



01B - ADVENT 1B - ONLINE LITURGY

Waiting in the dark

Abstract

“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’ ”

Mark 13:35–37

Jim de Jong
jim@dejongs.id.au

01B - Advent 1B - Online Liturgy

Waiting in the dark

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2020 | ADVENT 1B | FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT | YEAR B

<i>Old Testament</i>	Isaiah 64:1–9
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19
<i>New Testament</i>	1 Corinthians 1:3–9
<i>Gospel</i>	Mark 13:24–37 ⁱ

Mark 13.24-37

Jesus speaks of coming dark days when people will be close to losing hope. He urges them therefore to stay awake to signs that offer hope of the coming deliverance, which will certainly come, though at an unexpected time.

This week's resources explore: watching for signs of God in difficult times.

	<p>Pre-Service And he shall reign Kendrick</p>
	<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p>
	<p>We Gather</p> <p>O people of God, Let's draw near to God. O people who sometimes don't listen, Let's listen to God's name and be renewed by the 'Name Above All Names', the name of our maker, who made us, and who shapes us to be vessels of light in waiting times. Come, let's worship. Let's worship the 'Name Above All Names'.</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Gathered here today, we wait in hope, knowing that in dark times there is always a light in our world. Let us, people in dusk and dawn, light the light of vigilance, knowing that God is always calling us to justice, mercy and humility – at this time of year,</p>

	<p>and all times of the year. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song There's a light upon the mountain</p>
	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> We come to your house, God, sometimes aware, and sometimes not aware. Sometimes aware of our need, sometimes ignoring others' needs.</p> <p>You wait for us, O God, and as you wait, you call us to wait for you, too. As we gather around Word and Bread, may we remember how you have helped us – In the kindness of a stranger, in the comfort of a friend, in the call for justice, in the shout for mercy.</p> <p>And make us, who wait for you, approach you and each other with new vigilance, and with new hope. Amen.</p>
	<p>Readings</p> <p><i>Mark 13:24–37</i> ²⁴ “But in those days, following that distress, “ ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ ²⁶ “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. ²⁸ “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. ³⁵ “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at</p>

	<p>dawn.³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!' ” ii</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>Hymn/song/video The First Noel – Skit Guys</p>
	<p>We say Sorry We have turned our face from you, O God, whose face is always turned towards us. We have forsaken what we know is just. We have ignored what we understand is true. We have refused to believe what should be believed. We have deceived ourselves in word and deed.</p> <p>For this, we humbly repent, and we turn our face towards you – who waits for us, and makes us ever new.</p> <p>Make us ever new now, O restoring God. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/Song Come thou long expected Jesus</p>
	<p>Response</p> <p>Getting Ready Mark 13:24-37 It can be hard for us to understand Jesus' delay in his coming. God's time clock is certainly out of sync with ours. A young boy was laying on a hill in the grass on a warm spring day. Puffy white clouds rolled by and he pondered their shape. Was that a bird, an elephant, a kangaroo? Soon, he began to think more imaginative shapes was that superman or some other superhuman form, and he searched for one that might look like God.</p> <p>He soon fell asleep and as he dreamt, he asked "God? Are you really there?" To his astonishment a voice came from the clouds. "Yes? What can I do for you?" Bravely if a bit hesitant he asked, "God? What is a million years like to you?"</p> <p>Knowing that the boy couldn't understand infinity, God responded in a manner to which he could relate. "A million years to me, Jimmy, is like a minute." "Oh," said the boy. "Well, then, what's a million dollars like to you?"</p>

"A million dollars to me, Jimmy, is like a penny."

"Wow!" remarked the boy, getting an idea.

"You're so generous... can I have one of your pennies?"

God replied, "Sure thing, young man! Just a minute."

Our text this morning doesn't sound like a reading for Advent.

Christmas is only 4 weeks away

It has nothing to do with Mary and Joseph, Wise Men, or shepherds watching their flock.

Instead there is story about a wealthy landowner going on a trip.

The servants were given charge of the estate

and when the master returned, he would check on their stewardship.

It is a story about being prepared, getting ready.

In that sense then, this can tell us a bit about Advent,

the season of preparedness.

Advent is about God recognizing the human situation.

God came as a human and lived among us.

Paul worded it this way in 2 Corinthians 8:9,

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,
that through his poverty you might become rich,"

Several years ago, when Princess Diana was tragically killed in a car accident.

You'll remember that her public persona was well loved

and there was a huge backlash

against the Royal Family and the media after her death.

Afterwards, the Queen came on television to express her and her family's remorse,

yet since we all knew of the issues she had with Diana during her life

her words rang a bit hollow.

However, it was the comments of the people in the street that were interesting,.

One Said: "The Royals don't know how we live

and, they don't care."

Another Said: "They have been isolated in their palace so long

that they don't understand the common people live."

Yet another said: "The Royals never come among us these days.

They seem detached and preoccupied with their power and riches."

Maybe they were words expressed in anger,

maybe some believed what they were saying,

but it's not something you can say about our Heavenly King.

Our God is not a detached Royal

who doesn't know or care how we live.

