



# The Lion

A Monthly News Sheet for St. Mark's Church, Basford

[www.stmarksbasford.co.uk](http://www.stmarksbasford.co.uk)

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## Advent

For many Christians unfamiliar with the liturgical year, there may be some confusion surrounding the meaning of the Advent season. Some people may know that the Advent season focuses on expectation and think that it serves as an anticipation of Christ's birth in the season leading up to Christmas. This is part of the story, but there's more to Advent.

The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming." Scholars believe that during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries in Spain and Gaul, Advent was a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians at the January feast of Epiphany, the celebration of the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. During this season of preparation, Christians would spend 40 days in prayer and fasting to prepare for this celebration; originally, there was little connection between Advent and Christmas.

By the 6<sup>th</sup> century, however, Roman Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. But the "coming" they had in mind was not Christ's first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming in the clouds as the judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was explicitly linked to Christ's first coming at Christmas.

Today, the Advent season lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas and symbolizes the present situation of the church in these "last days as God's people wait for the return of Christ in glory to consummate his eternal kingdom. The church is in a similar situation to Israel at the end of the Old Testament: in exile, waiting and hoping in prayerful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Israel looked back to God's past gracious actions on their behalf in leading them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and on this basis they called for God once again to act for them. In the same way, the church, during Advent, looks back upon Christ's coming in celebration while at the same

time looking forward in eager anticipation to the coming of Christ's kingdom when he returns for his people. In this light, the Advent hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" perfectly represents the church's cry during the Advent season:

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appears.  
Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

While Israel would have sung the song in expectation of Christ's first coming, the church now sings the song in commemoration of that first coming and in expectation of the second coming in the future.

To balance the two elements of remembrance and anticipation, the first two Sundays in Advent look forward to Christ's second coming, and the last two Sundays look backward to remember Christ's first coming. Over the course of the four weeks, Scripture readings move from passages about Christ's return in judgment, to Old Testament passages about the expectation of the coming Messiah, to New Testament passages about the announcements of Christ's arrival by John the Baptist and the Angels.

While it is difficult to keep in mind in the midst of the shopping, lights and decorations, and joyful carols, Advent is intended to be a season of fasting, much like Lent, and there are a variety of ways that this time of mourning works itself out in the season. Reflection on the violence and evil in the world cause us to cry out to God to make things right—to put death's dark shadows to flight. Our exile in the present makes us look forward to our future Exodus. And our own sinfulness and need for grace leads us to pray for the Holy Spirit to renew his work in conforming us into the image of Christ.

While Advent is certainly a time of anticipation of Christ's birth, it is more than that. It is only in the shadow of Advent that the miracle of Christmas can be fully understood and appreciated; and it is only in the light of Christmas that the Christian life makes any sense. It is between the fulfilled promise of Christ's first coming and the yet-to-be-fulfilled promise of his second

coming that Swiss theologian Karl Barth penned these words: *“Unfulfilled and fulfilled promise are related to each other, as are dawn and sunrise. Both are promise and in fact the same promise. If anywhere at all, then it is precisely in the light of the coming of Christ that faith has become Advent faith, the expectation of future revelation. But faith knows for whom and for what it is waiting. It is fulfilled faith because it lays hold on the fulfilled promise.”* The promise for Israel and the promise for the church is Jesus Christ; he has come, and he will come again. This is the essence of Advent.

Blessings *Terry*

### Worship Services during December

1 <sup>st</sup>	Thursday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
4 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> of Advent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		10.00am	Family Service featuring the Scouts with HC
		4.30pm	Evensong
5 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	7.00pm	Scouts' District Carol Service
7 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
11 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> of Advent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		10.00am	Holy Communion
		4.30pm	Evensong
14 <sup>th</sup>	John of the Cross	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
15 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
18 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> of Advent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		10.00am	Family Worship with Baptisms
		4.30pm	Parish Carol Service
21 <sup>st</sup>	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Thursday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
24 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Eve	4.30pm	Crib Service
		11.30pm	Midnight Mass
25 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Day	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		10.30am	Holy Communion
28 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Innocents	8.00am	<b>NO</b> Morning Prayer!!!
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)

## SANCTUS

Our monthly collection for the SANCTUS Project will focus on the usual two standard requirements, viz... (i) Size '6' nappies and (ii) sanitary towels. The third requirement is for shaving and men's grooming items.



## Crib Service

Gifts for children at this year's Crib Service can be brought to the service in the usual, i.e. as parcels labelled for boy/girl and showing the approximate appropriate age. Gifts for adults; especially men's hats & gloves and women's socks & scarves, should be brought along please by 18<sup>th</sup> December and left unwrapped for packing by staff working at SANCTUS. The children's gifts will be taken to St. Mark's at Shelton for the children of refugee and asylum-seeking families who will be spending Christmas there.

## New Service Time!

Please remember that from New Year's Day 2017, our usual 10.00am service moves to its new time of 9.30am.

### Diary Dates for December

3 <sup>rd</sup>	Saturday	7.30pm	Parish Christmas Meal
4 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday	6.30pm	Deanery Worship at St. Peter's - Westlands
5 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	7.00pm	Scouts' District Carol Service
7 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
		7.30pm	Advent Bible Study (Pt 3)
10 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	10.30am	Messy Church for Christmas
13 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday		May Bank Infants' Carols in Church
14 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club (Final of Year)
		6.30pm	Carols at Alison House
		7.30pm	Advent Bible Study (Pt 4)

### Early January...

10 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	7.30pm	Baptism Team Meeting (Lady Chapel)
11 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club Resumes for 2017
12 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	7.30pm	Deanery Standing Committee in Vestry
14 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	11.00am	Emptying Garage of Rubbish into a Skip
17 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	7.30pm	PCC Meeting

## Messy Church...



...will run on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> December from 10.00am in church. The charge is £2.00 per accompanied child. Please publicise this service as much as possible so that we can sustain the momentum started back in the in the autumn with Messy's re-launch.

## Deanery Worship

On Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> December (6.30pm) at St. Peter's Methodist Church in the Westlands there will be a Deanery Service. This is something that the deanery offers twice a year to enable the 21 parishes of the deanery to worship together and share in prayer. Do support this if you can.

## Carol Singing

Alison House on Newton Street (for the first time) as asked us to sing some carols at their Christmas Party for resident's families. It would be good to get a number of people together for this at 6.20pm in church so that we can walk around the corner together and sing some carols. Those who go will be back in time for Part 4 of the Advent Bible Study.

Also, a few of us try to make St. Quentin's Residential Home on Sandy Lane for one evening. We're hoping that this will be at 7.00pm on Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> December; however, this still needs confirmation.

## Diocesan Magazine

The November/December diocesan magazine SPOTLIGHT is available in church. Please be sure to take one and read about what's going on elsewhere in the diocese. 2017 is likely to be a year of change as our new bishop gets to grips with his responsibilities and begins to reshape a vision for growth and mission.

## Christmas Flyers

There are some A5 flyers at the back of church which advertise the Christmas programme. Please use these with your neighbours and friends by way of invitations.

## Children's Society

If you have a CS Box in which you save loose change, it's now time to bring them in so that Adam Barlow can empty them, count the contents and bank the cash. Adam wishes to relinquish this role and so we need someone willing to take over for 2017 – could this be you?