

A few words from the Vicar

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)

The beginning of December always seems too soon to write about Christmas. Conceivably, you could be reading this before Advent Sunday, which this year is on 2nd December. Yet, if I leave writing about Christmas until next month, it will be too late.

Anyway, Christmas is coming so, inevitably December will be taken up with preparing for all those celebrations; shopping, sending Christmas cards, wrapping presents, putting up the decorations, decorating the tree. It is a busy time, especially for those who still have performance targets to meet at work (one last effort) or whose jobs are extra busy during December.

In Church December is a time of preparation too, but of spiritual preparation. For Advent is a season of expectation as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus as one of us. Hence all the Christmassy things we do this month. But, during Advent we also look forward to Jesus' return as our judge at the end of time.

So, Advent has a dual spiritual focus. We both prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth but, at the same time, we also remind ourselves that we will face divine judgement and therefore ought to adjust our lives accordingly. Advent is a mixture of joy and penitence and our worship this month will reflect both.

We start Advent as we mean to go on, with our Advent Sunday Communion on 2nd December, followed by Christingle at 4pm on the same day. We have Christmas Parade on the 9th and our Carol Service at 6.30pm on the 16th. We focus on the Advent themes on the 23rd before Christmas finally kicks in good and proper on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

A complete list of our December services can be found in the Parish Diary.

I know December is a busy time for everyone, but the Advent disciplines of prayer and penitence are essential for personal spiritual growth. Therefore, over this month I would like to encourage everyone to set aside extra time in busy diaries for prayer and personal confession.

In my October article I discussed the importance of prayer and encouraged everyone to devote more time to this important spiritual discipline. Specifically, I encouraged prayer to ask God to: shower His blessings upon us; guide us in mission; and bless us with funding for the building project and to enhance our sound system. I also suggested we ought to be bold and ask God to bless us with a spiritual revival in this country.

Well, I continue to pray for all these things. During Advent it would be good if you could join your prayers with mine by praying for these things too. But, whilst we are at it, in our prayers, let us also give joyful thanks to God that Christ our Saviour was born on that first Christmas Day!

Have a blessed Advent and a merry Christmas!

Every Blessing

Dave