He did come to earth in the form of a person, born into a peasant family.

His Christmas wrapping was not one of tinsel and paper

but of human flesh.
His very name, Emmanuel, means **GOD WITH US.**

Because God lived among us,
God does understand.
He experienced the loneliness of Gethsemane,
the betrayal at the Mount of Olives,
the weeping at the death of Lazarus,
the temptations of the wilderness,
the joy of the wedding at Gethsemane,
the pain of seeing his mother suffer while he was on the cross.

You can't tell me that God doesn't understand.
there isn't anything that you have encountered,
that God encountered before.

In the embrace of family and friends, God is there.
In the suffering of children who are the victims of violence, God is there.
No night is so dark that God's light will not shine.
No place is so barren, that new life cannot emerge.
No person is so lost or weak that they cannot be elevated.

Advent can be about getting ready for Christmas this year
but also, about the return of Christ.

Jesus put it this way,
"What I say to you I say to all:
Keep Watch!"
Be prepared for his return.

In a word: I think this means Repent.
It's a busy time of the year.
Choirs are rehearsing Christmas music.
The place gets decorated.
It's a busy and exciting time of the year.

Maybe, repentance seems out of place at Christmas.
After all, "It's the season to be jolly."
Talk of sin and judgment and repentance
and turning away from our comfortable world of self-indulgence
runs counter to the mood of the season.

We like the season to be upbeat.

But the Gospel message is clear.
The precondition for us to receive the Christ child
is a willingness to give up our violence, selfishness, idolatry, and self-seeking.
Unless we repent, we can't accept God's good news of coming among us.

Little, did the boy asleep on that hillside realise
that his superhuman rescuer was there with him as he slept.
His superhuman God was on a salvation mission.

	<p>We're told God is coming and the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the power in the heavens will be shaken. You will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will gather his elect from the four winds, from the four ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.</p> <p>And we shall survive. Not just one child but all God's children. Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song Amazing Grace</p>
	<p>Prayers for all people</p> <p>God of light and night, you are to be found, whether at dusk or dawn. Sometimes the light seems far, and the night seems long. May we find comfort, whether in the soft night, or the kind dawn, knowing that you created both, and you wait for us, as we wait for you.</p> <p><i>New screen</i> <i>After each bidding, the response is: Lord, we pray.</i></p> <p>For those who have waited for years for the dawn... For those for whom hope seems dim... For those whose morning brought the unexpected... For those struggling to adjust to new realities... For those whose fires have grown dim... For those who are ignoring the signs of the times... For those who are struggling to keep awake... Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song TIS #535 – "I am the bread of life"</p>
	<p>Invitation</p> <p>"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!' "</p> <p>Mark 13:35–37 ⁱⁱⁱ</p>
	<p>Great Prayer of Thanksgiving</p> <p>The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts.</p>

	<p>We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to God. It is right to give God our thanks and praise.</p>
	<p>We give you all thanks and praise, O God, for even when heaven and earth pass away, your words will never pass away.</p> <p>Like a potter you created the earth, and we are all the work of your hands. At your presence even the mountains quake, and yet to your people who wait for you, you are the light, revealing our salvation.</p> <p>In your child, Jesus, you have come among us, teaching us to live in readiness for your reign. Though he was killed, you raised him to life, restoring to us the light of your presence, and enriching us in every way so that we are not lacking in your gifts as we await the day when he comes on the clouds in glory and gathers his faithful ones from the ends of the earth; all who do right and remember you in their ways.</p> <p>Therefore, with our hearts lifted high, we offer you thanks and praise at all times through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.</p>
	<p>Lord's Prayer</p> <p>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. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN^{iv}</p>
	<p>Bread-breaking prayer</p> <p>The bread we break and the cup we now take are a sharing in the life of Christ. The gifts of God for the people of God.</p>

	<p>Lamb of God Lamb of God, you find us in our blindness Lift us up. Lamb of God, you lead us to your fold. Hold us close. Lamb of God, you conquer all injustice. We cry for peace.</p>
	<p>Distribution Receive this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.</p> <p><i>Words such as the following are said before or during the distribution.</i> The body of Christ, given for you. Amen.</p> <p>The blood of Christ, given for you. Amen.</p>
	<p>PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION Gracious God, we give you thanks for satisfying our hungry hearts with this holy meal shared in the Spirit with Jesus, your Son, our Lord.</p> <p>Strengthened and refreshed, we go from here prepared to live revealing your image in the world so that love and faithfulness meet together and righteousness and peace kiss. This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen Amen</p>
	<p>Hymn/song Shine Jesus Shine</p>
	<p>We are sent out</p> <p>We have been called in, to be renewed in the name of the one who is love. Even in the darkest night, even when there is only one small candle lit, your power and love restore us. Let your light shine on us as we go from here, so that we may be warmed and strengthened to light your light all around. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us</p>

	May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace
	Benediction
	Thank you

ⁱ [*Revised Common Lectionary*](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱ [*Revised Common Lectionary*](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱⁱ Moira Laidlaw

^{iv} English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988