

Advent Sunday Reflection, *Preparing for Hope*: Mark 13: 24-37

We've spent a bit of time in the run up to Advent, these November Sundays including Christ the King, with the theme of 'preparing to prepare' – a warning if you like of things to come. And now we've reached Advent, we've opened a new Church year with the Gospel of St Mark, and our preparations become more serious.

If I asked the question, 'what are we preparing for?' you would all know the answer. In some form, a mixture of Christmas, the birth of Jesus, the Word made flesh, a change; as the U A Fanthorpe poem has it *From BC to AD*.

It's a truism, a cliché, at present to say that we live in difficult times – war, violence, uncertainty, high cost of ordinary living and so on. Our Christian response is one of hope – that the birth of Jesus brings hope, not in a magical way, not in a way that makes these other things disappear, but in a way which allows us to see and understand differently. The bad things are not the end of the story.

So this season of Advent, I wonder if preparing for hope might be our theme, which includes refusing to be overwhelmed by bad news, and finding the good in the smallest of things: finding God already all around us.

Fr David



NEXT SUNDAY 10.12.2023 2nd Sunday of Advent
10.30am in the Hall

READINGS: OT Isaiah 40: 1-11
NT 2 Peter 3: 8-15a
GOSPEL Mark 1: 1-8



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St Thomas, Exeter

3rd December 2023

Advent Sunday

10.30am in Hall

Today

10.30am in the Hall

Hymn Numbers

49 Awake, awake, fling off the night

53 Be still, for the presence of the Lord

307 Lo, he comes with clouds descending

12noon Holy Baptism of Evie & Jacob Braund

Tuesday 5th December

7.30pm House Group 'Friends & Enemies'. 6
Painter's Court.

Wednesday 6th December

10am Walsingham Mass

Thursday 7th December

9.30—11am St Thomas Tots

10.30am-12noon Knit & Natter, 19 Maple Rd

Details from Jenny on 01392 498725

3-5pm Warm Space in the Hall

Friday 8th December

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 9th December

9am Men's Breakfast in the Sawyers.



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**

Isaiah 64: 1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

1 Corinthians 1: 3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark 13: 24-37

Jesus said to Peter, James, John and Andrew, 'But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

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

Community Larder There will be a collection box in church on Sundays for food donations. The need remains great so please be mindful of our wider community.

House Group will run a weekly Advent Course beginning on 28th November and finishing on 19th December. We shall meet at 7.30pm at the home of John Payne, 6 Painter's Court. We will be looking at the film 'Miracle on 34th Street'.

Our Methodist minister Julian Albrow and his wife Lesley celebrate their **50th Wedding Anniversary** on the 1st December. There will be a service of thanksgiving at the Methodist Church on the 2nd December at 3pm. All are very welcome.

Revd Sarah is leading an Advent Quiet Service at St David's Church on **Tuesday, 5th December at 6pm**. It is aimed especially at women.

The next **Hall Committee** Meeting is on 10th December after the service.

