

St Columba & the Northern Saints  
Sunday 5th December 2021  
Morning Prayer – Advent 2

PRE SERVICE WORSHIP

Our God is an awesome God,  
He reigns from heaven above,  
With wisdom, power and love,  
Our God is an awesome God!  
Our God is an awesome God,  
He reigns from heaven above,  
With wisdom, power and love,  
Our God is an awesome God!

**(x2)**

*....Our God is an awesome God!*  
*....Our God is an awesome God!*

Behold the Lord upon His throne;  
His face is shining like the sun.  
With eyes blazing fire, and feet glowing bronze,  
His voice like mighty water roars.  
Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.  
Holy, holy, we stand in awe of You.

The First, the Last, the living One  
Laid down His life for all the world;  
Behold He now lives forever more,  
And holds the keys of death and hell.  
Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;  
Holy, holy, we bow before Your throne.

So let our praises ever ring  
To Jesus Christ, our glorious King.  
All heaven and earth resound as we cry:  
'Worthy is the Son of God!'

**Rept.**{ Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;  
      { Holy, holy, we fall down at Your feet

The splendour of the King,  
clothed in majesty.  
Let all the earth rejoice,  
all the earth rejoice.  
He wraps himself in light,  
and darkness tries to hide  
and trembles at his voice,  
and trembles at his voice:

*How great is our God,*  
*Sing with me*  
*How great is our God,*  
*And all will see*  
*How great, how great, is our God!*

Age to age he stands,  
And time is in His hands;  
Beginning and the End,  
Beginning and the End.  
The Godhead, Three in One,  
Father, Spirit, Son,  
the Lion and the Lamb.  
the Lion and the Lamb.

*(Chorus)*

Name above all names,  
He is worthy of our praise,  
And my heart will sing how great  
Is our God **(x2)**

*(Chorus)*

.....Then sings my soul,  
my Saviour God to Thee:  
"How great Thou art!  
How great Thou art!" **(x2)**

*(Chorus)*

OPENING PRAYER:

**Lord may we prepare for your coming among us as we worship together.  
May we have open hearts and minds to receive from you.  
May our hearts be prepared for your coming this Advent and Christmas time.  
May our hearts be ever prepared for your second coming in great glory. Amen**

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The light of the flickering candle flames reminds us who Jesus is: "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:4-5).

HYMN Light of the World

Light of the world,  
You stepped down into darkness,  
Opened my eyes, let me see  
Beauty that made this heart adore You,  
Hope of a life spent with You.

*So here I am to worship,  
Here I am to bow down,  
Here I am to say that You're my God;  
And You're altogether lovely,  
Altogether worthy,  
Altogether wonderful to me.*

King of all days,  
Oh so highly exalted,  
Glorious in heaven above;  
Humbly You came  
To the earth You created,  
All for love's sake became poor.

*(chorus)*

And I'll never know how much it cost  
To see my sin upon that cross. *(Repeat)*  
*(chorus)*

#### PRAYER FOR ADVENT – LIGHTING THE SECOND CANDLE

Lord, you are the light of the world.

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.**

Heavenly Father, we long for your plan of rescue and redemption to be realized. Give us hearts that see Your beauty and wait in hope for You to make all things good and new again.

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.**

May Your light and love shine brightly in our hearts, spreading hope and peace to those around us.  
**Amen.**

#### LIGHTING SECOND CANDLE

**God our Father, you spoke to the prophets of old of a Saviour who would bring peace.**

**You helped them to spread the joyful message of his coming kingdom.**

**Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, to share with those around us the good news of your power and love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world.**

**Amen.**

Advent candle one was first lit last week in remembrance of the Patriarchs.  
This week the second candle is now lit to remember the Prophets.

Heavenly Father, you call us to repent of our sins: soften our proud and stubborn hearts. Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you declared the forgiveness of God: teach us to forgive one another. Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit, you search our hearts and show us the truth: direct us in your way of righteousness. Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Our confession this week is sung – set to the well known tune known as Frere Jacques. It has been specially chosen to represent the bells associated with Advent and Christmas. Go on, try singing it a few times – enjoy the words and also the bell like tune.

We are sorry.  
Truly sorry.  
Heal us Lord,  
In Your love,  
Help us to do better,  
Help us to be kinder.  
Forgive us,  
Forgive us.

#### HYMN Make way, make way

Make way, make way, for Christ the King  
In splendour arrives.  
Fling wide the gates and welcome Him  
Into your lives.

*Make way! (Make way!)  
Make way! (Make way!)  
For the King of kings. (For the King of kings.)  
Make way! (Make way!)  
Make way! (Make way!)  
And let His kingdom in.*

He comes the broken hearts to heal,  
The prisoners to free.  
The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,  
The blind shall see.  
(chorus)

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,  
Who weep and sigh;  
With laughter, joy and royal crown  
He'll beautify.  
(chorus)

We call you now to worship Him  
As Lord of all.  
To have no gods before Him,  
Their thrones must fall!  
(chorus)

COLLECT FOR TODAY:

**Almighty God, purify our hearts and minds, that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as judge and saviour we may be ready to receive him, who is our Lord and our God. Amen.**

GOSPEL READING: Luke Chapter 3: 1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene – 2 during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

'A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
"Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.  
5 Every valley shall be filled in,  
every mountain and hill made low.  
The crooked roads shall become straight,  
the rough ways smooth.  
6 And all people will see God's salvation."

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

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Malachi 3:1-4

'I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,' says the LORD Almighty.

