

Worship 6th December 2020 – Advent 1

Aberlour Parish Church

Rev Andrew Kimmitt

Intimations:

The buildings are open for in-person services of worship again– in Craigellachie at 9.45am and Aberlour at 11.15am.

Services will be not be ‘normal’: they’ll be shorter, and we won’t be able to sing together; we’ll have to limit numbers according to the capacity of the building; it might be chilly because of having doors and windows open to increase ventilation; we won’t be able to shake hands, hug or kiss; and we’ll be seated 2metres away from other households; there’ll be hand gel, and face-coverings, and one-way systems – but it will be worship in-person all the same. Not everyone will feel comfortable with this, and I can assure you that I’ll be continuing online digital services at <http://aberlour.video/services> for everyone to access. These digital services will be as close to identical to the in-person services as is possible.

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Or call Jane Tweedie 01340 871515

Heather Cruikshank 01340 871898

Rev Andrew Kimmitt 07752306462

Introduction

Hello and welcome to worship this Sunday, the 6th December.

This week is the second week of Advent, and we look for what it means to be peacemakers in a troubled world. We hear from the prophet Joel, experiencing a plague and searching for God in it all, and we hear from Christian Aid Scotland as they work in locust-devasted Ethiopia.

NB – for the in-person services and on the videos, worshippers are encouraged to join in with the leader for the words in UPPER CASE

Advent Litany

Among the poor,
among the proud,
among the persecuted,
among the privileged,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

In the private house,
in the market place,
in the wedding feast,
in the judgement hall,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

With a gentle touch,
with an angry word,
with a clear conscience,
with burning love,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the humble might be raised,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Within us,
without us,
among us,
before us,
in this place,
in every place,
for this time,
for all time,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Godly Play story – advent 2

In our in-person and recorded services, Andrew is telling the ‘Godly Play’ stories for each week of advent. To see a recording, go to www.aberlour.video/services

Lighting the advent candle

[CH4 284, v1,2]

*Hope is candle, once lit by the prophets,
never consumed though it burns through the years.
Dim in the daylight of power and privilege,
when they are gone Hope will shine on.*

*Peace is a candle to show us the pathway,
threatened by gusts from our rage and our greed.
Friend, feel no envy for those in the shadows -
violence and force their dead-end course.*

Richard Leach
CCLI Licence No. 649173

Reading

Joel 2: 12-29

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the LORD, your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
 Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD,
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
 Why should it be said among the peoples,
 "Where is their God?"'

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for his land,
 and had pity on his people.

¹⁹ In response to his people the LORD said:
 I am sending you
 grain, wine, and oil,
 and you will be satisfied;
 and I will no more make you
 a mockery among the nations.

²⁰ I will remove the northern army far from you,
 and drive it into a parched and desolate land,
 its front into the eastern sea,
 and its rear into the western sea;
 its stench and foul smell will rise up.
 Surely he has done great things!

²¹ Do not fear, O soil;
 be glad and rejoice,
 for the LORD has done great things!

²² Do not fear, you animals of the field,
 for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
 the tree bears its fruit,
 the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ O children of Zion, be glad
 and rejoice in the LORD your God;
 for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
 he has poured down for you abundant rain,
 the early and the later rain, as before.

²⁴ The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
 the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ I will repay you for the years
 that the swarming locust has eaten,
 the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
 my great army, which I sent against you.

²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
 and praise the name of the LORD your God,
 who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
 and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other.
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 be put to shame.

²⁸ Then afterwards

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Reflection

Last week we spoke about taking up our lead in readings from the Narrative lectionary – a system that allows us to spend more time with some of the too often overlooked figures in the bible. This week we have Joel, who like the others we sometimes call the ‘minor prophets’, in what the Hebrew Bible calls the Book of the 12. But the minor prophets are minor only in terms of length: the saying that good things come in small packages hold true of them. As prophetic books they each hold a powerful punch, and throw up really important questions.

