



Light of Hope

ADVENT is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (*adventus*) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth, they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgment.

The First Sunday of Advent also starts the new liturgical year. The liturgical calendar of the Anglican Church enables us as a worshipping community to remember, appreciate and celebrate the entire life of Jesus Christ each year. The gospel is the central focus of the Christian calendar. It encompasses six major seasons, namely, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Trinity. The period stretching from Advent to Easter follows the life of Christ, with Pentecost concluding the Easter season seven weeks later. Between Pentecost and the next Advent

is a long period called "ordinary time." This is the "time of the church", where the church is reminded of her calling in the world, fulfilling the mission of God until the next season of Advent and Christmas, which "functions as the proclamation of the Parousia."

Some comments on the collect for the first Sunday of Advent (front page of bulletin). Thomas Cranmer employs the splendidly effective imagery of darkness and light, coupled with Christ's glorious return at the end of our time. This collect draws on similar phrases in the epistle from Romans 13, and anticipates also the gospel from Matthew 21 that describes Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem. This prayer encourages us to have a posture of both penitence and anticipation during this season.

The theme chosen for Christmas this year is **Light of Hope**. This is indeed a dark pandemic year. May the light of Christ shine through our lives and bring hope to many.

