

St Werburgh's Sunday Newsletter No.37 It's the start of Advent! We have a lot of information to share with you this week regarding Advent and how we can make the most of this season together. Let's make this year's Advent as positive as it can be!

Rev Kate's reflection

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.'

Those words are taken from the book of Ecclesiastes and are reminiscent for me of today's Gospel.

There is a time for everything.

This morning we begin the season of Advent, a time of darkness, a time of waiting, a time when we realise – as we have so often this year - that we cannot save ourselves.

Life's dark seasons are threshold moments. I recently spoke about finding ourselves in a collective liminal space, a place where we have been forced to leave behind our comfort zone, but cannot see what lies ahead or imagine what life will look like even in a month's time.

For far too many, this feels more like a season of lament.

I have to be honest, I struggled to find the right words that wouldn't sound like platitudes this morning so I will, if I may, speak from my own experience of God.

I believe there comes a point in everyone's life where all we can do is surrender. At some point our world disintegrates, life changes, or we are seemingly plunged into darkness. We believe these experiences are the end of hope. They come at different moments for everyone, often unexpectedly, always unwelcome. This year, they have come collectively and individually. We are all experiencing the pain of loss of the familiar. We have been forced to take a long hard look at reality and reality has been found wanting.

That's when the time of darkness may fall.

That's when we need to surrender totally to God.

This year, in a sense, it feels like our time of waiting began some months ago and our season of hope has been a long time coming. But when it seems like creation itself is disintegrating, Jesus tells us to learn the lesson of the fig tree. To know that summer is near. To look for signs of hope.

In the season of Advent time may seem to slow down as we wait expectantly, asking questions of God that go unanswered.

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What we do know is that Christ comes to us in the darkness. Healing often takes place in the shadows, in the messy parts of our lives that we would rather hide, from ourselves, from others and from God. If we allow them to these moments invite us deeper into the divine. They remind us that we won't always get the answers we seek. We don't see everything that's possible. We aren't in control.

There is no other way than through. There is no other way out than Christ. In my own seasons of lament, I have tried to fix my gaze on the light in the darkness. To know that we have a God who is unchanging, to gaze up at the 'mystery of winter skies' and see God's 'starlit beauty', poetic words taken from our own liturgy. In those moments I believe we are offered the briefest of glimpses into the divine mystery, of cosmic hope and the eternal presence of Christ.

The seasons of life will continue to ebb and flow. There will still be times when we mourn and times of hope.

Keep awake, Jesus tells us.

When we believe that darkness is our permanent season, perhaps that's when we have fallen asleep.

This season will end.

Together if we stay awake, we can create a new season of joy, a time to heal, a time of people coming together in the midst of separation, of supporting those most vulnerable and in need, of helping those who cannot help themselves. We can rejoice that something new, beautiful and inclusive can emerge out of this time.

Being careful, caring for all @ St Werburgh's

Worship in church over Advent and Christmas

Following the Government announcement that after Lockdown Derby will be in Tier 3, public worship is allowed. (Subject to permission being granted by the Bishop).

Sunday Parish Mass will resume on Sunday 6th December and Wednesday Mass at 10.30am will resume on 9th December. Thursday evening will remain a livestreamed service only. Full COVID-19 guidelines will be followed: we will maintain social distancing, abide by the test and trace procedure, have our temperature taken and wear a mask. It is expected that this arrangement will be in place for a number of weeks if not months.

There will be no Nine Lessons and Carols, Christingle, Children's Nativity Service or Midnight Mass this year in church. Although the Children's Nativity Service and Midnight Mass will take place online on the Parish Facebook page. Great love to you all, Fr J.

Advent Begins

Countdown to Christmas

There's something very special about the Advent Sundays leading up to when Jesus was born. Join in with these activities as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas – and as we remember the Comfort and Joy that Jesus brings to us all.



Date	What brings joy today?	Who needs comfort today?
29th Nov, the First Sunday of Advent	Counting down with excitement Look at your Advent Calendar – just 2 days until you can open the first door! Give a jump for joy or fist bump your family at the excitement of looking forward.	Those who are anxious about Christmas Look at the floor. Some people are anxious about Christmas. Ask God to be close to them in the coming days.
6th Dec, the Second Sunday of Advent	Being able to give presents to others Christians sometimes call Jesus 'God's gift to us' – that's why we give gifts to each other at Christmas. Make a list of the people your family will give gifts to this Christmas. Thank God for each person.	Those worried about money Christmas can be expensive. Some people are worried that they do not have enough money for gifts or food. Could your family help by giving a gift to your local foodbank?
13th Dec, the Third Sunday of Advent	Access to water Count the number of taps in your home. Pour yourself a glass of water and give thanks for access to clean water for washing, cooking, drinking, and cleaning.	Children of the world Pour a glass of water. Add a teaspoon of mud to it, stir and place it in your kitchen. In some parts of the world children only have access to water like this. Each time you see your glass today, pray for agencies like Water Aid, trying to bring clean water to children across the world.
20th Dec, the Fourth Sunday of Advent	Health and people who care Draw a rainbow. Around it write the names of your local doctors, hospitals and pharmacies. Colour a heart by each one to show you are thankful for them.	People who are feeling sad Find a sticking plaster. Draw a sad face on it. Stick the plaster onto your bathroom mirror to remind you to pray for people who are sick or sad.
Carol Service	The gift of music What's your favourite Christmas Carol? Record your family singing it and send it to your wider family and friends.	Those who can't get to church Some people will be sad that they can't go to a carol service. Make a poster of your favourite carol to put in the window to cheer everyone up.
Christmas Eve	Everything that makes Christmas exciting Gather round your Christmas tree and look at the decorations. Tell each other which is your favourite and why.	Those who are home alone Do you know someone who will be home alone this Christmas? Surprise them with a phone or video call.
Christmas Day	The gift of God's love in Jesus Today we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Light a candle (safely) and sing Happy Birthday for Jesus before you open your presents. (Remember to blow the candle out!)	People who have no homes Some people don't have their own homes where they can celebrate Christmas. Pray for charities like Crisis who will provide safe space for them to eat and sleep today.