For Joel’s writing – the context is dire. He is called to prophesy at a time when his people are experiencing extraordinary affliction, through a devastating plague of locusts. In his prophetic imagery these locusts become an army from the north: pillaging and stripping bare – as we heard in the reading. And the job of a prophet in that context is to interpret the signs of the times: to make sense of what God is saying in and through the situation, and to communicate to God’s people.

The idea of a plague is today a much sharper and immediate issue than we might’ve heard it a year ago. Is Covid a plague of sorts? Afflictions which appear as if out-of-the-blue, affecting a whole society top-to-bottom? And we mustn’t forget that locusts are far from a thing of the past – in long forgotten biblical times. Climate change makes natural calamities across the world more common. As we speak, a plague of locusts is devastating communities in Ethiopia. Right now. Reaping destruction of exactly the kind Joel is talking about here.

The thing about plagues, and the question we might be tempted to ask if we were in Joel’s position – trying to work out where God is in this all – is: where has it come from? What is the cause? Did God do this? We perhaps subconsciously think that those experiencing ‘plagues’ somehow deserve it – after all did God send plagues upon the Egyptians when Pharaoh wouldn’t set the Israelite slaves free? And there breaks off a number of questions about why a Good God might send plagues and suffering, to God’s own people.

But I don’t think that’s a helpful route of questions always. Because, interesting philosophically it may be, it’s rarely a comfort for folk actually suffering to hypothesise down that avenue, if – and it’s a big if – God even is the origin of plagues. If the origin of the plagues is God, then surely the appropriate response, as in the case of Joel’s people, is humility and repentance, a transformation of heart that involves being turned around to God. But then, we should be serving God in humility and penitence anyway. And if the origin of plagues isn’t God, then the appropriate response is to seek God’s strength and comfort, and know God’s presence with us. But then, we should be doing that anyway too.

So is a better question not: Where is God in all this? That is the prophets’ question, that’s Joel’s question. And the answer here ought bring far more comfort and goodness to those suffering affliction and plague. Because the answer to where God is, is always always that God is nearer than our closest breath. Our God is the God of the wounded and suffering.

There is only one who ever knew suffering in the absence of God, and that suffering took place on a cross at Calvary. And in the mystery that we claim at the heart of our faith, precisely in that once-and-for-all saving action, Jesus won for all those who suffer God's closest presence and richest blessing. Christ fulfils the promise of the sermon on the mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

If we return to Joel for a moment. We heard the way God answered Joel, and the call of the people for God's mercy. We hear how God determines to drive the northern army of locusts away and restore the grain, wine and oil; the pastures, and the rainwater. But more than that, by verse 27 God promises God's presence amongst the people of Israel. And will bless them, pouring out the divine spirit, such that the sons and daughters of God's people will prophesy, the old will see visions and the young shall dream dreams.

And now we're back, squarely in the theme of our second week of advent. For if advent is anything, it is a call to be the ones who take part on the prophets' work of knowing and preparing the way of the Lord; if advent is anything, it is a time to see visions and dream dreams. And to dare to believe anew in the miracle of love come as human flesh.

And what ought we to seek with prophetic zeal? What ought to occupy our visions, and fill our dreams? We lit our second candle for peace. We know that Christ gave his disciples peace. We know what Christ said about the peacemakers in those beatitudes again: blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

There are sermons and sermons on the nature of peace. Whenever we study the gospels we look at Jesus, the one who comes in peace, who gives peace. There are observations to be made about peace not being simply an absence of violence, but an all-encompassing shalom. This week though, let us simply hear the call to become peacemakers – no matter what plagues us meantime.

This advent time, let us be reassured of God's presence even and especially amidst suffering and plague; let us be comforters of the afflicted; and let us commit ever anew to become peacemakers, worthy of being called children of God. Amen.

Video Christian Aid and Locusts in Ethiopia

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Women like Borgodo Tsoke, a widow and mother of five, witnessed plagues of locusts larger than ever before. 'The locusts suddenly came out of nowhere and ate every green plant in their

path. They left us nothing useful,' she said. Borgodo's crops were so quickly destroyed that she didn't know if anything would grow again.

Bodo Ayiso is a young farmer in South Omo.

