

Waiting....for the Coming of God in Jesus Christ

A series of themed addresses at the Parish Eucharist Sunday service

10 am each Sunday in Advent at Holy Trinity, Berwick



With the busy-ness of our daily lives, it's easy to see worship and the Eucharist as simply a weekly opportunity for us to reach out to God. Sundays might even be seen as the human equivalent of pulling into the service station to fill up with fuel, or now to speed along to the charging point to refill our batteries. For those less attuned to church, such needs may not even be part of their landscape.

Even in the shops, however, Advent brings its reminders. Candles counting down the days to Christmas and Advent Calendars - nowadays with 'a chocolate a day' lead us to expect *something*. In Germany, Advent is a richly celebrated season – wooden candelabra bedeck the streets, street markets sell sweetmeats and spices, and warm glühwein is the order for the day to warm our hearts, our spirits and much else!

But what are they celebrating? They're celebrating a season of expectation - it's not simply the run-up to Christmas. It's a season of celebration in itself. It's a reminder that we don't need to find God, for God is always first coming to us. So this Advent, four of us are hoping to remind us all that in four different ways, we patiently wait for God to come in Jesus Christ. We anticipate this as moving from darkness to light, as the coming of God's Word, as the coming of the forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist and finally, on the last Sunday of Advent, we always remember Mary, who herself anticipated what had been promised to her by the angel - for, she would be the instrument for the coming of the Lord.

3 December Advent I Waiting.....to be drawn from Darkness to Light

The great Collect for Advent which is set to be read every day till Jesus' birth, perhaps the greatest of all Thomas Cranmer's beautiful collects, begins 'Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light.'

Advent, a season of penitence, then, when God's grace will help cast off the works of darkness and put upon us the armour of light.

10 December Advent II Waiting.....on God's Word

This used to be called *Bible Sunday*, when we give thanks for the Scriptures and learn to understand them better. But, John, at the beginning of his gospel, sees the Word being made incarnate in Jesus. 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God and the same was in the beginning with God..' For us, the Word comes in the form of a person, and not just as paragraphs of 'words'.

17 December Advent III Waiting.....with John the Baptist, the Forerunner

Some saw John as the coming Messiah, but John said that was not even worthy to unbutton the shoes of he who is coming after him. Like the prophets of old, John too calls us to be patient. God is coming to us, and as never before. John is the forerunner, and...although he too had his followers, he points forward. Don't be impatient is his message. Keep waiting...

24 December Advent IV. Waiting....with Mary the Mother of the Lord.

From early on, with Simeon's message, Mary knows that her life is not to be just like any other life. The child she expects will transform our world for, through Mary, God comes among us as one of us. It will not all be a bed of roses, for Mary is told a sword will pierce her heart. But in Jesus, all humanity is embraced and our sufferings will be redeemed but for the Saviour it will mean an infinite costliness.

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