

Gospel Reading: [Luke 21: 25-36](#) **Glimmers of Hope**

The widow

I saw him smile at me. We were all making our offerings, as usual, and as usual I had very little, just coppers - some of those moneybags gave me such a look, as they put their gold and silver in. They smirked. He didn't. He smiled, and said something to his disciples - then he said something else, and they looked shocked. I moved a bit closer, and he was saying some terrible things, about trouble and destruction: this beautiful Temple, all those rich and powerful people, those smirking moneybags - there was going to be some sort of war, and all of their wealth and power would be useless to help them. It sounded like a nightmare, but he looked as if it was a dream, not a nightmare - as if all of this was meant to be, to shake everything up, sort out the mess. It sounded like he was expecting the world to be turned upside down, but the way he said it, it was turning it the right way up. He looked at that fig tree, said new leaves meant summer was on the way. And he smiled again, and gave me hope.

Pause for thought – where do you see (or need) a sign of life and hope in broken places?

Prayer

Into the dark days before Christmas

God of hope, scatter the light of your love

Into the darkness of anxiety

Jesus, come with the light of your healing

Into the darkness of fear

Holy Spirit, speak gentle words of assurance

As Elizabeth, Zechariah, Mary and Joseph awaited the joy of birth

Holy Trinity of community and blessing, unite us as we wait for Jesus

Hymn: StF 188 / H&P 246 **There's a light upon the mountains**

Blessing

ADVENT WORSHIP AT HOME:
week 1 28 November 2021



The Good News of Deliverance

We gather in the company of our incarnate God...

he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted... (Isaiah 61: 1)

Advent is a time of preparation, reflection, repentance and hope. Over the next few weeks we will journey together to Christmas and on to Epiphany. We will listen to prophetic voices old and contemporary and ask ourselves what it means to welcome Jesus into our lives and communities today. As we travel we will offer insights from fellow travellers and spaces to pause to pray and to think. Thank you for travelling with us. May the Lord bless you on the way.

Hymn: StF 180 / H&P 85 **O Come, O Come Immanuel**

Reading: [Isaiah 61: 1-3](#)

Prayer

Gracious God, as we once more enter these days of anticipation, we give you thanks for all who have encouraged us to have hope in difficult times, for all who have shown us compassion and kindness as pandemic uncertainty has continued and for all who have inspired us to resume activities or try new ones. Please forgive us if we have been too often the receivers and too rarely givers, and in the renewal that comes from this precious gift of yours, may your Spirit help us to find a better balance. We ask this for the sake of Jesus, who entered this world with nothing, but made many rich in love and generosity.

Hymn: StF 157 / H&P 64 **God has spoken by his prophets**

Meditation:

This is a season of hope,
Advent, the coming of God
in Jesus – Immanuel, God with us.

The news lightens our days,
lifts our spirits,
opens our hearts
to receive grace upon grace
from our generous God.
We say Thank you.
It's a time for listening
to God's voice amongst
the season's tempting voices,
saying 'I love you like this –
I am giving you my Son'.

Many need to hear the message
who feel forgotten,
lonely, hopeless, anxious.
Mental health and wellbeing
are in the news,
but those who suffer
need to know
they are loved
as they are,
when, in dark days,
there seems to be
only one way out.

Hard-pressed charities
hold the line
for those at the end
of their resistance,

and for families bereaved
by a loved one's suicide.
Those who reach
through their own grief
to help others
are a humbling gift
from God, like 3 Dads Walking,
dads whose daughters
took their own lives,
who have walked
together 300 miles
in support of PAPYRUS,
Prevention of Young Suicide.

We need to listen silently
for the gentle, calling voice of God
through Isaiah, for example,
where he describes
the ministry of God's Spirit –
our ministry, too –
to heal the broken-hearted.

Or through Paul
in the supreme importance
he attaches to growing
in generous love,
that spills over
to all around us
crying out
for healing love.

Or through Luke
in the parable of
the budding fig tree,
a sign of hope in turmoil.

To be a sign of hope
in broken places,
in broken lives
is our privilege,
as our warm acceptance,
patient listening,
laughter and friendship
witness to the
God of all hope
whose covenant love
embraces all.

Maranatha,
come Lord Jesus,
Light for all the world.

Pause to pray for those who are in
darkness.

Hymn-Prayer: StF 173 **Into the
darkness of this world**

**Maranatha,
come Lord Jesus,
Light for all the world.**