**Sermon – Advent 1 Year C - 28 November 2021**

**Jer 33:14-16, Ps 25:1-10, 1 Thess 3:9-13, Luke 21:25-38**

Do you remember as a child waiting for Christmas, waiting to open presents on Christmas day. Many of us now wait to meet up with family and celebrate together. Advent is the time the Christian church awaits the arrival of Christmas Day when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. As Christians we believe there are three such ‘comings’. The first is the coming of Christ incarnate, born in a manger. The second is the hope of Christ’s coming again and the third is God in us, the hope of glory. That hope that Christ dwells within us, comes to us as we open our hearts and minds to God each day, inviting God into our lives and our very being.

Advent asks of us something very different to the preparations we make for celebrations with those we love and long to be with on Christmas day. Advent calls us to ‘prepare the way of the Lord’ in our hearts and lives. The word Advent comes from the Greek *Parousia,* in Latin, *Adventus,* from which our word Advent comes. Advent can be defined as ‘presence, arrival, or coming’. The word was not initially used by Christians. It was used to describe the first official visit, of someone important, a king, or an emperor, coming to take possession of a province. The term Advent was adopted by Christians to describe their relationship with Christ. Jesus Christ, the coming new born King who we invite to come into our lives, into our hearts.

Advent, asks of us more than simply turning up to church or participating in online services. Christ comes to make in us a home, and we are invited to dwell in Christs presence. It is an invitation to come and reflect in the hope that Christ brings us. The hope of salvation, the hope of the love of God in Christ, the hope of the peace of God in our lives. The hope of the joy that the coming of Christ brings.

Advent also reminds us that Christ will come again. Our Gospel reading reminds us of this today. The first Advent candle we lit this morning symbolises the Hope that we have in the coming of Christ not only God incarnate in the form of a human child, but also of the coming King who will reign for ever. Over the centuries people have tried to predict the time of Jesus coming. Our Gospel reading encourages us to ‘be alert at all times’ and to pray.

Advent invites us to remember Christ in the liturgy, in the Eucharist, in the breaking of bread and wine. As you and I come to take of the sacrament this morning, take a moment to consider what it is that we are waiting for this Advent.

Advent invites us to come, to stop and be silent, to recall the presence of God in our lives. This is a time that we can bring to God all that has transpired in this year, the sadness, the struggles, the heartache, the joy, the gladness and celebration, all the mess this year has brought. For Christ comes into our lives in the midst of all that we face.

So as we eagerly await this Advent, this time of ‘presence, of coming and arrival’, may each one of us take time to live in the hope that Christ brings, the hope of Salvation, the hope of God with us, God for us and in us. May we bring our hopes for a world that has been torn by the pandemic to heal and be at peace once more. May we bring our hopes for all that Christ in the form of child brings to us this Christmas, hope, joy, love, and peace.

Amen.