NORTH CHESHIRE METHODIST CIRCUIT

HOME WORSHIP: ADVENT 2026

WAITING IN HOPE

The time is drawing near and we wait in hope for the Light.

The Light who will show us a better way, the Light who will lead us into the future, the Light whose love is deeper than any other.

John 1: 1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

In him was life and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.

HYMN

Of the Father's love begotten
Singing the Faith 181
Video: https://shorturl.at/r3MsG

Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;
he commanded, it was done;
earth and sky and boundless ocean,
universe of three in one;
all that sees the moon's soft radiance,
all that breathes beneath the sun,
evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers in old time
chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord,
evermore and evermore.

O you heights of heaven, adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
all dominions, bow before him,
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
every voice in concert sing,
evermore and evermore!

PRAYER

This Advent, in our waiting and preparation:

May we keep hoping and looking for the Light

This Advent, in our getting ready for the coming of Christ:

May we sense God's continued work and presence in our lives

This Advent, as we anticipate something very special:

May we share the message of hope with others.

Amen.

READING

John 1: 14

The Word became a human being and full of grace and truth, lived among us.

REFLECTION

The Word, Jesus Christ, came into the world. Jesus shared our humanity, identified himself with us and expressed God's love through action and self-sacrifice. Jesus spoke words of challenge, healing and hope.

The themes of Advent are not easy to grapple with - warnings in the Bible from the prophets and John the Baptist, the second coming of Christ and being prepared for that coming which no one knows when it will be.

Advent often includes the lighting of candles, one for each of the four Sundays and a fifth candle on Christmas Day.

The lighting of the candles often uses the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Advent is all about preparation and waiting. We prepare in many different ways from making the Christmas Pudding on Stir Up Sunday (probably in the past for many of us), to buying gifts, writing cards, decorating our homes, attending the annual Carol Service, and making preparations for a special meal on Christmas Day.

The most important part, however, is preparing ourselves and again, we will do this in various ways. We may, read though and reflect on the set lectionary readings in the Bible, use a particular book on the Advent themes (there are many available and new ones are produced each year), attend an Advent Study Group, to name a few ideas.

A number of years ago, a friend sent me a copy of story called 'Are you Ready for Christmas?' which I have used a number of times over the years.

'Are you ready for Christmas?'

Everyone is asking me the same question. The girl snipping away at my hair….the garage attendant….my friend in the street….my mother on the telephone…. 'Are you ready for Christmas?'

I hardly know. There is so much to think about, and so little time. I mentally tick off the items in my mind: the last (difficult) presents to find, the wrapping and the unwrapping to check what's inside, the cake to ice, the mince pies to bake, the house to clean, the spare beds to make, menus to prepare, the shopping, more difficult each day - too many people, nowhere to park, so much to carry.

Am I ready for Christmas? Help!

One day, long ago, God the Father turned to his Son and asked the same question, 'Are you ready for Christmas?'

Jesus turned aside from his heavenly home, where all was peace and love, joy and beauty, and looked upon the earth.

He saw the simple parents to whom he would entrust himself. He saw the cold smelly outhouse and the bed of straw where he would lay as a human child. He saw the pain and weariness and rejection.

He saw a cross with his name on it. But most chilling of all, he saw 21st century humanity engaged in a frenzied fever of expensive activity, preparing to celebrate his birthday without him.

The angels looked down aghast - then, in wondering love, as they heard his answer to the Father's question.
'I'm ready!'
Anon.

During this Advent, which literally means 'coming' or 'arrival', as we wait and prepare ourselves to welcome and celebrate the coming of the Christ-child, may we know God's presence, peace and blessings.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

We recall the journey to Bethlehem made by Mary and Joseph.

We pray for all who are making journeys at this time:

Refugees, far away from home, struggling to find a safe place to live.

Lord, as they travel: **May they find a welcome.**

Those journeying without a sense of purpose or direction.

Lord, as they journey: **Give them peace and hope.**

Those now journeying through life without their partner or close friend.

Lord, in their lives: **May they find comfort and peace.**

Those who will be journeying home for Christmas.

Lord, as they travel: **May journeys be safe and may they find joy in being reunited with family and friends.**

We pray for those who will spend Christmas alone, those who will find it hard to afford gifts and special food, those who, for whatever reason, find the season difficult to bear.

We ask our prayers in the name of Christ.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in Heaven;
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN

One of my favourite carols is 'Born in the night, Mary's child' written by the late Methodist minister, Geoffrey Ainger.

The words go far beyond the stable and any romantic notions of the Christmas story, to Jesus's life, the cross and the second coming of Christ. We need to remember that the stable wasn't warm, cosy and comfortable, it was cold, dark and smelly!

Born in the night, Mary's child
Singing the Faith 193
Video: https://shorturl.at/I0LZg

Born in the night,
Mary's Child,
a long way from your home;
coming in need,
Mary's Child,
born in a borrowed room.

Clear shining light,
Mary's Child,
your face lights up our way;
light of the world,
Mary's Child,
dawn on our darkened day.

Truth of our life,
Mary's Child,
you tell us God is good;
prove it is true,
Mary's Child,
go to your cross of wood.

Hope of the world,
Mary's Child,
you're coming soon to reign;
King of the earth,
Mary's Child,
walk in our streets again.

BLESSING

In all our comings and goings,

all our preparations to celebrate Christmas,

all our hopes for a better world,

May we know God's presence and peace in our hearts.

Amen.

Our thanks to Deacon Lyn Gallimore for the provision of this worship resource, for use at home and in church.

Insert Church CCLI number:

If you no longer wish to receive these services, please contact Rae Denley-Samson on 07394 361999 or email at circuitsupport@ncmethodists.uk