



## EMMANUEL CHURCH – WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020



Make some space at home to read and pray through the following, if possible, on the morning of Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2020.  
If you are able, join in this service on Zoom – contact Rev. Paul for details of the service, login and password.



**Gathering Prayer:** We pray this morning, Lord, that you would awaken us to your presence here and now in our midst, and that you would make us alert to all you would teach us. Grant us keen minds, and strong hearts of love, that we may be ready to worship you alone. Amen.

**Reading:** Mark 13: 23-27, 32-37 'The Coming of the Son of Man'

<sup>23</sup> Be alert; I have already told you everything. <sup>24</sup> 'But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup> and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>26</sup> Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>32</sup> 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup> Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup> or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup> And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

**Address:** 'Wake Up!'

**Prayers of Intercession and The Lord's Prayer:**

King of Kings, we seek you in the leadership of our world:  
in the places where power is not used with justice; in the people deprived of their human rights, that they will make known your call for justice;

Light of life, we seek you in the shadows of our world:  
in the places where violence and hatred thrive; in the people struggling with the darkness of depression and suffering, that your healing will re-create wholeness.

Saviour of the poor, we seek you in the needs of our world:  
in the places where there is hunger and thirst; in the people who have lost hope, that we will bear witness to your compassion and strive to plant and build your kingdom.

Word of truth, we seek you in the disbelief of our world;  
in the places of deceit and mistrust; in the people caught up in lies and suspicion, that we will put our trust in your wisdom.

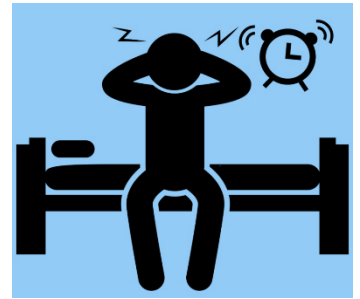
Flesh of our flesh, we seek you in the humanity of our world:  
in the places where dignity and worth are ignored; in the people we find difficult to get on with, that our eyes will be open to recognize your presence;

King of Kings, Light of life, Saviour of the poor, Word of truth, Flesh of our flesh,  
in your love we pray. **AMEN. OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN...**

**Blessing:** May we be awake to God's coming each and every day. And may the blessing...

**Address:** 'Wake Up!'

Do you know the three most popular names are for Popes? John is first – 23 of those (or XXIII), the last one in the 1960s. Benedict? 15 of those, most recently in 2013. The second most popular is... Gregory! Do you know what the name Greg or Gregory means? It comes from a word with Greek origins and in Latin it became *Gregorius*: it means 'alert', 'watchful' or 'awake'.



The imagery of the language of being asleep/awake is very common in the Bible. A number of the Old Testament prophets use sleep to refer to being unthinking, disconnected from God: *“For the Lord has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep; he has closed your eyes, you prophets, and covered your heads, you seers”* (Isaiah 29:10). And what about Jonah? Do you remember him fleeing God’s call, sailing away on-board ship across the Mediterranean as fast as he can when the storm hits? *“Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. The captain came and said to him, ‘What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.’* (Jonah 1:5-6). Poor Jonah!

Of course, not all sleep is bad – we need our sleep and rest, bringing peace to body, mind, and spirit. If sleep is a good Biblical metaphor for being slow, having dulled senses, not listening or being aware... then being awake, alert suggests the opposite effect. So it’s very appropriate that our reading on this first Sunday of Advent Jesus is telling his disciples: ‘Wake up!’

Jesus seems to be referring to things in a cosmic sense – a day of reckoning; a day when the Son of Man comes again and gathers all people together; maybe the end of all things; maybe the beginning of a new time? But it doesn’t mean we can roll over, go back to sleep, pull the covers over our heads and ignore everything around us. We need to be awake to see all that God has done for us in our lives so far: perhaps you can you think of a time in the past where you look back with different eyes? Where God was with you, guiding you, supporting you... maybe in ways that were not obvious at the time but are clearer now?

We also need to be awake to see all that God is doing for us in the here and now. The Covid pandemic has been a nightmare in 2020 – a nightmare that we may just be beginning to wake up from and which has affected people in all sorts of different ways. For one it’s loss of a loved one, for another it’s loss of job, another it’s loss of contact with friends or family, for many of us it’s a combination of these and more. Yet in the middle of this nightmare, the love and compassion of God is in our midst; he is with every grieving family, with every person separated. God is in our midst through the devotion and care of care workers, nurses, doctors, the ingenuity and insight of scientists and healers; the keyworkers who keep working; those who look out for neighbours.



When we’re fully awake, you and I, it means that we don’t live as if the world turns and turns the same way – as if the world is on an irrevocable course that can’t be changed. It means that you and I live with an awareness that we have a role to play, a life to lead that demonstrates the love of God is at work in us. That means we need to be awake to see all that God will make possible in the future. Jesus said these words to wake up his disciples in Chapter 13 of Mark... the very next chapter, two days later he is being arrested and facing death and humiliation. Yet because of his life, death, and resurrection, we can face the future as deeply uncertain as it is, knowing that in Jesus Christ, God has gone before us. God’s possibilities exceed human imagination, and God calls us to wake up and share the vision he gives us. A vision of love the whole world needs to wake up each day to.