

**St Andrew's and St George's West  
Order of Service, 19 December 2021  
Advent 4**

**The Freedom Place**



**Gathering music**

Pastorale from the 'Christmas Concerto' Arcangelo Corelli,  
arr. Christopher Tambling  
J. S. Bach, Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645

**Welcome**

**Introit**

**The Holly and the Ivy**

## Call to worship

Wanderers and explorers,  
dreamers and angels,  
mystery and magi,  
choirs and shepherds,  
we continue to make our way towards  
the star-blessed stable,  
to the light shining  
in the midst of pain and confusion.

We are almost there.  
Come let us worship.

## Hymn Hark the glad sound!

Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes,  
the Saviour promised long;  
let every heart exult with joy,  
and every voice with song!

He comes, the prisoners to relieve,  
in Satan's bondage held;  
the gates of brass before him burst,  
the iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken hearts to bind,  
the bleeding souls to cure;  
and with the treasures of his grace  
to enrich the humble poor.

The sacred year has now revolved,  
accepted of the Lord,  
when heaven's high promise is fulfilled,  
and Israel is restored.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
thy welcome shall proclaim;  
and heaven's exalted arches ring  
with thy most honoured name.

## Opening Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Loving God,  
We give thanks that  
you are here, there and everywhere;  
beyond and beside us,  
around us and within us.  
For your Spirit cannot be bound,  
she flies free.

Liberating Lord,  
life in you is freedom.  
Freedom is your gift and your promise  
yet sometimes we bind ourselves in ways that are wearying.  
We wonder whether we have the energy, or the heart, for the ongoing.

Release us from whatever prison hold us.  
Open the doors by which we separate ourselves from one another and from you.  
Forgive our hesitation to walk through doors opened  
and forgive us when we would rather than stand still than make a mistake.

We bring before you now the ways in which we have denied the freedom you offer this past week.

(silence)

### **Words of Assurance**

As God holds a small bird in all its vulnerability  
so, God holds each one of us  
and the world in loving care.  
Rest in the hand of God for healing  
and soon there will be freedom to fly.

We pray in the name of the one who walked the path to freedom  
and who taught us to pray:

**Our Father in heaven.  
Hallowed be your name  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us in the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

### **God of surprises! – A dialogue**

**Hymn**      God's intended joy

Aged ninety and a hundred years,  
our ancestors were told  
to bring a child into the world  
Despite their being old.  
So Sarah giggled, Abraham laughed,  
And when they birthed a boy  
They called him Laughter as a sign  
that God's intent is joy.

Much later, Miriam beat the drum  
when safely on dry land;  
and David danced before the Lord

that all might understand  
how fears dispelled and hopes restored  
are gifts without alloy,  
all meant to celebrate the truth  
that God's intent is joy.

Not shallow, precious sentiment  
or forced frivolity;  
not novelties to entertain  
or fabricated glee;  
but deep as lakes and bright as light  
Which nothing can destroy,  
and meant for every human heart  
is God's intended joy.

### **Advent candle lighting**

Our theme in the fourth week of Advent is that of liberation. Freedom is one destination of our pilgrimage – freedom in and through our Lord Christ.

Fourth Advent candle is lit

Lord, lead us towards the freedom you offer, and the joy your freedom brings.

For our true freedom if found in you, and your birth at Bethlehem.

### **Sharing a sign of Christ's peace**

Peace be with you  
**and also with you.**

### **Hymn** Christ is our light!

- 1 Christ is our light! the bright and morning star  
covering with radiance all from near and far.  
Christ be our light, shine on, shine on we pray  
into our hearts, into our world today.
- 2 Christ is our love! baptized that we may know  
the love of God among us, swooping low.  
Christ be our love, bring us to turn our face  
and see in you the light of heaven's embrace.
- 3 Christ is our joy! transforming wedding guest!  
Through water turned to wine the feast was blessed.  
Christ be our joy; your glory let us see,  
as your disciples did in Galilee.

### **Scripture Readings**

Luke 1:39-55

The Message

[After the angel left her] Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and travelled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When

Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly,

You're so blessed among women,  
and the babe in your womb, also blessed!  
And why am I so blessed that  
the mother of my Lord visits me?  
The moment the sound of your  
greeting entered my ears,  
The babe in my womb  
skipped like a lamb for sheer joy.  
Blessed woman, who believed what God said,  
believed every word would come true!

And Mary said,

I'm bursting with God-news;  
I'm dancing the song of my Saviour God.  
God took one good look at me, and look what happened—  
I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!  
What God has done for me will never be forgotten,  
the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.  
His mercy flows in wave after wave  
on those who are in awe before him.  
He bared his arm and showed his strength,  
scattered the bluffing braggarts.  
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,  
pulled victims out of the mud.  
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;  
the callous rich were left out in the cold.  
God embraced his chosen child, Israel;  
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.  
It's exactly what he promised,  
beginning with Abraham and right up to now

## **Anthem**

## **Torches**

John Joubert

Torches, torches, run with torches,  
All the way to Bethlehem  
Christ is born and now lies sleeping  
Come and sing your song to him!

Ah, Ro-ro, Ro-ro my baby,  
Ah, Ro-ro, my love, ro-ro  
Sleep you well my heart's own darling  
While we sing you our Ro-ro

Sing my friends, and make you merry  
Joy and mirth and joy again  
Lo, he lives, the King of heaven  
Now and evermore, Amen

## Scripture Reading

## Galatians 5: Selected verses

<sup>1</sup> For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

<sup>13</sup> For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

<sup>22</sup> ...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

**Reflection** True freedom

**Hymn** If you believe and I believe

If you believe and I believe  
and we together pray,  
the Holy Spirit shall come down  
and set God's people free,  
and set God's people free,  
and set God's people free,  
the Holy Spirit shall come down  
and set God's people free.

## Prayers of the People

Lord in your mercy  
**Hear our prayer**

## Hymn Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,  
great David's greater Son!  
Hail, in the time appointed,  
his reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression,  
to set the captive free,  
to take away transgression,  
and rule in equity.

He shall come down like showers  
upon the fruitful earth,  
and love, joy, hope, like flowers,  
spring in his path to birth.  
Before him, on the mountains,  
shall peace, the herald, go;  
and righteousness in fountains  
from hill to valley flow.

O'er every foe victorious,  
he on his throne shall rest,  
from age to age more glorious,  
all blessing and all-blest.  
The tide of time shall never  
his covenant remove ;  
his name shall stand for ever ;  
that name to us is Love.

## **Blessing and Sending**

### **Sending Music**

Organ Sonata in G, Vincenzo Bellini

Worship Leader: Rev. Rosie Magee

Organist and pianist: Alasdair Grant

Readers: Philippa Burgess, Lorna Cammock, James Crerar

Prayers of the People: Veronica Crerar

Advent candle: Marion Watson

The Choir of St Andrew's and St George's West

Technical team: Alison Bruce, Amy Marcham, Philippa Burgess, Susan McLarty, Mary Margaret Scott

Sources:

Image: Rosie Magee

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God of Surprises: Spill the Beans, issue 41, adapted by Adrienne and George Burgess, Rosie Magee.

Scripture readings: New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise stated.

Hymns from Church Hymnary 4<sup>th</sup> Edition except 'God's intended Joy' from *Known Unknowns* by John L Bell and Graham Maule, Wild Goose Publications, 2018

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