He has become familiar with the way extreme weather affects his crops. But the locusts were a new and unwelcome challenge.

'I know what drought or flooding can do. But I have never seen such a devastating plague before. We were ready to harvest our farm when locust swarms descended in our village. They destroyed everything within few days and only left dust behind. The swarms devastated rangelands and the vegetation. Even the bees left.'

Bodo and his pastoral community found it difficult to find fresh grass for their animals because it was so hot.

But, says Bodo, 'even when we feared the worst, Christian Aid supported our village.'

Christian Aid has provided locust prevention training to 130 local volunteers, including Bodo, in South Omo. The volunteers learned how to become familiar with the locust life cycle and how to use pesticides and sprayers effectively and safely. Together, they have sprayed pesticide over 2,500 hectares of crop and grazing lands in order to control the locust infestation and save their new crops.

Bodo feels confident about the future. 'We will not be panicked as previous time. We know what to do if the locusts return.'

Thanks to the Scottish Government's Humanitarian Emergency Fund, we were able to act quickly to protect any existing crops and plant new seeds for the next harvest. We distributed over 41 tonnes of maize seed to 3,416 families and pastoral farmers. But the extreme weather means that the threat of more locusts remains high.

Prayer

God of Peace,

We know how your people suffer.

We pray for all those suffering and afflicted this day.

And we pray with the words given to us from those working for Christian Aid in Ethiopia

We pray for the work that Christian Aid is doing to address the climate crisis causing drought and food insecurity; the support that we provide for internally displaced people; and for the eradication of disease outbreaks and desert locusts so that our communities can live decent lives.

We pray for our Ethiopia so that peaceful coexistence will prevail, and people displaced will get back to their normal lives.

We pray for the work Christian Aid is doing to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, and the communities we are serving so that their families know about the disease and will be resilient to its impacts.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

Amen

Advent Blessing

God of the watching ones,
the waiting ones,
the slow and suffering ones,
the angels in heaven,
the child in the womb,

GIVE US YOUR BENEDICTION,
YOUR GOOD WORD FOR OUR SOULS,
THAT WE MIGHT REST AND RISE
IN THE KINDNESS OF YOUR COMPANY.

AMEN.

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in the wedding feast,
in the judgement hall,
Christ is coming,
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With a gentle touch,
with an angry word,
with a clear conscience,
with burning love,
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That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the humble might be raised,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Within us,
without us,
among us,
before us,
in this place,
in every place,
for this time,
for all time,
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Godly Play story – advent 2

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Lighting the advent candle

[CH4 284, v1,2]

*Hope is candle, once lit by the prophets,
never consumed though it burns through the years.
Dim in the daylight of power and privilege,
when they are gone Hope will shine on.*

*Peace is a candle to show us the pathway,
threatened by gusts from our rage and our greed.
Friend, feel no envy for those in the shadows -
violence and force their dead-end course.*

Richard Leach
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Reading

Joel 2: 12-29

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
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with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.
¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the LORD, your God?
¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
 Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD,
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
 Why should it be said among the peoples,
 "Where is their God?"'

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for his land,
 and had pity on his people.

¹⁹ In response to his people the LORD said:
 I am sending you
 grain, wine, and oil,
 and you will be satisfied;
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²⁰ I will remove the northern army far from you,
 and drive it into a parched and desolate land,
 its front into the eastern sea,
 and its rear into the western sea;
 its stench and foul smell will rise up.
 Surely he has done great things!

²¹ Do not fear, O soil;
 be glad and rejoice,
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²² Do not fear, you animals of the field,
 for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
 the tree bears its fruit,
 the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ O children of Zion, be glad
 and rejoice in the LORD your God;
 for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
 he has poured down for you abundant rain,
 the early and the later rain, as before.

