



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on November 28th 2021 at 10:45,  
meeting once more at Bethesda Chapel.**

As restrictions are eased at present, we are able to join together in worship again. However, as not all are yet able to return, we still plan to use our YouTube channel to broadcast a recording of the services, and will continue to provide this written service sheet. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we all seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

**Welcome to our ADVENT SERVICE "GOD WITH US" led by Alec. The Piano is played today by Trevor**

**10:40 Lighting of the Advent candle, accompanied by an acoustic version of**

**"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOId-iOp4nc>

**10:45 Alec welcomes everyone, and introduces our opening Hymn:**

**O COME O COME IMMANUEL**, sharing that the text for this comes from a 7 verse poem that dates back to the 8th century. It was used in a 'call and response' fashion during the vespers, or evening, service. The original text created the reverse acrostic "ero cras," which means "I shall be with you tomorrow," and is particularly appropriate for the advent season.

(We don't often sing all 7 verses, but did do today - Trevor did a sterling job playing it on the piano)

O come, O come, Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem, unto your own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe for us the heavenward road and bar the way to death's abode.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar!  
Dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O King of nations, bind, in one the hearts of all mankind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease and be yourself our King of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Psalter Hymnal Translated from Latin by JM Neale, who also composed the tune with Thomas Helmore. Public Domain CCL No 5664

### **Alec then invited Brenda to lead our prayers:**

“Our Loving Heavenly Father, as Advent starts, we remember again that You are with us now as You have been from the beginning. We thank You for the Light of Jesus Christ coming to our world (as our candle shows) and the love, joy, hope and peace that it brings to those who trust in Him. We bring our praise to You this morning for the years that many of us have put our trust in that Light and the strength and comfort that we have received and continue to do so.

We thank You that we are able to be here this morning to share in worship together, but we also remember those who are unable to come, for whatever reason, asking that You will be beside them. We thank You for the service recordings and scripts which reach those not able to be present.

Almighty God, we praise You for the wonders of creation and the beauty we see season after season. At the same time we ask that all the world's people will be led to help to care for it and to protect it from pollution and climate change problems.

We give thanks for the Covid vaccine but are aware of a new mutation and we pray that this will not lead to a more serious situation throughout Africa and the world and the new restrictions will be the right ones. We ask for healing for those suffering with Covid now and the ones taking many weeks and months to recover.

Lord, as we thank You for our opportunity to worship in peace together, we remember those who can't do this because of persecution and discrimination and we pray for strength and courage for those with lives in turmoil. Our thoughts turn to the refugee situation and those who have lost their lives and we ask that a better way to deal with the problem can be found. We bring our thanks to You for the work of

charities, remembering all that is done by many volunteers and we pray again for the input and safety of our link missionaries, Jackie and Brian Chilvers.

We bring our thanks to You for our NHS and those who work for the health and well being of others, and especially think of the ones who are worn out with increasing workloads. Also Lord God, we ask for Your presence with the many we know who are suffering at this time. Some are weary and distraught following bereavement and we think of families like Ava's who was murdered recently in Liverpool. Others are struggling with illness or pain and are waiting for treatment or have other problems and we bring them to You for Your comfort and guidance. We thank You for our Prayer Chain where we can share concerns and offer special prayers when there is a need.

Lord God, we give You thanks that our church building is available again at present and we have been able to open up more. We pray for Your hand to be at work among the parents and children at Tiddlywinks and on Saturday mornings. We also remember the ladies' meetings, the Tuesday coffee morning, and the Thursday evening prayer and Bible Study time where many can enjoy fellowship together and with You.

We offer grateful thanks for Alec and the other church leaders and those who work to make things flow smoothly. Thank You for all the careful planning and the hours spent and we ask that all concerned may be upheld by You and given the strength to deal with each task You have given them. We also ask that You be beside those who take on pastoral work of various kinds, so they know what to say and do to meet each need. As the church prepares to face new challenges like "Messy Church" and reaching the nearby new housing, please guide us in the right way.

This world is suffering in so many ways and we pray that more may turn to Jesus as the Light in their life and the Way to follow.

Heavenly Father, we can all think of things we have done wrong and omissions we have made recently and we ask You to forgive us in the name of Jesus and may we do better in the weeks to come.

Lord, we continue to pray for our service this morning and thank You for Alec and all those taking part, asking that You will be beside each one. May we all feel the presence of the Holy Spirit near us and learn more about You today. As we go out into the world, please help us to try to share something of Your love with those we contact each day. Be with us, keep us safe and guide us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son. Amen"

**Brenda and Becky were invited to take up our Offering**, whilst Trevor played a verse of There's a light upon the mountain, **after Alec had shared the notices** for the week - Coffee morning (including painting and guitar lessons!) and Ladies Bible Study on Tuesday, Church Cleaning on Thursday morning with the Fellowship meeting in the evening, and an opportunity to help with a church workday, to decorate the church for Christmas, on Saturday lunchtime. Morag shared that 70 boxes for

Operation Christmas Child - many more than anticipated, have been collected, thanks to all.