But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in

righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

This is the word of the Lord,

**All: Thanks be to God**

SERMON

Can I firstly add a rider to my sermon. Today's message is much shorter than usual. This is deliberate because I want to add time for quiet reflection at the close of my sermon. Sadly, the Season of Advent can be snatched away from us and dissolve into a frenzy of fervent activity!  
So, it's good to take time to be still, to listen and to ponder. More later...

This morning we are going to consider our Old Testament passage together from the book of Malachi.

I felt that I didn't want to speak about John the Baptist from our New Testament reading, as he will be the subject for next week's service and sermon.

My text is a simple one for today.

Malachi Chapter 3 and V2:

*"For He will be a blazing fire that refines metal."*

Now as Corby people you could say that those words would be right down our alley.

And that many of you here have first-hand experience of "the blazing fire that refines metal", when working in the steel works.

For without that industry, I would not be sitting here in my study this morning, or Sunday by Sunday at St Columba's.

I never cease to wonder how from this lump of iron stone – we end up with this amazing tube!! Let me remind you of Malachi's vivid words. I like the way they are translated in *The New Living Translation*.

<sup>2</sup> ...For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. <sup>3</sup> He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Then once more the LORD will accept the offerings brought to him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in the past.

Being tested or tried by fire seems a painful experience which I am sure we would willingly forego! And yet there are times when each one of us has felt the heat of the furnace upon our lives. When we have been taken through difficult times. And yet those fiery ordeals have made us into the people that we are today.

Hard as it seems the refining process strips away the dross to reveal that which is precious – the gold, silver or steel!

I guess that many of us remember the highpoints of our faith – the "Hallelujah moments" of triumph. And we may say, "Do it again Lord! and again!"

But, we do we call to mind those difficult times – when life has left us high and dry. And yet God has come close beside us and made his presence so clearly felt. That He has used these hard times to chip away and refine our lives to reveal the gold and silver.

I like this poem written by Patience Strong some 70 years ago! It's entitled, *Problems*.

*When your problems overwhelm you and your faith is all but gone – when the whole world seems against you and you feel you can't go on...  
Turn to God and ask for wisdom. Wait and trust. Hold on and pray. He will straighten out the tangle in his time and in his way.  
Nothing is impossible once you touch the secret spring - of the mighty power of prayer and onto him your troubles bring...*

*Through the force of circumstance, in ways too strange to understand – you will feel at every turn the hidden pressure of his hand.*

I want to conclude my sermon with the words of a song.

Words that seem so appropriate and take us to the core of our Reading from the book of Malachi and my text for today.

*“For He will be a blazing fire that refines metal.”*

Words that are familiar to us.

But may we, on this 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent hear them afresh and take them to our hearts anew!

Purify my heart,  
Let me be as gold  
And precious silver.  
Purify my heart,  
Let me be as gold,  
Pure gold.

*Refiner’s fire,  
My heart’s one desire  
Is to be holy,  
Set apart for You, Lord.  
I choose to be holy,  
Set apart for You, my Master,  
Ready to do Your will.*

Purify my heart,  
Cleanse me from within  
And make me holy.  
Purify my heart,  
Cleanse me from my sin,  
Deep within.

*Refiner’s fire,  
My heart’s one desire  
Is to be holy,  
Set apart for You, Lord.  
I choose to be holy,  
Set apart for You, my Master,  
Ready to do Your will.*

And so, to finish please listen to the instrumental version of *Purify my heart*.

Allow yourself time to quietly reflect and let the Lord to speak to you ‘deep within!’ and refresh your soul.

May God bless you. Amen.

#### TIME OF REFLECTION

Read again the words of *Purify my heart* above and reflect on their meaning to you this Advent.

#### APOSTLES CREED

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

PRAYERS by Sheila Pender

Dear Lord, as we continue in Advent, we think of the prophets of old. They had hard times ahead of them and warned the Jews to repent and turn back to the Lord. Their prophecies were not only for their times but ours too. We have hard times, times of anxiety, worry, fear, sorrow, times of uncertainty. We've seen in the news man's inhumanity to fellow humans. Murders, wounding, theft, attacks on the vulnerable and least able to defend themselves. Uncertainty about the latest Covid rules with conflicting advice. Job insecurity. Then there were the tragedies of the capsized dinghy, the bus crash and fire in Bulgaria, the SUV that drove into the crowd enjoying the Thanksgiving parade. Is it any wonder society is turning to things like drugs and alcohol or other alternatives? But these are at best only temporary solutions and at worst life destroying. The only answer is to repent and turn your life over to Jesus, to rely on him, the Way, the Truth and the Life to direct your steps, to remember he is God, and he is still in control even if the world seems to be in chaos. He will make a way where there seems to be no way. So we pray for all who have been affected by bad and sad things in their lives, that you will give them comfort, peace, direction and purpose as we look forward to the time you will return. In Jesus' name,  
**Amen.**

LORDS 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 These are the days of Elijah

These are the days of Elijah,  
Declaring the word of the Lord:  
And these are the days of Your servant Moses,  
Righteousness being restored.  
And though these are days of great trial,  
Of famine and darkness and sword,  
Still, we are a voice in the desert crying  
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'

*Behold He comes riding on the clouds,  
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call;  
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee,  
Out of Zion's hill salvation comes.*

These are the days of Ezekiel,  
The dry bones becoming as flesh;  
And these are the days of Your servant David,  
Rebuilding the temple of praise.  
These are the days of the harvest,  
The fields are as white in the world,  
And we are the labourers in the vineyard,  
Declaring the word of the Lord.  
(chorus x 2)

#### THE GRACE AND SENDING OUT

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
And the Love of God,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us for evermore.  
Amen**

**As we await our coming Saviour,  
let us all go out in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
In the name of Christ.  
Amen**