“So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming.” Mark 13:35

“It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope.” Pope Benedict XVI

Be Still
- Light the first candle on your Advent wreath or light a candle as a reminder of Christ’s presence.
- Take a moment to allow whatever is in your heart to rise, and offer your thoughts to the loving care of the Lord.
- As we focus on the Advent candle, what memories of the year rise up for you?
- For what do you give thanks?

Sing or listen
St Augustine famously said, that when we sing our prayer, we pray twice. Spend some time in prayer singing or listening to these Advent hymns: Hark, tis the watchman’s cry and Wait for the Lord. You can also listen to our full Advent playlist here.

Gathering Prayer
Loving God,
Awaken our hearts as we keep this Advent time; allow us to draw near to you and to be attentive to your gracious presence. Awaken our hearts as we keep this Advent time: that we may make room anew for Emmanuel. Amen.

Gospel (Mark 13:33-37)
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling aboard: he has gone from home and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!”
The Gospel of the Lord
To read and pray with all the readings of the day, see here.

Ponder
After the first reading of this Sunday’s Gospel, what words or phrases struck you from the passage? Re-read the Gospel. Take a moment of silence to reflect upon how God is speaking through this text. Noting down some responses to the following questions may assist with reflection.

Today’s Gospel reminds us that we must be ready for Christ’s coming:
- Reflecting on the previous weeks, where has God been present? Have I been ‘alert’ to God’s presence and grace working in my life?
- As we begin this journey of Advent, what might God be asking of you during this time of preparation? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and lead your prayer.
- How can I make extra room in my life for God this Advent? What are some practical things I can introduce into my day that will help me be receptive and responsive to God’s voice?
- Am I alert and watchful for the needs of others? Are there relationships in my life where I need to practice kindness, mercy, and forgiveness?

Further reflection
If you would like more time for reflection, you might like to view the following resources here:
- Advent Voices
- Scripture reflection
- Real Conversations

Respond
Loving God,
As we keep this Advent time, awaken our hearts to goodness and hope. Help us to hear your voice. Strengthen our voices as we work towards building a world where justice reigns. Through Christ, our Lord, Amen.