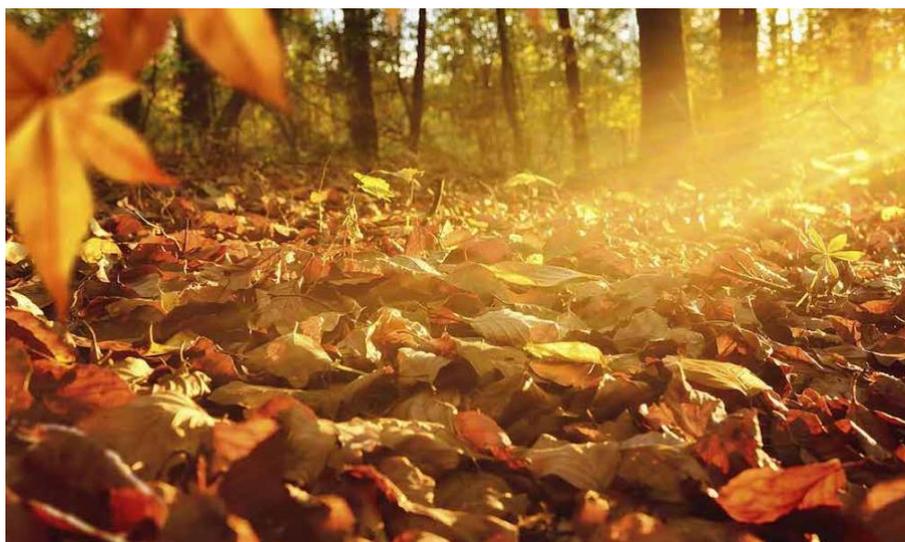




Advent 2 December 8th 2019



[Call to thoughtfulness](#) [Advent Calendar](#) [Rowan Williams](#)

He will come like last leaf's fall.

One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.

One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.

One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

HYMN 277 Hark the glad sound, the Saviour comes



The falling leaves some time to be still, and maybe catch a leaf, a falling thought?

The gathering prayer URC p 102

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us, give us your peace!

ISAIAH 11 1- 10 new life when least expected

HYMN Expansive faith, expansive hope Words Thomas Troeger Tune Forrest Green 304

Like stars positioned far apart
across the skies of night,
too often science, faith, and art
are points of single light
whose powers do not congregate
to burn the dark away
but shining lone and isolate
ignore each other's ray.

And yet, O God, in you exist
whatever things that are,
and by your will they all persist:
the dark, the light, the star,
the cells from which our thoughts are knit,
our science, prayer, and art?
for all their differences they fit
in your expansive heart.

Grant us a mind
more like your mind,
as ample as the skies
where truth that we have yet to find
will help new thoughts arise,
where all the single lights that burn
combine their angled rays
till by their gathered light we learn
to give you thanks and praise.

HymnQuest ID: 83599

Never forget, justice is what love looks like in public



MATTHEW 3 1-12 A shift in perspective; seeing things in a different light

HYMN Face to face Words Andrew Pratt Tune Nettleton 339

This is it, the stark beginning,
all that follows will be new,
lightening dims before the glory,
God is coming into view.
Now the wilderness will blossom,
rock strewn roads be levelled out;
and if you would mask the message,
even stones will rise and shout.

Shaken to the earth's foundations,
like the genesis of old,
God is speaking, who will listen?
Now the story must be told:
rough-hewn, ragged, John is standing
in the centre of the stage;
looking like a mighty prophet,
mortal from another age.

First attracted, then astonished,
people come to see the sight,
heard the challenge of conviction,
some preferred the dark to light.
Others came out from the shadows,
self exposed to human stare,
ridicule or resurrection,
hate and hope prefigured there.

John would challenge them with judgement,
humble them and bring them low,
strip away the sad veneer,
tear away all pomp and show.
And in some imagined present
now we stand and meet his eye,
in this moment judged? Forgiven?
Live for Christ? If need be die?





A peal of hope

OFFERTORY HYMN 359 He came down that we may have love

Primary Wonder Denise Levertov (1923–1997)

Days pass when I forget the mystery. Problems insoluble and problems offering their own ignored solutions jostle for my attention, they crowd its antechamber along with a host of diversions, my courtiers, wearing their coloured clothes; cap and bells.

And then
once more the quiet mystery
is present to me, the throng's clamour
recedes: the mystery that there is anything, anything at all,
let alone cosmos, joy, memory, everything, rather than void:
and that, O Lord, Creator, Hallowed One, You still, hour by hour sustain it.

The sharing of bread and wine; gifts falling from heaven, rooted in earth

HYMN 285 The Angel Gabriel

Lord, as we rise to leave this haven of worship, called to the risk of unprotected living,
willing to be at one with all your people;

Lord, we ask for courage.

For all the strains with living interwoven, for the demands each day will make upon us
and for the love we owe today's world;

Lord, make us cheerful.

Give us eyes for ways to serve you; make us alert when calm is interrupted,
ready and wise to interpret and use the unexpected;

Lord, sharpen our insight.

Lift from our lives the blanket of convention, give us the nerve to lose our lives to others,
to be your Church through death to new life;

Lord of all ages, touch us today!

The Blessing after which we sing

**May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place
May the Love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace**