

Reflection for Advent Sunday

One of my most enduring memories of the run up to Christmas is of the huge pre-decorations clean-up my mother used to engage in. She was determined that every skirting board, every shelf and cupboard would be spotless and dust free before the tree went up. This initial cleaning was swiftly followed by intermittent bursts of yet more hoovering and dusting whenever seasonal visitors were expected. To me, it seemed like mops and sweeping brushes had a great deal to do with the birth of Jesus!

Advent is certainly a time when we are invited to 'clean house' spiritually. To notice the forgotten corners of our relationship with God and gently clear away any cobwebs which might be lurking. And yet this is not the hasty, breathless, slightly desperate scrubbing done in expectation of a guest we're trying to impress or whose opinion we fear. It is instead done as an act of love.

The King whose birth we are preparing for is neither expecting nor wanting to find a spiritual kitchen floor he can eat his dinner off. He knows us and loves us and longs to spend time with us just as we are, even if there are messy bits we can't yet bear to touch. When your best friend comes to lunch, yes, you might Hoover and tidy up because you care, but you know they would still come even if it was a mess. And perhaps with their help, with Jesus' help, we can start to clear those cobwebs.

Rev'd Carys

CAROL SERVICE

Sunday 8th December at 6pm in the Church.
Mince pies and mulled wine in the Hall after.
Come and celebrate with us!

NEXT SUNDAY 8.12.2024 2nd Sunday of Advent
10.30 in the Hall

READINGS: OT Baruch 5: 1-9
NT Philippians 1: 3-11
GOSPEL Luke 3: 1-6



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St Thomas, Exeter

1st December 2024

Advent Sunday

10.30 in the Hall

5pm Evening Worship by Zoom

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

209 Hills of the north, rejoice

529 Wake, O wake! With tidings thrilling

307 Lo, he comes with clouds descending

Tuesday 3rd December

7.30pm House Group at Helen's house.

Wednesday 4th December

10am Walsingham Mass

Thursday 5th December

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter. 19 Maple Rd

Details from Jenny. 01392 498725

3-5pm Warm Space in the Hall *postponed*

Friday 6th December

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting



Collect

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Jeremiah 33: 14-16

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Luke 21: 25-36

'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.' Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

Post Communion

O Lord our God, make us watchful and keep us faithful as we await the coming of your Son our Lord; that, when he shall appear, he may not find us sleeping in sin but active in his service and joyful in his praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

NOTICES

Winter Festival. A wonderful amount of money was raised for the Church. £600 in the collection boxes and £260 on the sale of cakes, chutneys and refreshments.

Three trees have been planted in the Churchyard. Two apple trees; Cox's Orange Pippin and Scrumptious, one Concorde pear tree. Community money was used to buy these. Thanks to Helen Pearce and Ian Totterdell.

Support for Pensions on Low Incomes

An estimated 880,000 low-income pensioner households eligible for pension credit currently fail to claim it and a deadline is approaching. The government says it is worth an average £3,900 a year, but it is also a gateway to other financial support such as winter fuel payments. If you know a pensioner on a low income, please encourage them to check if they could be eligible for pension credit. This can be done online through www.gov.uk/pension-credit:calculator or people can get advice via phone on weekdays 0800 99 1234

Warm Space will return on Thursdays, from 3pm in the Hall. Tea, coffee and biscuits and a chance to meet other people. A start date will be announced once the administration has been completed. **Also there are more spaces for people to volunteer. See Carys or Ian.** Watch this space for details.

Future dates & local info: 8 December 6pm Carol Service St Thomas Church with Gracechurch; **10 December** Exwick Community Centre 7.30pm A Taste of Christmas Mummers Play and mini-panto; **14 December—5 January** Winterwood at Theatre Alibi, volunteers needed.