



St Paul's
**United
Reformed
Church**

Minister:
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Currently unavailable

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Order of Service

Sunday 12 December 2021



Third Sunday of Advent

Please use 'T' on your hearing aid if you need to use the Hearing Loop.

This morning's service is being led by: **Rachel St Clair**
The Organ is played by: **Mr Robert Cooper**

We extend a very warm welcome to you. If you do not attend a church elsewhere, we invite you to join regularly with us in our Sunday worship and other activities – see www.stpaulsurc.org.uk

You are welcome to use the time before worship for quiet preparation, especially once the music begins. We light a candle at the start of the service to remind us all of Christ's message of peace.

The Reformed Church recognises God's Word as its supreme authority and **you are asked to stand as the Bible is brought in** at the start of worship, **and again as the Bible is taken out after the blessing.**

Important notes:

- It is a joy to welcome you to this service!
St Paul's URC has a **full Covid-19 Risk Assessment**, to help keep us all safe, so please follow the notices and advice you are given in church.
- Please continue to **maintain social distancing** where possible and we encourage people to **wash and sanitise their hands regularly.**
- In line with new government guidance **you are required to wear a face covering indoors unless exempt.** Please bear with one another to keep us all safe.
- The hymns and responses are in this **Order Sheet**, but **feel free to pick up a Hymn book or Bible should you wish.**
- **Offertory** – we circulate the collection bag for contributions to the church's work, but standing orders and bank transfers are preferred (please ask an elder or welcomer for details) and we have a credit card reader if you prefer that..
- We pray that you will know God's presence as we worship – in church, at home, online, outdoors, at work, school; in all places.

Welcome & Notices

Advent 3 – John the Baptist

The lighting of the advent candles

As we light this Advent candle, may its flame be for us a sign of the light that reveals to us our path through life that inspires us to live simply and generously, after the example and call of John the Baptist that we ourselves may be signs of the good news we proclaim.

Jesus is the light of the world

A light no darkness that can never be put out

Amen.

We sing: (tune Angel voices ever singing)

Advent candles tell their story as we watch and pray,
longing for the Day of Glory, 'Come, Lord, soon,' we say.
Pain and sorrow, tears and sadness
changed for gladness on that Day.

John the Baptist, by his preaching and by water poured,
brought to those who heard his teaching news of hope
restored:

'Keep your vision strong and steady, and be ready
for the Lord.'

Call to Worship

Hymn – In Christ alone, my hope is found

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;

This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Prayers

Talk

Hymn 412: There's a quiet understanding

There's a quiet understanding
when we're gathered in the Spirit,
It's a promise that he gives us,
When we gather in his name.
There's a love we feel in Jesus,
There's a manna that he feeds us,
It's a promise that he gives us
When we gather in his name.

And we know when we're together,
sharing love and understanding,
That our brothers and our sisters
feel the oneness that he brings.
Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus,
for the way you love and feed us,
For the many ways you lead us,
Thank you, thank you, Lord.

Gifts are presented - Blessing over gifts

Music for reflection – Count your blessings

Junior Church Blessing

Leader: Whether we are together or apart in God's spirit

Junior Church: The Lord bless us and keep us

All: *The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. The Lord lit up his countenance upon us and give us peace.*

Junior church leave for their activities.

Scripture reading: Luke 3: 7 – 18

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,[Ⓜ] ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with[Ⓜ] the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Message

Hymn 522: The servant king

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
Entered our world, your glory veiled;
Not to be served but to serve,
And give your life that we might live.

*Refrain: This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
My heavy load he chose to bear;
His heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said. *Refrain*

Come, see his hands and his feet,
The scars that speak of sacrifice,
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered. *Refrain*

So let us learn how to serve,
And in our lives enthrone him;
Each other's needs to prefer,
For it is Christ we're serving. *Refrain.*

Prayers for the World

Offering and prayers

Hymn: Christ be our light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness
Longing for truth, we turn to You.

Make us your own, your holy people
Light for the world to see.

*Refrain: Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in Your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. *Refrain*

Longing for food, many are hungry
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us Your bread, broken for others
Shared until all are fed. *Refrain*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us Your building, sheltering others
Walls made of living stone. *Refrain*

Many the gift, many the people
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another
Making Your kingdom come. *Refrain*

Sending forth and blessing

For future events and activities please see our website



St Paul's United Reformed Church

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