**We then had an opportunity to sing (or read) again, our second Advent Hymn "Come thou long-expected Jesus", played by Trevor.**

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,  
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

**Words** Charles Wesley Public Domain CCL No 5664

**Alec introduced a Quiz, based on Movies with at least two sequels, shown on the screen.**

No multiple choice - either we knew the answers or we didn't!! (I didn't - in fact I hadn't even heard of a number of the film series, which ranged from Toy Story - which I had heard of, to Captain America, Eastrail 177 trilogy and The Real One - the answers to which were IS, WAS and IS COMING - which can be related to Jesus, who was born at Christmas and will be coming again)

**As we had some of our younger friends here this morning, they were invited to lead us in a Song they knew well and sing at home: "My mind's made up" (which was also displayed on the screen so that others may join in with the words as they felt led)**

**The song has a country style feel to it, and 4 of the children came to the front to sing it for us.**

I've got my mind made up and I won't turn back  
because I want to see my Jesus someday.  
I've got my mind made up and I won't turn back  
because I want to see my Jesus someday.

Goodbye world, I stay no longer with you.  
Goodbye pleasures of sin, I stay no longer with you.  
I've made up my mind to go God's way the rest of my life.  
I've made up my mind to go God's way the rest of my life.

Born, born, born again; thank God, I'm born again.  
Born, born, born again; thank God, I'm born again.  
Born, born, born again, thank God, I'm born again.  
Born, born, born again, thank God, I'm born again.

Born of the water, spirit and the blood  
thank God, I'm born again.  
Born of the water, spirit and the blood  
thank God, I'm born again.

I've got my mind made up and I won't turn back....

I am under the rock, The rock that's higher than I.  
Jehovah hide me, I am under the rock.  
Go tell my enemies, I am under the rock;  
Jehovah hide me, I am under the rock.

I've got my mind made up and I won't turn back.....

Goodbye world, I stay no longer with you  
Goodbye pleasures of sin, I stay no longer with you  
I've made up my mind to go God's way the rest of my life  
I've made up my mind to go God's way the rest of my life.

Oh I want to see him, to look upon his face  
there to sing forever of his saving grace.  
On the streets of glory, let me lift my voice  
all my cares have past, home at last, forever to rejoice.

I've got my mind made up and I won't turn back...

Songwriter: Donald Mc Clurkin  
Caribbean Medley lyrics © Warner Chappell Music, Inc  
CCL No 5664  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLyF\\_fo4kWM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLyF_fo4kWM) (only if the kids present)

**Our Reading today was then shared by Shirley: John 1.1-14**

### **The Word became flesh**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He 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 mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### **Alec shared a short Message "Who was and is and is to come"**

#### THE REAL ONE

"Today we celebrate what we call the beginning of Advent, (Advent or Advert?). It is officially the first Sunday in Advent. But what is this all about? What does this strange word "advent" mean and why the candle?

Advent means the arrival of a special person. Advent is when we get ready for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and also for the Second Coming of Christ. For us it means that Jesus who was in the beginning with God has come into the world.

The Bible teaches "In the beginning was the Word", (that is to say Jesus Christ the Son of God was in the beginning), "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. Jesus is referred to as "The Word," from the Greek word logos. Christ is the Logos, the "Word" of God. The Bible makes it very clear that this Logos, Jesus, is identical to the Creator: the Word was God. "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." That is also what the candle symbolises, what the lighted candle means. Jesus is the Light of the World as He said He was.

"Was, and is, and is to come". 3 times in the book of Revelation we get this phrase.

"Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne." (Revelation 1:4)

“‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.’” (Revelation 1:8)

“Day and night they never stop saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.’” (Revelation 4:8)

These verses in revelation look like they simply say God is eternal. He existed in the past, (“he was”), he exists in the present (“he is”), and he will exist in the future (“he is to come”).

But the tense is present, not future. This is not saying anything about what God will do, but is saying something about God now, God in the present. He is a God, today, who is coming and who is on his way.

So a better translation might be he “who is, and who was, and who is coming”.

Who is this Jesus? What is this God like? In the OT in the book of the prophet Isaiah 44:6 we read:

“Thus says the LORD, the King and Redeemer of Israel, the LORD of Hosts: “I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God but Me.”

