

Friday 4th December

The Rev'd Heather Cooper

*"O Holy Child Emmanuel
Hope of the ages God with us "*

Readings

Psalm 27

Isaiah 29: 7-24

Matthew 9:27-31

Candle in the Black Night

When night arrives in the desert it comes quickly. The stars, though, come slowly, increasing in number and brilliance until they fill the black vault overhead. For centuries, they have been the guides and companions of the night to the desert people known as the Bedouin. But not every night is clear, and when the clouds blank out the stars and the moon the blackness is total. It is impossible to see anything.

On one such night a Bedouin friend called Sleman lit a candle and placed it in the window of our stone hut. I followed his laughter as we stumbled out into the blackness for several minutes before stopping. He then asked me if I could find my way back. I instinctively turned around, but Sleman grabbed my shoulders and twisted me further round to my left. My first attempt had been quite wrong, for there in the direction I was now facing, perhaps 100 metres away, flickered the tiny candle surrounded by an infinity of blackness. Its light pierces through the darkness. The faint breeze caused the candle to flicker wildly, but each time it would burst back giving out a new radiance. In all that blackness, the tiny glow shone through and proclaimed silently, "I am the way home."

Reflection

These verses from Matthew's Gospel may seem odd for Advent.

What does a healing have to do with the coming of Christ at Christmas?

Yet, throughout scripture the images of light and darkness are important and blindness is used as an illustration of those who cannot see the truth.

In our secular society where the main system of belief seems to be Atheism (and that is as much a faith as religious faith) we can see the results of a society which has lost its way.

We stumble around believing anything we want to, truth is relative and Christianity is rejected as being intolerant, out of date and not worth bothering about.

We live with the consequences of our blindness.

Too many struggling to make ends meet. Too many children brought up in blown home.

Too much greed and injustice

And so we could go on.

Into this blindness, this darkness, Christ comes to bring us light.

Light that gives us sight and light that points us home.

Light that heals our blindness and our brokenness.

May we all find the Light of Christ anew this Advent season.



Friday 4th

Into the darkness of this world
Into the shadows of the night
Into this loveless place You came
Lightened our burdens eased our pain
And made these hearts Your home
Into the darkness once again
O come Lord Jesus come

Come with Your love to make us whole
Come with Your light to lead us on
Driving the darkness far from our souls
O come Lord Jesus come

Into the longing of our souls
Into these heavy hearts of stone
Shine on us now Your piercing light
Order our lives and souls aright
By grace and love unknown
Until in You our hearts unite
O come Lord Jesus come

O Holy Child Emmanuel
Hope of the ages God with us
Visit again this broken place
Till all the earth declares Your praise
And Your great mercies own
Now let Your love be born in us
O come Lord Jesus come

Come in Your glory take Your place
Jesus the Name above all names
We long to see You face to face
O come Lord Jesus come

Prayer

Lord, where we are willfully blind to the light of your
Word, forgive us.

Where we have allowed the ways of our world to dim our
eyes to you, forgive us.

Restore our sight that we may clearly see the Light of the
World, Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen**

Into the darkness

<https://youtu.be/qXKOxub5obc>



We pray for all who are caught up
in the conflicts of this world. For
those too scarred and scared to
leave their homes. For those serv-
ing in armed forces and aid
organisations.
May they know Gods peace.



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