

## Advent Liturgy 2021

### Dear Stewards/Preachers and Worship Leaders,

During this Advent, we are being encouraged to focus on praying for our Circuit, for our ministers and lay leadership, for our churches and our communities. We will be using prompts from the material 'A Methodist Way of Life' so that we can reflect on what it means to be the Methodist people, disciples of Jesus, in this time and place.

Our communities are going through difficult times, our churches are facing enormous challenges, and our Circuit has some hard decisions to face. We are, without a doubt, waiting in the darkness for the light to come. And so, let's make this 'waiting' an active one, a prayerful one.

This Advent Liturgy has been put together with Poole Bay Circuit particular needs and challenges in mind. There are some hymn suggestions with videos that you may choose to use or not. But we would urge each congregation to make use of the prayer points below when preparing the Prayers of Intercession during the service.

From an Intergenerational point of view, we have also suggested some crafts activities inspired by the Methodist Christmas theme for this year: Angels announcing the good news FOR ALL PEOPLE. We would love to see as many angels being created as possible each week. They may be brought to church to decorate the space, presented as a gift to someone, or if appropriate, left somewhere in the community with a simple message of hope attached. [Please see our Circuit website for more details.](#)

Advent blessings to all,

*The Team Ministry*

### Pointers for Prayers of Intercessions

ADVENT 1 – pray for our Presbyters and Deacons, our Supernumerary ministers, Local Preachers, Worship Leaders, Lay Pastors, Musicians/singers, those working with children and young people and those with an Intergenerational Ministry calling. For their physical, mental and spiritual health.

ADVENT 2 – pray for our prayer groups, prayer chains, our Bible Study groups and any other fellowship groups we belong too. For their leaders and members, for the spiritual growth of each person and the formation of new groups of discipleship and spirituality.

ADVENT 3 – pray for our Circuit Leadership Team (CLT), our Church Stewards, Circuit Finance Team, Pastoral visitors, our Mission Forums, our mission and outreach projects and the vision we search for our churches and communities in this place.

ADVENT 4 – pray for all those whose work in our churches and in our Circuit is somehow hidden or perhaps not often given the value they deserve (please make it specific for your congregation, including people like cleaners, people on flower rotas, those who come to do the odd jobs, etc), Circuit office employees, etc. We are also called to pray for those who may be discriminated against because of their age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language and culture.

CHRISTMAS DAY – pray for the initiative 'New Places for New People, those new ways of being church which we have committed to prioritise and support in our Circuit. Pray also for all who work to renew the environment, especially our Circuit Eco - Church Initiative.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent: November 28, 2021

### Reader 1:

We start by saying together these words taken from the Gospel of Luke chapter 21:

***'People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world...Now, when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near'. (Luke 21:26,28)***

### Reader 2:

During the past two years' lockdowns, communities have become further disconnected and dispersed. People are tired and many are living in more difficult circumstances due to the ongoing pandemic. Recognising everyone's fatigue and the Covid-19-related uncertainty that surrounds the approach of Christmas, we are being encouraged to stand up and raise our heads because our redemption is drawing near. The message of Jesus' birth at Christmas continues to be one of hope in our troubled times. God's love is stronger than our fears.

### Reader 1:

On this first Sunday of Advent, we remember that God calls us. God calls us to be God's people. We light the first candle in Advent to commit ourselves in an uncertain world to watch and wait for God's light to come in Jesus.

***(Light the first candle on the Advent wreath)***

In the course of this week, we are invited to pray particularly for those amongst us who've had a specific calling: our Presbyters and Deacons, our Supernumerary ministers, Local Preachers, Worship Leaders, Lay Pastors, Musicians/Singers, those who are called to work with children and young people and those with an Intergenerational ministry calling.

But we should also pray for and encourage those amongst us who have heard God's call but have not yet responded, as well as those who God is calling right now for a specific ministry within our church and Circuit. Is that person you?

**Reader 2:** Let us pray...

*God who comes in Jesus, we thank you today for your call on us to be the people called Methodist in our Circuit and in our church. As we look towards Christmas, we commit ourselves to worship, to watch, to wonder and to be the light in our communities who have been darkened by fear and anxiety.*

***Jesus, Saviour of all, come to us again this Christmas. Amen.***

**Hymn suggestion: StF 170 *Darkness like a shroud covers the earth***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHG3YS0NGJc>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent: December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Reader 1:

We start by saying together these words taken from the Gospel of Luke:

***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'. (Luke 3:4)***

### Reader 2:

What does it mean to 'prepare the way'? It means to create a favourable environment or to make it easy for one to come to you and operate in your life. The phrase derived from the understanding of what Romans did while constructing their massive road system. They "made paths straight" for the emperor. They removed rocks, brambles, smoothed the bumps and even hills. When we prepare the way for the Lord, we are preparing our hearts and being willing to remove sin and obstacles that hinder our blessings.

On the second Sunday of Advent, we remember that, as Methodist people, we are called to prepare the way for the Lord as we worship together, pray daily, and look and listen for God in Scripture and in the world. We also prepare the way for the Lord when we become the prophets of our generation, challenging sinful 'crooked ways' and being a voice for the voiceless.

### Reader 1:

Can you recognise some of the prophets amongst us? Are you being called to be one? In the course of this week, we are invited to pray particularly for our prayer groups, prayer chains, our Bible Study groups and any other fellowship groups we belong too.

We light the second candle to commit ourselves to the things that Methodists have always used to help people grow in faith: lively worship, faithful prayer, small groups of fellowship and bible study, and looking for the Kingdom of God all around us.

