

Beaminster Area Team

God our Father, renew our hope. By the Holy Spirit's power, strengthen us to pray readily serve joyfully and grow abundantly rejoicing in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Week: 29th November, First Sunday of Advent

Old Testament: Isaiah 64: 1-9

Psalms: 80: 1-8, 18-20

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9

Gospel: Mark 13: 24-37

Reflection on the Gospel reading, written by Lucy Winkett. Copyright ©The Archbishops' Council 2017.

With fabulous Middle Eastern hyperbole, using evocative descriptions of the darkened sun and falling stars, Jesus is trying to communicate the urgency of his message to live differently, to be attentive to the presence of God and the intolerable injustices of organized religion and politics.

It has often seemed to me that to be too literal about these pictures, and therefore to worry about whether they are true, is, ironically, to rob them of their beauty and power. At Advent singing Charles Wesley's words 'Lo he comes with clouds descending', quoting directly from this passage, has often given me a greater sense of awe and expectation as the musical picture unfolds than I have received from simply reading the words. The sense of God being 'at the very gates' as Jesus say, just out of reach, the other side of the door – all these spiritual truths are recognizable to anyone who wants to take their own spiritual lives seriously.

In the rhythm of night following day, as Spring follows Winter, we learn to expect change and movement at the heart of creation. Jesus is urging his listeners to learn from the fig tree's seasons, to be attentive to its transformation and to know the potential for transformation for us too.

Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

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.

Worship to enjoy at home

BBC Radio 4, 8.10am Sunday Morning Worship,
Songs of Praise BBC1 1.15pm

A Useful Telephone Link from The Church of England. This is a free number where you can listen to prayers, reflections and hymns and join in worship with others.