The Church of England Countdown to Christmas continues past Christmas Day itself, go to the following link to view the second page of ideas which run from Boxing Day to Epiphany https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/COFE_02977_AdventCalendar-ComfortandJoy_v4.pdf

This information will also be available on the church website on the Advent page.

Advent for children and families

Reverse Advent Calendar

Thinking of ways to involve our young people, families and grown-ups together, to make Advent meaningful and fun; why not do a reverse advent collection from the 1st December? The idea is that everyday you put something in a box every time you open your advent calendar. (*You don't have to have an advent calendar to join in*) you can just put an item in your box or bag. You could decorate your box in whatever way you wish with your child and talk about what you are going to be doing.

Things that are really great are: tea, coffee, hot chocolate, sugar, biscuits, chocolate, confectionary, pot noodles, tinned veg, tinned meat, crisps and bathroom goods like toothpaste/brushes, shower gel, deodorant and feminine hygiene products. You can talk to your child about where food comes from, who might find it hard to buy food and what are things like toothpaste important for... You can chat about how your child feels when they get their favourite sweets or toys and how good a family or homeless person may feel when they see what your child has helped to collect! Bring the box into church between 11am - 3pm after Christmas.

There's a Calendar to help you pick stuff for your collection on the Advent page of the website.



Parish Facebook Advent Calendar / making everyone know they are loved..

As part of our journey through advent, we would like to invite you to join us on Facebook everyday as we open our virtual advent calendar. Sorry no chocolate in this one! But we do have an idea on what you can do....it would be great if you could make a picture or

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write a poem or prayer or even a story based on the advent calendar pics which we can then send to people who live on their own or who are isolated. It's a wonderful way to make people who are feeling lonely know that we care about them. All you have to do is place your art, your poem or whatever in an envelope with a message. Please leave the envelope open and you can post it in the post box inside the doors at church on your way to school or on your way home from school. Church is open 8am - 4pm Mondays to Fridays and 11am - 3pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Nativity in Pictures

During children's church we are very often getting creative and the children all enjoy sharing their works of art at the alter on a Sunday. Covid has unfortunately meant that we have been deprived of this joy but we would love it if we could share some of that joy again over the Christmas period. In the newsletter each week on the run up to Christmas there will be a picture template for the children to work their magic on and get creative. The pictures will all be different scenes from the story of the nativity.

We then hope to be able to display these outside the church before Christmas so that we can bring a little colour to the railings and we can all look and admire their efforts in a socially distanced way. The children are also welcome to create their own works of art that are not in the templates along the Christmas theme. The children can post their pictures in the post box inside the church doors, church is open 8am - 4pm Mondays to Fridays and 11am - 3pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

This week's picture is of the angel, please find it at the end of the newsletter.



Advent for Grown Ups too...

Reading Isaiah

Each day a chapter from Isaiah is being emailed out as well as being read on the FaceBook page; let Fr J know if you want to be added to the list.

ISAIAH WhatsApp group... you can join in discussion, ask questions to help you as you read.

ISAIAH LECTIO GROUP - on Thursdays at 8pm. 3rd, 10th, 17th December. A Lectio reflection group focusing on passages from the Prophet Isaiah. If you want to join (via Zoom) get in touch with Rev. Kate 0776347943 and she will arrange for you to get the

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zoom link. Lectio bible study is a beautiful way to engage with scripture, if you've never done it and have questions then ask Fr J or Rev. Kate but go on, this year of all years we can do Advent well, so have a go.

ISAIAH STUDY GROUP - 7.30pm Wednesday 9th & 16th December. 2 sessions (45 mins each) looking at how, why and when Isaiah was written and some ideas about what the Prophet might be saying to us today. Contact Fr J if you want to join in. The group will be on Zoom and the invitation will be available from Fr J.

There are more details regarding all of these events on the Advent page of the website.

Daily Prayer for Advent with the Journey Community

10am each day - contact Rev. Cath if you'd like to join in and she can send you the zoom link. Her contact number is 07745735060 or email her at chollywell@btinternet.com A booklet to accompany the group is available on the Advent page of the website.