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 that the swarming locust has eaten,
 the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
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 and praise the name of the LORD your God,
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I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
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Reflection

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There is only one who ever knew suffering in the absence of God, and that suffering took place on a cross at Calvary. And in the mystery that we claim at the heart of our faith, precisely in that once-and-for-all saving action, Jesus won for all those who suffer God's closest presence and richest blessing. Christ fulfils the promise of the sermon on the mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

Amen

Advent Blessing

God of the watching ones,
the waiting ones,
the slow and suffering ones,
the angels in heaven,
the child in the womb,

GIVE US YOUR BENEDICTION,
YOUR GOOD WORD FOR OUR SOULS,
THAT WE MIGHT REST AND RISE
IN THE KINDNESS OF YOUR COMPANY.

AMEN.

Worship 6th December 2020 – Advent 1

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among the proud,
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Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

In the private house,
in the market place,
in the wedding feast,
in the judgement hall,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

With a gentle touch,
with an angry word,
with a clear conscience,
with burning love,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the humble might be raised,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Within us,
without us,
among us,
before us,
in this place,
in every place,
for this time,
for all time,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Godly Play story – advent 2

In our in-person and recorded services, Andrew is telling the ‘Godly Play’ stories for each week of advent. To see a recording, go to www.aberlour.video/services

Lighting the advent candle

[CH4 284, v1,2]

*Hope is candle, once lit by the prophets,
never consumed though it burns through the years.
Dim in the daylight of power and privilege,
when they are gone Hope will shine on.*

*Peace is a candle to show us the pathway,
threatened by gusts from our rage and our greed.
Friend, feel no envy for those in the shadows -
violence and force their dead-end course.*

Richard Leach
CCLI Licence No. 649173

Reading

Joel 2: 12-29

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.
¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the LORD, your God?
¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;
¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
"Where is their God?"'

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for his land,
and had pity on his people.

¹⁹ In response to his people the LORD said:
I am sending you
grain, wine, and oil,
and you will be satisfied;
and I will no more make you
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²⁰ I will remove the northern army far from you,
and drive it into a parched and desolate land,
its front into the eastern sea,
and its rear into the western sea;
its stench and foul smell will rise up.
Surely he has done great things!

²¹ Do not fear, O soil;
be glad and rejoice,
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²² Do not fear, you animals of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
the tree bears its fruit,
the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ O children of Zion, be glad
and rejoice in the LORD your God;
for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
he has poured down for you abundant rain,
the early and the later rain, as before.

²⁴ The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
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²⁵ I will repay you for the years
that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
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²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of the LORD your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other.
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I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Reflection

Last week we spoke about taking up our lead in readings from the Narrative lectionary – a system that allows us to spend more time with some of the too often overlooked figures in the bible. This week we have Joel, who like the others we sometimes call the ‘minor prophets’, in what the Hebrew Bible calls the Book of the 12. But the minor prophets are minor only in terms of length: the saying that good things come in small packages hold true of them. As prophetic books they each hold a powerful punch, and throw up really important questions.

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There is only one who ever knew suffering in the absence of God, and that suffering took place on a cross at Calvary. And in the mystery that we claim at the heart of our faith, precisely in that once-and-for-all saving action, Jesus won for all those who suffer God's closest presence and richest blessing. Christ fulfils the promise of the sermon on the mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

Amen

Advent Blessing

God of the watching ones,
the waiting ones,
the slow and suffering ones,
the angels in heaven,
the child in the womb,

GIVE US YOUR BENEDICTION,
YOUR GOOD WORD FOR OUR SOULS,
THAT WE MIGHT REST AND RISE
IN THE KINDNESS OF YOUR COMPANY.

AMEN.

Worship 6th December 2020 – Advent 1

Aberlour Parish Church

Rev Andrew Kimmitt

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Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the humble might be raised,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Within us,
without us,
among us,
before us,
in this place,
in every place,
for this time,
for all time,
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Godly Play story – advent 2

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Lighting the advent candle

[CH4 284, v1,2]

*Hope is candle, once lit by the prophets,
never consumed though it burns through the years.
Dim in the daylight of power and privilege,
when they are gone Hope will shine on.*

*Peace is a candle to show us the pathway,
threatened by gusts from our rage and our greed.
Friend, feel no envy for those in the shadows -
violence and force their dead-end course.*

Richard Leach
CCLI Licence No. 649173

Reading

Joel 2: 12-29

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the LORD, your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
 Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD,
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
 Why should it be said among the peoples,
 "Where is their God?"'

