



Link Up!



'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.' John 1:14

Coming up in December:

On **Sunday 7th December** we will continue our Advent series with the theme 'Anticipate'. Rev Penny Draper from St George's Oakdale C of E will be leading our service and this will include our monthly communion time.

Then on **Sunday 14th December** we will be looking at our Advent theme of 'Prepare' with Ken leading the service

On **Sunday 21st December** we will hold our Carol Service and will look at the final Advent theme of 'Reflect'. Visitors are welcome to join us for this service.

We will hold our **Christmas Day Family Service on Thursday 25th December** and **this starts, as usual, at 10.30am**. Another opportunity to invite visitors to join us.

The **final Sunday of December (28th)** will be a Combined Service with Parkstone Baptist Church using the theme we have used in the past of 'Looking Back, Moving Forward'. **The service at Parkstone starts at 10.30am**. If anyone needs a lift to this, please let Janet know.

Publicity leaflets are available for you to use to invite your friends and family along to our Christmas services and you will find copies of these in the entrance lobby, hall and lounge.

If you were at our service on the first Sunday of Advent, you'll know that during this Advent season I'm asking us to consider the following words: Anticipate, Prepare, Reflect.

The word Advent comes from the Latin word 'adventus', meaning 'coming' or 'arrival', and it's the same word that we get 'adventure' from. During advent we Christians get ready to celebrate the historical birth of Jesus Christ, and we anticipate his promised second coming, when he will destroy evil and take his rightful place as King of all creation.

Anticipate describes the heart of the Advent season: we are hopeful and expectant as we wait for the arrival of Jesus. As I've said, this anticipation has two parts, we look both to the past event of the Nativity and the future promise of Christ's return in glory. During the service we thought of some other words that anticipate brings to mind, such as looking-forward, longing, hope, anxious, expectation, exciting. Although anticipation is often a good thing, it can also be negative, especially if the thing we're anticipating isn't good.

Prepare refers to the actions we take during this time to get ready spiritually for Christ's arrival. This involves self-examination, repentance, and a focus on the Christian themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Common practices include prayer, fasting and charitable giving. How are we preparing for Christmas, and the second-coming of Christ? Are our metaphorical back-packs full of the right things, or are we carrying around items which are superfluous to our discipleship?



The Christmas post-box will be available in the entrance lobby at church from Sunday 7th December for you to send cards to other people within the church. Please make sure that you put surnames on the cards as well as first names. Cards for our housebound members will be delivered to them before Christmas. The cards will be sorted and distributed on Sunday 21st December at our Carol Service, but you can collect yours before then if you will be away on that Sunday.

Other Notices:

The first of our new men's **Pie and Pint gathering at the New Inn** just along Wimborne Road from the church will be on **Thursday 11th December at 12.30pm**. The cost of a pie and mash lunch with a drink will be £10 per person. Please see Ken to book for this.

Also please join us at the New Inn on **Wednesday 17th December at 6pm for a Christmas Carol Singalong**. Ken is leading this, and it would be good if as many church folk as can join him for this. Mince pies and mulled wine will be available for those who would like this.

Alissa Ford is starting her own cake making business and her price list and a selection of cakes she can offer is on the noticeboard in the lobby at church along with details on how to order.

Family News

The funeral of Ralph Thomas will be held on Friday 12th December at 10.30am at Harbour View. Please remember Cally and Michael, Ralph's daughter and son and their families at this sad time.

Reflect is perhaps the most important and highlights the introspective nature of Advent. It is supposed to be a time for Christians to pause amidst the busyness of the secular holiday season. We pause to examine our lives, and consider our spiritual readiness to receive Christ. Reflection helps us to deepen our understanding of God's love and align our hearts with the true meaning of the season of Advent, rather than the secular, commercialised pre-Christmas period.

Finding time to reflect meaningfully can be very challenging, yet reflection or contemplation is a vitally important part of being a Christian. Christian reflection isn't just about thinking about something, we do that all the time. It's about pausing and deliberately contemplating. Although we all reflect differently, here are some things to bear in mind:

- Our reflection must be Gospel centered; we should examine our lives through the lens of Jesus' words and actions.
- Reflection can be personal or communal; you may find it helpful to reflect with someone you know and trust, rather than by yourself, especially if your mind tends to wander!
- Christian reflection integrates faith and life. With the Gospel at the heart of our reflection, we can attempt to relate our actions and thoughts to our faith.
- Reflection focuses on growth; it is not for becoming maudlin, or regretful, but for learning lessons, hearing God's plan, and moving forward in the power of the Spirit.

Rev Ken Adolphe

A Prayer:

God be with us on our journey towards Christmas. As we anticipate, prepare and reflect help us to go deeper into what is real, until we are brought to the wonder of your birth and to a fresh knowledge of your incarnate love. Amen