

## Reflection for Advent 2

I wonder what the attraction is about Carol Services? The glitter can wear a bit thin if you are involved in quite a number, and I did used to get tired of singing about Santa being stuck up or down the chimney, but they are definitely part of the cultural landscape; even if, perhaps especially if, you are not a regular churchgoer.

They almost speak of a different age when the Church was part of the warp and weft of social life, and we have a nostalgia for that – a bit like for banks and butchers on every high street. Life seemed simpler and safer then, and we hark back to it, slightly reluctant to admit that on-line banking is very convenient and the supermarket cheaper for meat.

For me and many others, they also contain something of childhood, an age of innocence when letters were written to Father Christmas and presents received and stockings filled. It's enough to hear the first notes of some carols and the opening lines of some of the Old Testament readings from Isaiah to take us straight back there; or the sonorous tones of a headmaster intoning "In the beginning was the Word" to be school pupils again.

The wonder, joy and delight of a childhood Christmas are nourishing and wholesome, provided we're not stuck there. Can we use these as a springboard to something more adult: the light that cuts through the darkness, the value of vulnerability, God's desire to be human because God love us so much.

Do come this year on **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm in the Church** to our joint Carol Service with Gracechurch, and do dress very warmly.

*Fr David*

## 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 15.12.2024** 3rd Sunday of Advent  
10.30am in the Hall 5pm with Zoom

**READINGS:** OT Zephaniah 3: 14-20



NT Philipians 4: 4-7

GOSPEL Luke 3: 7-18

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# St Thomas, Exeter

**8th December 2024**

**Second Sunday of Advent**

**10.30am in the Hall**

**6pm Carol Service in Church**

### Today

**Sung Eucharist**

*Hymn Numbers*

*401 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry*

*428 Purify my heart*

*98 Come, thou long-expected Jesus*

### Tuesday 10th December

**7.30pm** House Group at Helen's house.

### Wednesday 11th December

**10am** Holy Communion (BCP)

### Thursday 12th 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 13th December

**9.30am** Morning Prayer

**10am** Staff Meeting

### Saturday 14th December

**9am** Men's Breakfast in the Sawyers



## Collect

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, now and for ever.

**Amen**

## Baruch 5: 1-9

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. For God will give you evermore the name, 'Righteous Peace, Godly Glory' Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look towards the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

## Philippians 1: 3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until

now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

## Luke 3: 1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."'

## Post Communion

Father in heaven, who sent your Son to redeem the world and will send him again to be our judge: give us grace so to imitate him in the humility and purity of his first coming that, when he comes

again, we may be ready to greet him with joyful love and firm faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

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## 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](http://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: 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.