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for his land,
 and had pity on his people.

¹⁹ In response to his people the LORD said:
 I am sending you
 grain, wine, and oil,
 and you will be satisfied;
 and I will no more make you
 a mockery among the nations.

²⁰ I will remove the northern army far from you,
 and drive it into a parched and desolate land,
 its front into the eastern sea,
 and its rear into the western sea;
 its stench and foul smell will rise up.
 Surely he has done great things!

²¹ Do not fear, O soil;
 be glad and rejoice,
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²² Do not fear, you animals of the field,
 for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
 the tree bears its fruit,
 the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ O children of Zion, be glad
 and rejoice in the LORD your God;
 for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
 he has poured down for you abundant rain,
 the early and the later rain, as before.

²⁴ The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
 the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ I will repay you for the years
 that the swarming locust has eaten,
 the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
 my great army, which I sent against you.

²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
 and praise the name of the LORD your God,
 who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
 and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other.
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I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
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²⁹ Even on the male and female servants,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Reflection

Last week we spoke about taking up our lead in readings from the Narrative lectionary – a system that allows us to spend more time with some of the too often overlooked figures in the bible. This week we have Joel, who like the others we sometimes call the ‘minor prophets’, in what the Hebrew Bible calls the Book of the 12. But the minor prophets are minor only in terms of length: the saying that good things come in small packages hold true of them. As prophetic books they each hold a powerful punch, and throw up really important questions.

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There is only one who ever knew suffering in the absence of God, and that suffering took place on a cross at Calvary. And in the mystery that we claim at the heart of our faith, precisely in that once-and-for-all saving action, Jesus won for all those who suffer God's closest presence and richest blessing. Christ fulfils the promise of the sermon on the mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Prayer

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We pray for all those suffering and afflicted this day.

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We pray for the work Christian Aid is doing to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, and the communities we are serving so that their families know about the disease and will be resilient to its impacts.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

Amen

Advent Blessing

God of the watching ones,
the waiting ones,
the slow and suffering ones,
the angels in heaven,
the child in the womb,

GIVE US YOUR BENEDICTION,
YOUR GOOD WORD FOR OUR SOULS,
THAT WE MIGHT REST AND RISE
IN THE KINDNESS OF YOUR COMPANY.

AMEN.

Worship 6th December 2020 – Advent 1

Aberlour Parish Church

Rev Andrew Kimmitt

Intimations:

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among the proud,
among the persecuted,
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Christ is coming,
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in the market place,
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Friend, feel no envy for those in the shadows -
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Richard Leach
CCLI Licence No. 649173

Reading

Joel 2: 12-29

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the LORD, your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;

assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
 Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD,
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
 Why should it be said among the peoples,
 "Where is their God?"'

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for his land,
 and had pity on his people.

¹⁹ In response to his people the LORD said:
 I am sending you
 grain, wine, and oil,
 and you will be satisfied;
 and I will no more make you
 a mockery among the nations.

²⁰ I will remove the northern army far from you,
 and drive it into a parched and desolate land,
 its front into the eastern sea,
 and its rear into the western sea;
 its stench and foul smell will rise up.
 Surely he has done great things!

²¹ Do not fear, O soil;
 be glad and rejoice,
 for the LORD has done great things!

²² Do not fear, you animals of the field,
 for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
 the tree bears its fruit,
 the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ O children of Zion, be glad
 and rejoice in the LORD your God;
 for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
 he has poured down for you abundant rain,
 the early and the later rain, as before.

²⁴ The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
 the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ I will repay you for the years
 that the swarming locust has eaten,
 the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
 my great army, which I sent against you.

