



## 7. Closing Prayer

Compassionate and loving God  
You created the world for us all to share,  
A world of beauty and plenty.  
Create in us a desire to live simply,  
so that our lives may reflect our generosity.

Creator God,  
You gave us responsibility for the earth,  
A world of riches and delight.  
Create in us a desire to live sustainably  
so that those who follow after us  
may enjoy the fruits of your creation.

God of peace and justice  
You give us the capacity to change  
To bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.  
Create in us a desire to act in solidarity  
so that the pillars of injustice crumble  
and those now crushed are set free.

*Linda Jones. CAFOD*



### Meaning of the Advent Wreath:

- The 1st **purple** candle is lit on the 1st Sunday in Advent, Nov 29th, and is the candle of HOPE.
- The 2nd **purple** candle is lit on the 2nd Sunday in Advent, Dec 6th, and is the candle of PEACE.
- The 3rd **pink** candle is lit on the 3rd Sunday in Advent, Dec 13th, also known as Gaudete Sunday, and is the candle of JOY.
- The 4th **purple** candle is lit on the 4th Sunday in Advent, Dec 20th, and is the candle of LOVE.
- The central white candle is lit on Christmas Day as the light of Christ enters the world when Jesus is born.
- The wreath is **evergreen** symbolising everlasting life, and in the shape of a circle because a circle has no beginning and no end. It goes on forever, just like God's love for us.



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*Making Space for Wisdom*  
First Sunday of Advent 2015



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## 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Lord, as each summer comes  
our hearts grow lighter;  
we smile at the fresh leaves and flowers  
and the new stalks pushing up in the fields.  
we look forward to the harvest,  
fruit and grain.

Help us to face life each day  
whatever comes our way  
with the same hope and trust  
in your goodness  
which never lets us down.

May we find joy in sharing  
whatever we gather in  
with those who need it  
and walk the way of peace and justice  
along the path you show us.

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## 2. Gospel text: Luke 21:25-36

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. on the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads because your redemption is drawing near.

He told them this parable: ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

## 3. Quiet Moment

*People can take time to read over the text again for themselves and pick out words or short phrases that strike them and say them out loud. When everyone has had a chance to say their word/phrase, they can briefly say why such a word/phrase struck them, in relation to themselves or their community or the world.*

*(NB This is not a time for argument or discussion)*

## 4. Reflection Questions for Luke 21:25-36

1. What’s sprouting in your life now that gives you joy?
2. What does it mean to say: ‘I trust in you’?
3. What keeps you going in winter?

## 5. Prayers

*Mentioning situations and people we would like to pray for.*

## 6. Background notes for Luke 21:25-36

Luke has Jesus speaking these words just before He is betrayed, arrested and killed. We are confronted with a grim picture of a world that is falling apart, where disasters loom and which shows no hopeful signs of repair. And Jesus does not minimise or soften the picture.

But with an equal insistence, Luke’s listeners are urged not to dull their awareness, but to face the reality, to stand firm, to trust, to be faithful – not because they are not terrified nor mightily confused but because they believe in the power of God and in the new world that is coming to be through the Holy Spirit.

When these terrible events happen they will signal the dawn of a new age. If believers walk forward with the Lord, then the journey is not descent into a landscape of horror but an adventure into a new experience where evil, hatred and injustice is overcome and joy, hope and peace triumph.

Jesus suggests we learn from looking at the figtree ( the last of the trees to sprout in spring time). Winter does not have the last word; out of apparent lifelessness comes life. The future is in God’s hands. This is the basis of our being able to face what comes.

NB Scholars differ about whether Jesus is talking about the horrors to come with the impending seige and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or to the end of time.