Advent and Christmas Charity

In last week's newsletter we asked if anyone had any good ideas about fund-raising this year for our Charity Appeal which is to support Aspire and our Food Bank at St Mark's. We have already had some ideas and three of them You can do something about now to support:

Christmas Wreaths and Table Decorations for sale:

Small fresh circular wreaths £6.50 each

Large Fresh Circular Wreaths £7.50 each

Crosses £7.50 each.

Artificial Table decorations £5 - £7 depending on size

Fresh Table decoration with candle £7.50

Please contact Shirley Donovan to discuss needs and order. Mobile - 07582347533

Shirley also has a limited amount of home-made Christmas chutney - £2.00 per jar

Home-made Piccalilli - £2.75 per jar

I look forward to hearing from you all, Shirley 😊

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Homemade Christmas Cards available in church at the entrance - just leave a donation!

I think this has gone in but there is some additional info about choosing St Philips even if it doesn't come up as your nearest store ie postcode search

Support St Philips at the co-op

If you shop at the co-op please and have a membership card please consider selecting 'St Philips' as your chosen charity cause.

<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/49800>

If you are not a member you can sign up online or in store. We are developing the church for community use and need to refurbish the kitchen and cafe area. If you live outside the area or the church, then your closest co-op may offer different charities but you can go online with the co-op and put in the postcode DE214JF to find us that way and select us as your chosen charity.

We really want to open up to the community, chatting with residents and in meeting with other community organisations this has come out as a much needed provision in the area.

THANK YOU-- Rev Sarah

Now this will not apply to everyone, but I do ask you read this and ask yourself if you could do the same...

This week I received this amazing email from a member of our congregation at St Werburgh's, **"Like many thousands of older people in the area I have received a nice letter from Boris telling me he is sending me £100 winter fuel payment. Since this is external to my regular budget I am happy to donate it to the Christmas Appeal. There could be many others like me..."** I think for those who know they can afford to use the winter fuel payment in that way that is a very generous gift. If you would like to do the same contact Sue Clewes in confidence and she will give you the bank details for the appeal. If only 15 people felt able to do likewise, we would hit our target and thank you so much to the person who felt moved to get in touch and make that donation.

Fr J.

Toy Appeal - THANK YOU

A big thankyou to Pauline and Elaine for organising such a brilliant Toy Appeal and to everyone who donated gifts, cards and money. A brilliant effort that will make a real difference in the lives of a huge number of children and families. Well done everyone and again, well done Pauline and Elaine.

PCC

PCC meeting via Zoom next Sunday at 11.30am. THIS MEETING WILL BE AN HOUR MAXIMUM!!

Photo time

The children have been getting out and about...



Autumn and Rupert went to Calke Abbey



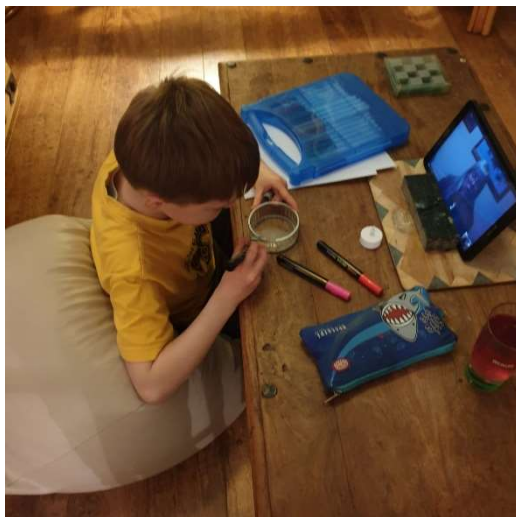
Dora tried out the new bridge over the A52



Bea and Gabby have got a new addition to their family, Cookie the cat



'Baby' Edward has been learning about animals whilst 'big' Edward has been making a diya (for Diwali) at Cubs on Zoom.



Alexis is getting ready for Christmas.

Advent Wordsearch

Q J A P T F N T N E V D A E E K J
 Z H T H J X E U U C W Z M I Q M F
 S W G B S U P L D W H M H M G R G
 D I V K N U A T D N A R H O C C L
 L U E B E O W Z R N O Z I Q P R P
 C I Z K E L D F U E A O P S E E B
 H M I F R D Q E A P S C D E T E N
 R Z Y V G D L S O N G H A I A S I
 I C W M R B E T H L E H E M D V C
 S R Y M E O E L E S U S E J N R E
 T O A E V N S E R A P E R P E C L
 M I D S E F S N A S A A J O E X E
 A V N S W R E A T H N V V U R S B
 S A U I B O J V G G N Z N T G O R
 V S S A W V K E E D V Z A Z B L A
 F V X H R K C L C I Y L P G O D T
 I H M T B Y U V K G U L F H O Z E

emmanuel jesse bethlehem angel light

hope green evergreens god candle

wreath sunday celebrate savior christ

christmas messiah isaiah prepare jesus

advent

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Please find the angel picture overleaf for your child/grandchild/niece/nephew/neighbor to colour in, do not forget to drop it off at church so that we can hang them from the railings during Advent.