²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
 and praise the name of the LORD your God,
 who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
 and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other.
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I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
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²⁹ Even on the male and female servants,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

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There is only one who ever knew suffering in the absence of God, and that suffering took place on a cross at Calvary. And in the mystery that we claim at the heart of our faith, precisely in that once-and-for-all saving action, Jesus won for all those who suffer God's closest presence and richest blessing. Christ fulfils the promise of the sermon on the mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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We pray for the work Christian Aid is doing to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, and the communities we are serving so that their families know about the disease and will be resilient to its impacts.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

Amen

Advent Blessing

God of the watching ones,
the waiting ones,
the slow and suffering ones,
the angels in heaven,
the child in the womb,

GIVE US YOUR BENEDICTION,
YOUR GOOD WORD FOR OUR SOULS,
THAT WE MIGHT REST AND RISE
IN THE KINDNESS OF YOUR COMPANY.

AMEN.

Worship 6th December 2020 – Advent 1

Aberlour Parish Church

Rev Andrew Kimmitt

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Among the poor,
among the proud,
among the persecuted,
among the privileged,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

In the private house,
in the market place,
in the wedding feast,
in the judgement hall,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

With a gentle touch,
with an angry word,
with a clear conscience,
with burning love,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the humble might be raised,
Christ is coming,
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Within us,
without us,
among us,
before us,
in this place,
in every place,
for this time,
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Godly Play story – advent 2

In our in-person and recorded services, Andrew is telling the ‘Godly Play’ stories for each week of advent. To see a recording, go to www.aberlour.video/services

Lighting the advent candle

[CH4 284, v1,2]

*Hope is candle, once lit by the prophets,
never consumed though it burns through the years.
Dim in the daylight of power and privilege,
when they are gone Hope will shine on.*

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and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
 Let them say, 'Spare your people, O LORD,
 and do not make your heritage a mockery,
 a byword among the nations.
 Why should it be said among the peoples,
 "Where is their God?"'

¹⁸ Then the LORD became jealous for his land,
 and had pity on his people.

¹⁹ In response to his people the LORD said:
 I am sending you
 grain, wine, and oil,
 and you will be satisfied;
 and I will no more make you
 a mockery among the nations.

²⁰ I will remove the northern army far from you,
 and drive it into a parched and desolate land,
 its front into the eastern sea,
 and its rear into the western sea;
 its stench and foul smell will rise up.
 Surely he has done great things!

²¹ Do not fear, O soil;
 be glad and rejoice,
 for the LORD has done great things!

²² Do not fear, you animals of the field,
 for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
 the tree bears its fruit,
 the fig tree and vine give their full yield.

²³ O children of Zion, be glad
 and rejoice in the LORD your God;
 for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
 he has poured down for you abundant rain,
 the early and the later rain, as before.

²⁴ The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
 the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

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 that the swarming locust has eaten,
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²⁶ You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
 and praise the name of the LORD your God,
 who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

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 and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other.
 And my people shall never again
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I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

Reflection

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So is a better question not: Where is God in all this? That is the prophets’ question, that’s Joel’s question. And the answer here ought bring far more comfort and goodness to those suffering affliction and plague. Because the answer to where God is, is always always that God is nearer than our closest breath. Our God is the God of the wounded and suffering.

There is only one who ever knew suffering in the absence of God, and that suffering took place on a cross at Calvary. And in the mystery that we claim at the heart of our faith, precisely in that once-and-for-all saving action, Jesus won for all those who suffer God's closest presence and richest blessing. Christ fulfils the promise of the sermon on the mount: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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And now we're back, squarely in the theme of our second week of advent. For if advent is anything, it is a call to be the ones who take part on the prophets' work of knowing and preparing the way of the Lord; if advent is anything, it is a time to see visions and dream dreams. And to dare to believe anew in the miracle of love come as human flesh.

And what ought we to seek with prophetic zeal? What ought to occupy our visions, and fill our dreams? We lit our second candle for peace. We know that Christ gave his disciples peace. We know what Christ said about the peacemakers in those beatitudes again: blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

There are sermons and sermons on the nature of peace. Whenever we study the gospels we look at Jesus, the one who comes in peace, who gives peace. There are observations to be made about peace not being simply an absence of violence, but an all-encompassing shalom. This week though, let us simply hear the call to become peacemakers – no matter what plagues us meantime.

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Bodo Ayiso is a young farmer in South Omo.

He has become familiar with the way extreme weather affects his crops. But the locusts were a new and unwelcome challenge.

