

From Darkness to Light
A Service for the first Sunday of Advent

*The service begins in darkness as the light of Christ,
from the Paschal Candle, is spread among us*

The Choir sing: Let all mortal flesh keep silence

Hymn 307: Hills of the north rejoice

We await the Christ,
the one who will reveal God to us.
He comes to us as sparkling light:
twinkling with joy and playfulness.
He comes to us as everyday light:
brightening the ordinary world around us.
He comes to us as softened light:
creating a gentle, healing space in the shadows.
He comes to us as a focused spotlight:
bring truth and justice into stark relief.
This is the light of the world:
Jesus Christ, coming to shine among us.

Our Father,
which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that
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

The lights are turned on and candles extinguished

The Choir sing: Gabriel's Message

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on
the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious
majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the
life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen

We believe in God, robed in splendour, veiled in mystery,
ruler alike of darkness and light.
We encounter God in Jesus Christ, who was tortured and
put to death, but whose radiance could not be quenched;
whose touch brings a blaze of colour to a dull, drab world:
reviving the weary, healing the wounded, dazzling the
satisfied.
We walk with God, guided by the light of God's loving
Spirit, who enters the shadowed places of our hearts
and leads us into truth and life.
We wait for God, and for the fulfilment of God's promises,
for the time when the darkness will hold no fear and the
light will no longer blind, but creation will be made whole
once more and God's peace will reign for ever.

Hymn 535: O come, O come Emmanuel

Reading 1: Genesis 1: 1-5

Reading 2: Psalm 13

The Choir sing: Lo, how a rose e'er blooming

Reading 3: Baruch 4: 36 – 5: 9

Reading 4: Isaiah 7: 10-15

Hymn 357: In the bleak midwinter

Reading 5: Luke 1: 26-33

Reading 6: Luke 1: 68-79

Hymn: 584 Of the Father's love begotten

Prayers

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be
destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his
kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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 may prepare for it in hope.

As we watch and wait and pray, may we be always ready to
encounter the Lord who is already and always with us.

Amen

We thank you, God, for the people whose lives have been light
in dark places. We pray for ourselves that God's light may
shine in us.

Amen

**Lord Jesus, we thank you, that when the world was very
dark, you came to bring light into our darkness.**

**You came into the night to bring light into the lives
of Mary and Joseph.**

**You came to Bethlehem, then, as now, a very troubled
town, bringing light to all who came to trust you.**

**You come to us now, into our lives and into our world,
bringing light still to your people.**

**We ask you now, once again, to accept this worship that
we bring as we come again to the manger.**

**Help us to see there the light that will shine for us;
not just at Christmas, but every day of the year.**

Amen

The light of God

Lead us and make us unafraid

The power of God

Protect us and make us strong

The joy of God

Heal us and make us happy

The grace of God

Bless us and keep us loving now and evermore.

Amen

Hymn 452: Longing for light

Now, as we enter this time of waiting,
stay with us, Lord.

Stay with us, Lord.

Soon, as we say goodbye to each other,
stay with us, Lord.

Stay with us, Lord.

Always and everywhere, as we travel homewards,
stay with us, Lord.

Stay with us, Lord. Amen

The Blessing