



Virtual Service 21 November 2021

Welcome!

(Brian Lima)

“Welcome to today’s virtual service from Milford Baptist Church. We are trying our best to create small outdoor services on our property as government regulations allow. The Leadership Team and I hope this virtual service would speak directly to your heart ... about what you are going through today. We pray that God’s Spirit would open your heart to really know God in new and intimate way. Blessings as you engage with our service today!”

Call to Worship

(Brian Lima)

Psalm 8

¹ *Lord, our Lord,*

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory in the heavens.

² *Through the praise of children and infants*

*you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.*

³ *When I consider your heavens,*

the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars,

which you have set in place,

⁴ *what is mankind that you are mindful of them,*

human beings that you care for them?

⁵ *You have made them a little lower than the angels*

and crowned them with glory and honour.

⁶ *You made them rulers over the works of your hands;*

you put everything under their feet:

⁷ *all flocks and herds,*

and the animals of the wild,

⁸ *the birds in the sky,*

and the fish in the sea,

all that swim the paths of the seas.

⁹ *Lord, our Lord,*

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

“God has created all that we see. Everything! And he has made us rulers over all he has created. Shocking isn’t it! The psalmist agrees when he says, ‘what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?’ And yet it is the truth. We were created to glorify God’s righteous rule over all His creation. Today, let us worship Him as we ought, as children taking part in their father’s work.”

Carol: Angels from the Realms of Glory

(Jo & Brian Lima)

“Let us prepare our hearts before the Lord for this coming Advent season by worshiping together with this first song for the season. It begins, ‘Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o’er all the Earth; Ye who sang creation’s story, Now proclaim Messiah’s birth.’ May the Spirit make these words our own heart’s desire.”

[Angels from the Realms of Glory](#)

Prayer

(Serene Hu)

*“O Lord, our Lord
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
above the heavens.
You are our Rock, our fortress and our deliverer
in whom we take refuge.
You are our shield and the horn of our salvation, our stronghold!
You are worthy of our worship, praise, honour and praise.
Blessed be your Holy Name.*

Yes! Heavenly Father, we are indeed privileged to be able to come together albeit not in the flesh to worship you. You have protected us from Covid-19 in the Milford church community. You have protected us from earthquakes, floods, and famine! Many of our prayers have been answered. Your Holy Spirit has been prompting us and enabling us to love one another and to serve one another. Lord, grant us Love to replace our indifference, Joy to counter sadness, Peace to replace our anxiety, Patience to push out our impulsiveness, kindness to care about others, goodness to see to their needs, faithfulness to keep our promises, gentleness instead of harshness and self-control to lift us beyond self-centeredness.

We give you thanks!

We continue to pray for our government for wisdom, honesty and sound judgement as they lead our nation forward in these troubled times. Lord we pray against this present pandemic. That we will be able to overcome the effects of this virus health wise, and economically. Above all we pray that unbelievers will be moved to seek You oh Lord—for help and for salvation in Jesus. We pray for our front line and essential workers who are putting themselves at risk, to serve in healthcare, education, security and in businesses.

We remember our Christian brothers and sisters in Israel, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Myanmar and many other countries who are facing severe persecution. That they will stay strong in their faith. Lord may you find us faithful and ready when you come—Maranatha!

For Tithes and Offering:

Father you have provided for us, especially in New Zealand with such abundance! We acknowledge that all good things come from you.

We pray that you will give us a generous heart and spirit to give joyfully. Indeed, we thank you for everything. Great is your faithfulness and mercy and grace. We bring but a token to the community and ask that our leaders will be able to use it to your glory.

Amen!

Carol: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

(Jo & Brian Lima)

“Let the Spirit fill you with the truth of this next song of worship. ‘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.’ May we know the rest he provides as we worship him.”

[Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus](#)

Advent Preparation

(Larry Robbins)

[Listen to “Advent Preparation”](#)

“Like Christmas, the true symbolism of advent has been somewhat devalued by the secular world. Advent calendars allow the countdown to Christmas as one opens a different window in the calendar each day in December. Some just have little pictures appropriate to the season, while others have chocolates or other treats. They range in price from a few dollars in the supermarket, to a somewhat ridiculous \$150,000 for four-foot tall Tiffany version!

But what is the true import of the season of Advent?

As many know, December 25th was chosen as the date upon which to celebrate and commemorate the Birth of Christ since the winter solstice (the shortest day in the northern hemisphere) falls around that date. Once this date was accepted, the period leading up to Christmas Day eventually became a period of preparation for a significant season in the Christian calendar, in the same way as Lent leads up to Easter.

‘Advent’ from the latin *adventus* (‘Coming or arrival’) [being a translation of the Greek word *parousia* used for the coming of Christ in human flesh – as well as for His Second Coming] appears to have been adopted in the fourth century as the modern church became established, and by the fifth and sixth century was firmly established in the church calendar.

For the first two weeks of Advent, the ancient church would reflect on the Second Coming. Disciples would “chasten their hearts, confess sins, and spend time hoping for the quick coming of the Lord”. The last two weeks of Advent would then transition to focus on the first *Parousia* - Christ in the manger.

In the modern protestant churches, the dual focus of Advent has largely been lost, and the focus is on the lead up to Christmas.



The Advent wreath first appeared in Germany in 1839 and, like the Christmas tree, probably made its way into the British protestant tradition through the influence of Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria.

The Advent wreath has seen a few iterations and variations on traditions over the years and is interpreted variously in different denominations. The most common Advent wreath tradition, however, involves four candles. A new candle being lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas.

Each candle represents a different aspect of faith. Traditions vary, and different colours of candles are employed – purple in catholic traditions for example.

Various symbolism is assumed for the various elements of the wreath - the candles traditionally representing hope, faith, joy, and peace for example, or representing the period of 4 Sundays waiting during Advent or the 4 centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ. A fifth white candle may be placed in the middle of the wreath and is lit on Christmas Day to celebrate Jesus' birth. Candles of whatever colour may also be seen to symbolise 'the light of the world.'

At MBC we do not generally use a wreath or candles, but with Christians of whatever ilk we do share that feeling of hope and expectation in the period leading up to Christmas Day and the celebration of the fact that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to save that World.”

Carol: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

(Brian Lima)

“This song of worship starts with the words, ‘O come, O come Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here until the Song of God appear.’ The words remind us of the central

importance of God's Son for all humanity. We were all captive to sin and in need of God to save us. Worship God and give Him the praise that is due Him."

[O Come, O Come Emmanuel](#)

Bible Reading

(Di Bartlett)

[Listen to the Reading](#)

Genesis 3:1–13

³ *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"*

² *The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"*

⁴ *"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

⁶ *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

⁸ *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"*

¹⁰ *He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*

¹¹ *And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"*

¹² *The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."*

¹³ *Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"*

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Sermon "As we approach Advent"

(Brian Lima)

[Watch the Sermon](#)

[Read the sermon](#)

Video/song: Mary Did You Know?

(Jo & Brian Lima)

[Mary Did You Know?](#)

Benediction

(Brian Lima)

(May you) grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever. Amen!"

2 Peter 3:18