

As we begin this journey of Advent we ask Lord that it may be both a journey of repentance and of hope. Repentance for all that we have done as individuals and collectively to mar your world and hope that in the mystery that is the birth of your Son we may find forgiveness and be welcomed by angels as we kneel together in adoration beside your manger in Bethlehem.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Lord we pray for the wide-world church at this time that it may act as a beacon of Light to the world. A Light that exposes the greed and the selfishness, the injustice and the exploitation and in their place reveals in the birth of your Son the true joys of your Kingdom. The joys of justice, mercy and love for all your children. We pray too for the work of all the churches in the Leith Hill Benefice at this time and ask that all their careful preparations may be blessed by you so that our Christmas services may glorify the wonder and mystery of that time and bring a sure hope to all who participate.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our Prayer.**

Lord who is the Prince of Peace we pray for all those places where war rages, the innocent are killed and homes and ways of life destroyed. We think especially of those living in the Tigray region of Ethiopia where there is widespread bloodshed and reports of massacres and of the people of the Yemen where the UN reports that after year upon year of war twenty million people need humanitarian assistance of whom half are children. Help us to be people of peace in all our relationships always ready to forgive, always ready to confess to our own anger and intolerance towards others.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Lord we give our most grateful thanks for all those who have worked using their immense scientific knowledge and with such dedication to produce effective vaccines against Covid 19. We pray that these vaccines can be made available not just to those living in the richest countries but may be distributed equably throughout all countries and thus bring the pandemic under control. May we too always be ready to use our gifts in your service.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Lord of love we pray for all who suffer in any way at this time in mind, body or spirit recognizing the additional suffering that the pandemic has caused among those too frightened to report their symptoms and those whose mental health has been so badly impaired. We give thanks for all those doctors, nurses and care assistants who work often to the point of exhaustion to bring comfort and healing. Teach us Lord also to be people of healing if only by a smile or a quiet word or touch.

Now in a time of silence let us lift into Christ's scarred hands all those on our hearts and minds today for his healing touch.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

And finally, a prayer for these coming weeks of Advent as we prepare to greet the Prince of Peace our Shepherd and our Saviour.

Lord, instil into our hearts the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of compassion. Grant us insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with dedication to justice, to need with the sharing of self, to war with peacemaking. Amen.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord.