Dear friend,
Many thanks to Judith for preparing this week's service.

She has suggested the hymn ‘Take my life and let it be’, and here it is to Mozart’s tune Nottingham:

https://youtu.be/Gf11rReeWIs

An enthusiastic rendition by University Choir, Knust, of Lloyd Larson’s rather grandiose ‘Lord you have been our dwelling place’ (psalm 90), which concludes with Isaac Watts’ version of the words (‘O God, our help in ages past’):

https://youtu.be/gc-CI85sMfc

Here’s a gospel version of the psalm:

https://youtu.be/LUX3ZO3B3bM

The readings share an apocalyptic theme. Here the Berlin Phil under Claudio Abbado perform the Dies Irae (day of wrath) from Verdi’s Requiem:

https://youtu.be/up0t2ZDfX7E

If you fancy a brief summary of the main themes of the Book of Zephaniah, here’s a bible study:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFZknKPNvz8

or you may perhaps appreciate an animation of the gospel reading:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbPKhYBaWRg

Finally, from Martin,10,000 Reasons – Redman (Prom Praise). All Souls Orchestra featuring Matt Redman at the 2015 Prom Praise:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUfyowttvmY

With all good wishes
Chris

Sunday 15th November – 2nd before Advent

O God, who has prepared for those who love you, such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *(Book of Common Prayer)*

CONFESSION We need your healing, merciful God; give us true repentance. Some sins are plain to us; some escape us, some we cannot face. Forgive us; set us free to hear your word to us; set us free to serve you. *(NZ Prayer book)*

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen. (Common Worship).

COLLECT

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

READINGS Zephaniah 1: 7,12-end; Psalm 90: 1-8,12; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11; Matthew 25: 14-30.

REFLECTION

In these Sundays before Advent, we are forced to face unpalatable truths; Jesus does not mince his words. He, in the days preceding his death on the Cross, is urgently spelling out to his hearers just what to expect at the coming of God's kingdom. The servant, or slave, who hides away his talent, is punished, not for what he has done, but what he has, as the General Confession puts it, not done. Nigel Wright comments, 'Apathy is an outrage to God and as much a rejection of our vocation as anything else.' Today's other readings are also uncomfortable reminders that there is a seriousness to life which we ignore at our peril. And yet, there are signs of hope, too: Paul's words of encouragement to the Thessalonians, 'For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,' and the verse from Psalm 90 which reminds us that we do have time to change our ways, 'So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.' That is Jesus' longing for us, too; that we can shake off apathy, take hold of our God-given opportunities and 'live with him'.

A moment of quiet……

PRAYERS Lord, we pray for the energy to fulfil your hope in us. Help us to take the opportunities you give us, and to make the most of them that we can.

We pray for those who suffer the inequalities of this world. Help us not to be complacent, but to share the world's resources with all who are in need.

We pray for those who fear for the future, those facing job uncertainty or loss, those anxious about the continued impact of the Covid pandemic. We give thanks for the scientists who are preparing the hope of vaccination against the virus, and for those who will administer it.

In a moment of silence, we bring our personal prayers to you; as we pray for those in our minds at this time……

WE SAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

WE SHARE THE GRACE

A FINAL PRAYER

Enable us, O God, so to use the talents entrusted to us both for your glory and the needs of others, that at the last, we may hear that most joyful of voices saying, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord'; for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.
(Jeremy Taylor 1613-1667)