He made you and me; he gave us life.

He sustains you and me; he gives us life every day.

He lives in you and I, those of us who have made a 180 degree turn in our lives away from the cul-de-sac of doing what we thought was cool and OK and right and through Christ’s death and resurrection knowing forgiveness and new life with God in Jesus. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that what they do will be exposed.

But God says, „I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove your stubborn hearts and give you obedient hearts.”

He took away our hard hearts of stone and put his Holy Spirit within us. Now we live according to the Spirit at work in us.

But not only was Jesus alive when the world was made as John said, “In the beginning was the Word” referring to Jesus, not only is he alive in us after his death and resurrection to set us free from sin and give us new life in Him, but He is coming again. He is already on His way so to speak.

Many people really concern themselves with whether they are going to be ready for Christmas, planning this, thinking about that, buying this and that. It is a major galactic enterprise spanning weeks and sometimes even months. But then so many people, in

waiting and preparing for it in this time of Advent, miss the point of Christmas which is about Jesus Christ coming into the world, coming into our lives, preparing for us the way of forgiveness and new life.

And one more thing; He is coming again. The historian and doctor Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles, 1:9-11:

“He” (Jesus Christ) “was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Those of us who love the Lord Jesus Christ, whose names are written in the book of life, look forward eagerly to his coming again. Are we ready? Are we excited? Are we thrilled at the certain prospect of seeing Jesus Christ face-to-face and of being re-united with all who love Him from every nation, from all tribes and all peoples and all languages before the throne of God?

That is going to be a great day when Jesus, who is coming again comes.”

**We were then able to lift our voices to accompany the video shown on screen:  
“This is amazing grace”**

Who breaks the power of sin and darkness?  
Whose love is mighty and so much stronger?  
The King of glory, the King above all kings.  
Who shakes the whole earth with holy thunder?  
And leaves us breathless in awe and wonder?  
The King of glory, the King above all kings.  
    This is amazing grace, this is unfailing love,  
    that You would take my place, that You would bear my cross.  
    You laid down Your life that I would be set free,  
    Oh, Jesus, I sing for all that You've done for me.

Who brings our chaos back into order?  
Who makes the orphans a son and daughter?  
The King of glory, the King of glory.  
Who rules the nations with truth and justice?  
Shines like the sun in all of its brilliance?  
The King of glory, the King above all kings.  
    This is amazing grace.....

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain  
Worthy is the King who conquered the grave  
Worthy is the Lamb who was slain.....

Worthy, worthy, worthy -  
This is amazing grace....

Songwriters: Farro Joshua Neil / Wickham Phil / Riddle Jeremy

CCLI SONG # 6333821

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SrZvQeVKag>

**Graham was then invited to share his testimony: these are his notes:**

As this is arguably more about Jesus than me let's just remind ourselves who Jesus is.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a Child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders; and he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you."

There we have the name of God at that time, I AM. Jesus would later teach us to address God as our father.

John 8:58 "Very truly I tell you", Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" When Thomas proclaimed of Jesus "My Lord and My God" Jesus accepted his conclusion without correction.

John 10:31-33 Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" "We are not stoning you for any good work", they replied, but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God"

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Either Jesus spoke the truth or he didn't, no in-between, no good teacher or good man. You must believe he is who he proclaims to be and all that implies or reject him as a liar, you cannot sit on the fence.

Luke 4:5 The devil let him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me and I can give it to anyone I want to. Interesting Jesus doesn't disagree. It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to."

Interesting.... Jesus didn't disagree.

Although the devil was defeated at the cross his influence remains. Just think about that for a few seconds. No wonder the world is in the state it is. As Christians we underestimate the devil's influence at our peril. That's why prayer and petition to the Father is so important and is our main fighting tool against the devil.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their action deserve.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Ephesians 6:12. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms

Who does it please when men and institutions treat Jesus as an equal to others? If you are a Christian there can be no treating him as just another example, teacher reformer and just another saviour of history. Please consider your position if that's you.

The "who it does please" can be found in Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 John. 3:23 Whosoever denieth the Son has not the Father

(At this point, Graham began his personal story) So. Brought up in a Christian home, taken to church, baptised as an infant, confirmed as a young teen. Families link with the church further back, with Great-grandad involved in the building of All Saints Church in 1872. His family emigrated to Australia (£10 poms!) and his mum saved big Bible. As an adult he didn't want to know. Met Chris in 1977 and 1982 we bought our first house in Knuzden, a semi demolished, nightmare, following down. (He elaborated on some of the disasters that befell them and the house). Thoughts of church but not the church I had known as a boy.

