



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit



Big Sunday 30 November 2025 Advent 1: A Song of Hope

INTRODUCTION

- Advent is a time of hope, but also time of sadness and difficulty for many. As we meet together virtually today we recognise that we will have different themes over the next few weeks
 - my prayer is that in all of those different themes we would be able to find hope prevailing
- And that, to use the our Connexional theme for the year - Our story our song - we would learn to sing songs of hope, especially into our places of darkness.

- **Responsive Call to Worship from UMC:**

Beloved, once again, we embark on the Advent path that points us to the coming of Jesus.

We journey together toward the day that all the earth awaits.

We remember the signs and the times that heralded the arrival of the baby Jesus, God Incarnate.

We journey together toward the day that all the earth awaits.

We tell the stories once again as we learn how to discern the signs and the times, watching for glimpses of God's here-and-not-yet kingdom among us.

We journey together toward the day that all the earth awaits.

Come, let us worship God who shines a light to guide us on the path to peace and flourishing for all creation.

Come, let us worship as we journey together toward the day that all the earth awaits.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2025

Lighting of the Advent Candle:

This candle symbolises the hope of the people of God of every age who await the coming of a Saviour.

God's people of the Old Testament who await the promised Messiah.

God's people of the New Testament see with their own eyes the 'salvation of our God'.

God's people of today who eagerly await Christ's coming in glory to establish His everlasting kingdom.

Almighty Father

Your son came to us in humility as our Saviour

and at the last day He will come again in glory as our judge:

give us grace to turn away from darkness to the light of Christ

that we may be ready to welcome Him

and to enter His kingdom;

where he lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

- Song 175 (StF) - Light of the World

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CKCThJB5w0&list=RD6CKCThJB5w0&start_radio=1

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

And here I am to worship, here I am to bow down

Here I am to say that You're my God

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

And here I am to worship...

I'll never know how much it cost

To see my sin upon that cross

I'll never know how much it cost

To see my sin upon that cross

*And I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross
No, I'll never know how much it cost
Here I am to worship... (x2)
I'll never know how much it cost... (x2)*

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

- Song 169 (StF) - Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFloWX1yuyQ&list=RDpFloWX1yuyQ&start_radio=1

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Scripture:

Isaiah 2:1-5

Matthew 24:36-44

REFLECTION:

The two readings for today are difficult ones. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, they refer to his second coming - a time when everything will be transformed from war to peace. Indeed, this is something that we need in our world right now, but

we should not fool ourselves to think that the change will be easy. Any change, and especially one from war and division to peace and harmony, will be tumultuous.

But the message of Advent is always one of hope, even in the darkest of times. Today as Pippa and I reflect I'm taking advantage and sharing some thoughts about celebrating Christmas and Advent in South Africa, particularly in regard to the place of hope in the darkest days of apartheid in the 1980s, and how that can continue to offer us hope today.

CONVERSATION:

- **Conversation Pippa and Neil**

- Advent and Christmas in South Africa
- Hope as being disruptive

- Eddy Grant: "Give me Hope Jo'anna"

🌟 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yTzLct8aTw&list=RD7yTzLct8aTw&start_radio=1

Well Jo'anna she runs a country
She runs in Durban and the Transvaal
She makes a few of her people happy, oh
She don't care about the rest at all
She's got a system they call apartheid
It keeps a brother in a subjection
But maybe pressure will make Jo'anna see
How everybody could a live as one

Gimme hope, Jo'anna

Hope, Jo'anna

Gimme hope, Jo'anna

'Fore the morning come

Gimme hope, Jo'anna

Hope, Jo'anna

Hope before the morning come

I hear she makes all the golden money
To buy new weapons, any shape of guns
While every mother in black Soweto fears

The killing of another son
Sneakin' across all the neighbours' borders
Now and again having little fun
She doesn't care if the fun and games she play
Is dang'rous to ev'ryone

[Chorus]

She's got supporters in high up places
Who turn their heads to the city sun
Jo'anna give them the fancy money
Oh, to tempt anyone who'd come
She even knows how to swing opinion
In every magazine and the journals
For every bad move that this Jo'anna make
They got a good explanation

[Chorus]

Even the preacher who works for Jesus
The Archbishop who's a peaceful man
Together say that the freedom fighters
Will overcome the very strong
I wanna know if you're blind Jo'anna
If you wanna hear the sound of drum
Can't you see that the tide is turning
Oh don't make me wait till the morning come

[Chorus]

- **Prayer of response**

In the hushed anticipation of your coming, O Lord,
kindle in us the desire to remain awake;
that we might be ready for your coming and eager to pray.

O God, in days to come,
the mountain of your house will be established,
and your joy shall reign.
We pray for the church (especially...),

that you might teach us your ways and that we might walk in your paths.
Come, Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer.

Out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and you, O God, shall judge between the nations.
We pray for our nation, and all nations,
that your peace would be manifest in every corner of the earth.
Come, Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer.

In your Kingdom, O Lord,
wolves lie down with lambs
and children play with serpents without fear.
We pray for the sick, the suffering,
and those in distress of any kind (especially...);
that you would heal all injuries, comfort all grief,
and settle all wrongs.
Come, Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer.

In your Kingdom, O Lord,
even the wilderness and dry land are glad and rejoice.
We pray for those who rejoice this week
as they celebrate their birthday (especially... and anniversaries...);
that they might obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing might flee away.
Come, Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer.

In the fullness of time, O God,
you sent your son to be born of our sister Mary.
And his name was Emmanuel: God with Us.
We thank you for your Presence with us,
and we pray that you might be always present
with those whom we love but see no longer.
Come, Lord Jesus, and hear our prayer.

Come among us, O God, and hear our prayers;
so that when your Son Jesus comes among us
with great might, and in manger mild,
we might recognize his face and his voice,
and come to adore him. Amen.

*Written by Fr. Rick Morley and posted on rick morley,
<http://www.rickmorley.com/archives/207>. Reposted on the re:Worship blog at
<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/10/advent-intercessions.html>.*

- Hymn 898 (H&PSA) - Christ enough (John Gardner)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuLlDAf7pHQ>

Who will save our land and people
Who can rescue us from wrong
We are lost—faint, false, and foolish—
We have slighted God too long.
Save the people, Lord our Saviour,
Guide us home from country far;
Holy Fire, consume our rancours:
Thy Kingdom come—in Africa.

Make our land as clean and wholesome
As the white of sea-washed sands;
Stretch our vision vast and boundless
As our brown-spread, dusty lands.
Make our people strong and steadfast
As the hills that claw our sky;
Hear our prayer for land and people:
“God bless Africa”, we cry.

We believe God is our Saviour;
Christ enough to heal our land.
He will use the Church, His servants:
We on earth His stretched-out hand.
May His Church in loving service,
Shown to all whose path is rough,
Give a clear, united witness,
And proclaim: “Christ is enough!”

Christ enough to break all barriers;
Christ enough in peace, in strife;
Christ enough to build our nation;
Christ enough for death, for life.
Christ enough for old and lonely;

Christ enough for those who fall;
Christ enough to save the sin-sick;
Christ enough for one—for all!

- **Benediction**