

(Staff) Advent Prayer Service

Introduction

Advent, the “Coming Season” begins a new Church year and all Christians are asked to “wake up” and to “stay awake” to the real meaning of Christmas. We are a people expecting something. This is the season of change, of preparation, of looking forward to welcoming the child Jesus into our world.

- What am I waiting for?
- What am I looking forward to?
- A couple of weeks off school at Christmas?
- The arrival of family and friends?
- Maybe something more, something deeper inside me – inner peace, transformation, change?
- Am I prepared to change?

Waiting

You are always there in a quiet room
Waiting for me to come to you.

This morning in a hilly field,
Sitting on the corner of a stone cattle trough,
Listening to the water tumbling down the hill
Into the silent river,
Watching the crows fly to work across the sky,
Why was I surprised to find you there?

Lord, teach me to leave space in my mind
So that you can always be there.

Alice Taylor, Praying Place



Intercessions:

1. We await your coming and with joyful hearts we pray:
All: Come, Lord Jesus.
2. You come to bring us hope and courage:
All: May our actions of justice and care reflect this same love.
3. You come as a reflection of God’s love:
All: May our actions of justice and care reflect this same love.
4. You come to show us ways of compassion and mercy:
All: May we reach out to all people in our society with that same spirit of compassion and mercy.

1 Corinthians 13 – A Christmas Version (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boqtnlPCI_k)

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny baubles, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

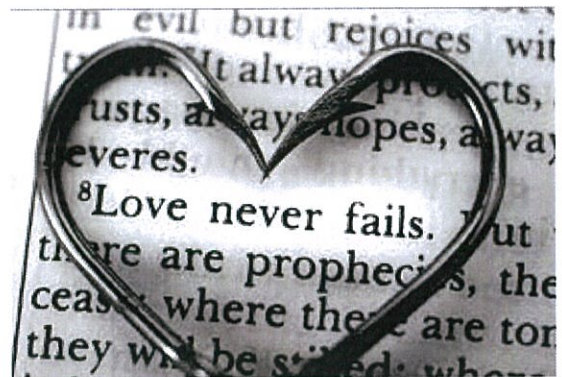
If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the spouse. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails. Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust, but giving the gift of LOVE will endure.



Conclusion:

A constant feature of Christmas decorations is light. We see coloured lights on trees, in the shops, on the streets. Many who see Christmas lights will hardly remember that the reason for the lights is Jesus Christ, the light of the world. When we say that Jesus is the light of the world, we are also thinking about darkness. The darkness of the world is sin, anger, hatred, division, violence, greed and selfishness of every kind. Jesus came to point another way, so that the most characteristic Christian word about Christmas is not 'merry' but rather 'Peace'. Our world and the attitudes need to undergo a change if Christ – the light of the world is to find a welcome in it. Will we allow the infant Jesus to make this change in our lives?

Song:

Man in the Mirror – Michael Jackson