I was reading a book by Doris Stopes, a famous medium. Police had used her. Teaching was very attractive. No penalty for sin, no need of a saviour, just go through the door of death and everyone is waiting for you on the other side.

The house began to take its toll on my health but worst was still to come. Knock on the door one evening when Chris was working. The woman next door was there, pale and shaking. She asked if Chris was in, when I said no she said that her 15-year-old son had hung in self in the loft. It was a communal loft. There were ambulances and police cars outside. We decided to go away for a few days to Chris's sister in

Weymouth.

When there we went to see a Filipino woman who was a medium and came home more convinced.

In 1982 we had moved house having been in the semi demolished for just a year.

In 1984 my father died at 2 am, from a burst ulcer, he bled to death before an ambulance could get to him. I blamed God. I said I knew he would eventually take him but he didn't need to snatch.

Thoughts then turned to Doris Stopes and the local spiritualist church - maybe I could hear from my father. Just pass through to the other side and all your loved ones there to greet you and life carries on eternally. Speak to your earthly relative through the mediums. It's good to keep in touch.

So we found the Spiritualist Church in Blackburn and decided to go just to see. The Medium was a woman from Preston. We sang hymns and prayed but no mention of Jesus. We sat down and waited to see what would happen. It was the medium's time to introduce herself and outline what would happen later in the service. As she began she suddenly stopped and clutching her abdomen complained of a terrific pain and the feeling of a burst ulcer. I looked at Chris and she had burst into tears. I was in a state of shock. The medium regained composure and then carried on with her mediumship giving messages to various people. She told them things only the recipient would know, very personal things like nicknames, places to look to find things. Who had done what and what was said.

At the end of the service I asked if I could speak to her, she said "it's your father that's passed, he is perfectly happy and he's telling me to tell you to get the tools." (we realised afterwards that my fathers van was sold with his tools in the boot). She told me other things about our family that no one there could know. We left feeling comforted and couldn't wait to go again.

The next evening I got a visit from my brother who seemed upset and concerned. He pointed out scriptural passages that put us in spiritual danger and pleaded with us not to go again. He said these Bible verses were "his authority to speak to us."

Leviticus 19:31 Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

Isaiah 8:19 When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and nutter, should not people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?

Leviticus 20:6 I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people.

Deuteronomy 18:10-13 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or consults the dead.

Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord; because of the same detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God.

We were determined that he shouldn't interfere and rejected what he had to say.

A week later we were back at the Spiritualist church, hopeful. Different medium this time and we sat at the back, expectant.

The room was similar to a lot of evangelical churches, informal chairs in semi-circular rows with a piano. They sing hymns of a sort but never mention Jesus.

The medium looked round the room and spoke to various people who were receiving messages. She would stop now and then and whisper over her shoulder as if talking to someone or something and said "yes, just a minute, I'll tell them" I remembered what Isaiah said - mediums that whisper and mutter. Then she said "the gentleman at the back with a beard" She was talking to me. I was expecting her to give me a message from my father but what she said was more significant than I could ever imagine. She said "does anyone paint in your family". I said no, no one paints in my family. She looked perplexed then she said, "I can see a picture of Jesus over your shoulder." All I could do was not and smile and then she moved on. Something happened from that moment on. It occurred to me that what she saw was not a picture but the living Jesus. Unknown to me loads of people have been praying for us including the people of this chapel. Suddenly Gods words came flooding in and I realised the spiritual danger we were in, and those words had literally put the fear of God in me.

Chris and I talked it's over and we both agreed we needed Jesus so shortly afterwards we committed ourselves to the Lord, attended this church and were subsequently baptised in this church in this baptistry by Janet Dewhurst's father Tom Cox.

What subsequently made me angry and still does with that he had used my father's name to get at us.

Hebrews 9:27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that face judgement,

So. No lingering, wandering about or visiting relatives or friends.

So from whom or what are these messages coming from. As Ephesians says, powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil.

Revelation 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and they were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.:

Remember in Lukes gospel where the devil said "all the kingdoms authority and splendour has been given to me," well here he loses it and the world returns to its rightful owner. Satan and his minions lose their power over this world Jesus reigns forever.

So now the hymn amazing Grace means so much to me. Once I was lost but now I'm found.

Not only did God search for us but he came also to the slave market and brought us back.

**We brought our time together to a close as we sang the Hymn that means so much to Graham: "Amazing Grace" sung to the traditional tune, which Trevor again played for us on the piano. If you are reading this at home, you may want to sing or hum the tune, or simply read the words aloud or silently.**

Amazing grace (how sweet the sound) that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come:  
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease:  
I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise, than when we've first begun.

Trinity Psalter no. 700 Words John Newton  
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**And finally we join together saying:**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.**

