in the name of Trinity, is enrolled into a company of disciples of Christ. In a very real sense, we bear his name. So, as we journey through these days of Advent may we fulfil our high calling as followers of Christ, bearers of his name, witnesses to his life and light in our daily lives.

Isaiah desires that God will tear open the heavens and come down. This is exactly what we proclaim happens in the mystery of the incarnation that we are preparing to celebrate “the word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1.14). God comes down to be among us in the form of a human being as a vulnerable baby. For a reflection on this mystery see StF 512/ H&P 462 “Stupendous height of heavenly love, of pitying tenderness divine, it brought the Saviour from above...” And so with Isaiah and people of faith down the ages we cry “ everlasting God come down” (Charles Wesley StF 177).

So, I wonder what sort of a name we are known by or what sort of name our church community has within the local neighbourhood?

Hymn 512 StF/ H&P 462 **Stupendous height of heavenly love**