



The Lion

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

www.stmarksbasford.co.uk

December 2019



Advent Begins!

“Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.”

Matthew 24:42 (Year A)

“Be watchful! Be alert!”

Mark 13:33a (Year B)

“Be vigilant at all times and pray.”

Luke 21:36a (Year C)

As per the above biblical directives from each of the three liturgical year readings, Advent begins with a call to vigilance. There are so many Scripture passages that call us to this attitude of vigilance and anticipation of the Lord's coming; these are only a few. Being vigilant means, also, that we are prepared. We are not caught off guard. Imagine if Christmas morning came and you woke up suddenly realizing that you forgot to prepare! Imagine if you had no gifts, no food purchased and no plans were made. Of course you wouldn't allow that to happen, but we do sometimes allow it to happen spiritually speaking. We often are not prepared to celebrate the birth of Christ within our hearts.

Those of you who have travelled through many Advents will already know that this season also offers a focus of the Second Coming of Christ in addition to his incarnation at Bethlehem. Jesus will return again, in all splendour and glory, to judge the living and the dead. We profess that fact every Sunday in our Creed. So, even though Advent is a time for the preparation of the celebration of the first coming of Jesus in the flesh, it is also a time to acknowledge that His first coming is ultimately fulfilled in His final glorious coming.

As Advent begins, why not reflect upon how ready you are for Jesus' coming. Are you preparing for it with the same fervour that you prepare for Christmas through shopping, cooking, decorating, etc? Are you looking forward to that day when He will return? Are you preparing for the spiritual

celebration of His birth? Are you awake and attentive to the numerous ways that God speaks to you on a daily basis?

If you find that you are not as prepared for His return in glory as you'd like to be, make this Advent a time when you get your heart ready. Commit to prayer and regular worship in church; be sure to tap into the special services that we offer at this time of the year. Remember that when you come to church to be with brothers and sisters, you bring more than simply yourself! Your presence is a gift to others and a help to their worship.

Patrick and I will be starting our Advent together with our German partners in the town of Güstrow. I hope we will be as much a blessing to them as I'm sure they will be to us. The tradition of these Advent meetings within the Nordkirche Partnership commenced about 20 years ago and they always act as a timely reminder that the Church is ONE and reliant upon everyone to play their part in its global mission.

This year, a new Pastor for Mission and Ecumenism will be licensed during Morning Prayer on the Saturday, her name is Melanie Dango. I've been asked to pray with her and to offer her a Bible verse (a Lutheran tradition at licensing services). The verse I've chosen in consideration of the nature of her new role is..... here it is in German; see if you can work it out, you might surprise yourself! There are a few key words which are similar to their English equivalents (emboldened) – they give a strong clue....

*“Da **winkten** sie den Gefährten, die im anderen **Schiff** waren, dass sie **kommen** und ihnen **helfen** sollten; und sie **kamen** und **füllten** beide **Schiffe**, sodass sie zu **senken** **begannen**.”*

Did you get it? It's Luke chapter 5, verse 7.

“They signalled for their partners who were in another ship to come and help them. They filled both ships so full that they began to sink.”

I assume you can see quite easily why I chose that verse. I look forward to working with Melanie in the future as our well-established Partnership grows and develops in new directions. Please pray for Melanie as she starts her new ministry.

Clergy: Prebendary Terry Bloor ☎ 01782 623668; Reverend Pat Dunn ☎ 01782 846417; Reverend Patrick Griffin ☎ 07792 467190

Churchwardens: Diane Downard ☎ 01782 621424; Nick Atkins ☎ 01782 632213.

Readers: Janet Pazio ☎ 01782 698359; Julie Atkins ☎ 01782 632213

Safeguarding Coordinator: Jill Ayres ☎ 01782 625327 **Parish Administrator:** Julie Atkins ☎ 01782 632213

The Advent readings will remind us that the Christmas story included everyone returning to their home town for a census required by the civil authorities. This was what brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, the City of David, and made it the centre of God's unfolding plan of salvation at that time. Our Advent season will also see each of us being called to engage with a civil requirement in our own locality, viz., a General Election! This coincidence serves as a reminder that amidst the ordering of the world's affairs of governance and politics, God often has parallel activities of his own. The affairs of this world and of God need not be directly related, yet let's hope and pray that the outcome of the former is consonant with the latter. Be in prayer for a positive outcome which will help move our nation forward for the good of all.

An Advent Prayer

Lord, as Advent begins, help me to put my eyes on You. Help me to open my ears to Your voice. And help me to open my heart to Your glorious presence. May I be attentive to You in every way You desire to come to me. Jesus, I trust in You.

Amen.

Advent Blessings

Terry

Worship Services during December

1st	First of Advent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
<i>3rd</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>10.45am</i>	<i>Funeral</i>
<i>4th</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>8.00am</i>	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Holy Communion (BCP)</i>
8th	Second of Advent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
<i>11th</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>8.00am</i>	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Holy Communion (BCP)</i>
15th	Third of Advent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Family Worship with Baptism
		04.30pm	Festival of Carols
<i>18th</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>8.00am</i>	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		<i>10.30am</i>	<i>Holy Communion (BCP)</i>
22nd	Fourth of Advent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
		04.30pm	Blue Christmas
24th	CHRISTMAS EVE	4.30pm	Crib Service
		11.30pm	Midnight Mass
25th	CHRISTMAS DAY	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
29th	1st of CHRISTMAS	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion

Carol Singing

Alison House on Newton Street have asked if we could sing some carols at their Christmas Party for resident's families on **11th December**. It would be good to get a number of people together for this and meet at 7.00pm to sing some carols.

Prayer Breakfast

Come and join us at Beechwood Shire Living (ST5 0RJ) **on 14th December at 9.00am** for a fabulous time of fellowship over breakfast, followed by a short time of seasonal reflection. For more information and to pre order your breakfast please see Julie.

Diary Dates for December

1 st	Sunday	18.00pm	Lichfield
3 rd	Tuesday	19.30pm	Living Faith
4 th	Wednesday	19.00pm	Reading Circle
7 th	Saturday	16.30pm	Christmas meal
9 th	Monday	10.00am	Advent Quiet day
10 th	Tuesday	19.30pm	Living Faith
11 th	Wednesday	6-9.00pm	PCC drop in session
11 th	Wednesday	19.00pm	Alison House Carols
14 th	Saturday	09.00am	Prayer Breakfast

Early January Dates

12 th	Sunday	12.00pm	Parish Lunch
14 th	Tuesday	19.00pm	PCC
18 th	Saturday	10.00am	Christingle preparation

The Annual Advent Quiet Day

This is organised by the Community of Saint Chad and is taking place at Shallowford House on **Monday 9th December**, from **10.00am - 4.00pm**, Cost: £15 with a soup lunch. The speaker is the Revd Faith Claringbull, Volunteer Coordinator of Sanctus in Stoke. Bookings can be made through Helen Scheven (Helen.Scheven@lichfield.anglican.org)

Blue Christmas

Some circumstances in life make for a 'blue' Christmas. Our service on 22nd December at 4.30pm will be reflective, avoiding the glitz and celebratory feel of the usual Christmas offering.



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. 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.

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 Sue Morley can empty them, count the contents and bank the cash.