***(Light the second candle on the Advent wreath)***

**Reader 2:** let us pray...

*God who comes in Jesus, we thank you today for the prophets amongst us. We thank you for the promise of new beginnings and the challenge of your words which call us to radical discipleship. As we look towards Christmas, we commit ourselves to a way of life that is constantly preparing the way for the Lord.*

***Jesus, Saviour of all, come to us again this Christmas. Amen.***

**Hymn suggestion: StF 169 Come thou long-expected Jesus**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dmO8UPIWoo>

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent: December 12, 2021

### Reader 1:

We start by saying together these words taken from the Gospel of Luke, words that John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him:

**Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."  
And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" (Luke 3:9-10)**

### Reader 2

On the third Sunday of Advent, we continue to reflect on the message of John the Baptist to change our ways. He called for religiosity to be less narrow, to think less about rules and traditions, and more about making sure all are valued.

Our churches, Our Circuit, have also been asking this same question: 'What then should we do?' What are the 'trees or branches' that need cutting down from our heavy structures and our traditional ways?

### Reader 1:

As Methodist people, we are called to care for ourselves and those around us, to learn more about our faith and to practice hospitality and generosity. We light the third candle to commit ourselves to relearning what putting our faith into practice means, that through our conversations about what we believe, our churches will be centres of care, sensitivity and welcome for all, and to commit ourselves to be prepared to change when we are confronted by God's word brought to us.

*(Light the third candle on the Advent wreath)*

### Reader 2:

In the course of this week, we are invited to pray particularly for our Circuit Leadership Team (CLT), our Church Stewards, Pastoral visitors, Circuit Finance Team, our Mission Forums, our mission and outreach projects and the vision we search for our churches and communities in this place. What is God calling us to let go and what is God calling us to give ourselves to? And so we pray...

*God who comes to us in Jesus, as we light this Advent candle, may its flame be for us a sign of the light that reveals to us our path through life, that inspire us to live simply and generously, that we ourselves may be signs of the good news we proclaim*

***Jesus, Saviour of all, come to us again this Christmas. Amen.***

**Hymn suggestion: StF 173 Into the darkness of this world**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXKOxub5obc>

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent: December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Reader 1:

We start by saying together these words taken from Mary's song in the Gospel of Luke:

***'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed.'* (Luke 1:46-48)**

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we recall the words of Mary as she sang praises to God who 'looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant'. In her joyful song, Mary recognises that God has acknowledged the presence of a simple girl living in a small place – in the eyes of the world a person of no consequence. Mary's joy is not only that she has been chosen, but that in God's grace there is no marginalisation! Therefore, Christmas is the celebration of good news for the poor, the weak, the different, the outcast and the sinful – they all have a special place in the eyes of Jesus.

### Reader 2

As Methodist people, we are called to serve others wherever they are, to lift up the lowly, to care for creation and to challenge injustice. Methodists affirm the ministry of all people because we all have gifts to share, and Mary's calling reminds us that God always spots potential. We light the fourth candle to commit ourselves to being open to respond to God's call on us, to say yes even if we aren't sure that what we can offer will make much difference.

*(Light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath)*

### Reader 1:

In the course of this week, we are invited to pray particularly for those people whose work in our churches and in our Circuit is somehow hidden or perhaps not often given the value they deserve. We are also called to pray for those who may be discriminated against because of their age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language and culture. How will you open your hearts and your hands as Christ is born this year? Maybe you are just who is needed.

### Reader 2: Let us pray...

*God who comes to us in Jesus, we thank you today for angelic interventions in life, for those who encourage us to say yes to serve in your Kingdom, who give us a bigger picture, who make it clear that the promises of God are much greater than we can imagine. We might say "how can this be?" but with you O God, all things are possible. We pray for a world where the lowly are lifted high and the hungry are fed. We pray for our churches and communities that we may look towards the margins and not always to the centre.*

***Jesus, Saviour of all, come to us again this Christmas. Amen.***

**StF 203 I had a dream** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-q6GrNH8fU>

*(with British sign language)*

## Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Reader 1:

We start by saying together the angelic words from the Gospel of Luke:

***But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people..."***      *Luke 2:10*

FOR ALL THE PEOPLE! On this Christmas Day, it's important to start here, acknowledging that this extraordinary gift is for all.

### Reader 2:

Methodists have always been clear that no-one is beyond the reach of God's love. Salvation is there for everyone, and not just for a chosen few. As Methodist people we are called to evangelism, to speak of the love of God which comes down to us, to tell the story in words people can understand and to take every opportunity to share faith with others. We have good news of great joy for all the people: this day is born a Saviour; he is Christ the Lord!

### Reader 1:

We light this candle at Christmas 2021 to celebrate that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness shall never put it out. We light this candle hoping to radiate light by how we live as the body of Christ. We light this candle hoping to welcome new people to places of radical welcome and generosity in our Circuit.

***(Light the fifth candle on the Advent wreath)***

In the course of this week, we are invited to pray particularly for those New Places for New People, those new ways of being church which we have committed to prioritise and support in our Circuit. We should also pray for all who work to renew the environment, as we include all of God's creation as recipients of the gift of Christmas.

### Reader 2: Let us pray

*God who has come to us in Jesus, abide with us today and always. Help us to be embodiments of good news so others may know you in us and through us. Encourage us reach out to our communities, to each other, and to the whole creation with the angel's message – that the good news of great joy is for ALL!!*

**Jesus, Saviour of all, you come to us today and every day. Alleluia! Amen.**

**Hymn Suggestion: StF 176 Like a candle flame**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGAXIGBB10M>