'I know what drought or flooding can do. But I have never seen such a devastating plague before. We were ready to harvest our farm when locust swarms descended in our village. They destroyed everything within few days and only left dust behind. The swarms devastated rangelands and the vegetation. Even the bees left.'

Bodo and his pastoral community found it difficult to find fresh grass for their animals because it was so hot.

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Bodo feels confident about the future. 'We will not be panicked as previous time. We know what to do if the locusts return.'

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Prayer

God of Peace,

We know how your people suffer.

We pray for all those suffering and afflicted this day.

And we pray with the words given to us from those working for Christian Aid in Ethiopia

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We pray for the work Christian Aid is doing to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, and the communities we are serving so that their families know about the disease and will be resilient to its impacts.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

Amen

Advent Blessing

God of the watching ones,
the waiting ones,
the slow and suffering ones,
the angels in heaven,
the child in the womb,

GIVE US YOUR BENEDICTION,
YOUR GOOD WORD FOR OUR SOULS,
THAT WE MIGHT REST AND RISE
IN THE KINDNESS OF YOUR COMPANY.

AMEN.

Worship 6th December 2020 – Advent 1

Aberlour Parish Church

Rev Andrew Kimmitt

Intimations:

The buildings are open for in-person services of worship again– in Craigellachie at 9.45am and Aberlour at 11.15am.

Services will be not be ‘normal’: they’ll be shorter, and we won’t be able to sing together; we’ll have to limit numbers according to the capacity of the building; it might be chilly because of having doors and windows open to increase ventilation; we won’t be able to shake hands, hug or kiss; and we’ll be seated 2metres away from other households; there’ll be hand gel, and face-coverings, and one-way systems – but it will be worship in-person all the same. Not everyone will feel comfortable with this, and I can assure you that I’ll be continuing online digital services at <http://aberlour.video/services> for everyone to access. These digital services will be as close to identical to the in-person services as is possible.

If you wish to come in person, **you must ‘book’ a place**. This ensures that we keep to a safe capacity for each building as well as giving us ‘track and trace’ details in the event that any potential Covid-19 transmission might be detected.

To book: email aberlourchurchbooking@gmail.com

Or call Jane Tweedie 01340 871515

Heather Cruikshank 01340 871898

Rev Andrew Kimmitt 07752306462

Introduction

Hello and welcome to worship this Sunday, the 6th December.

This week is the second week of Advent, and we look for what it means to be peacemakers in a troubled world. We hear from the prophet Joel, experiencing a plague and searching for God in it all, and we hear from Christian Aid Scotland as they work in locust-devasted Ethiopia.

NB – for the in-person services and on the videos, worshippers are encouraged to join in with the leader for the words in UPPER CASE

Advent Litany

Among the poor,
among the proud,
among the persecuted,
among the privileged,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

In the private house,
in the market place,
in the wedding feast,
in the judgement hall,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

With a gentle touch,
with an angry word,
with a clear conscience,
with burning love,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

That the kingdom might come,
that the world might believe,
that the powerful might stumble,
that the humble might be raised,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Within us,
without us,
among us,
before us,
in this place,
in every place,
for this time,
for all time,
Christ is coming,
HE IS COMING TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

Godly Play story – advent 2

In our in-person and recorded services, Andrew is telling the ‘Godly Play’ stories for each week of advent. To see a recording, go to www.aberlour.video/services

Lighting the advent candle

[CH4 284, v1,2]

*Hope is candle, once lit by the prophets,
never consumed though it burns through the years.
Dim in the daylight of power and privilege,
when they are gone Hope will shine on.*

*Peace is a candle to show us the pathway,
threatened by gusts from our rage and our greed.
Friend, feel no envy for those in the shadows -
violence and force their dead-end course.*

Richard Leach
CCLI Licence No. 649173

Reading

Joel 2: 12-29

¹² Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³ rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

¹⁴ Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain-offering and a drink-offering
for the LORD, your God?

¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶ gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation;

assemble the aged;
gather the children,
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷ Between the vestibule and the altar
 let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
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