

# St Paul's Church

Dear all,

So, we now come to the last Sunday of Advent as we count down to Christmas and will light the fourth candle on our Advent Wreath in church. This candle represents Mary, the mother of Jesus and I will say more about her on Sunday, both online and in church.



There is another 'count down' to Christmas that has historically been used in the church although we rarely hear of it these days – maybe it is time for an airing. This 'count down' takes place between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> December and is called The Advent Antiphons – an 'Antiphon' is an anthem, or verse, that is sung as part of the liturgy of a service, usually vespers (evening prayer). They are often referred to as the 'O Antiphons' because each anthem begins with 'O'.

Each day from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> December has a different Antiphon as follows;

**17 December – O Sapientia (Wisdom)**

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
reaching from one end to the other mightily,  
and sweetly ordering all things:  
Come and teach us the way of prudence.

**18 December – O Adonai (Lord)**

O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel,  
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush  
and gave him the law on Sinai:  
Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

**19 December – O Radix Jesse (Root of Jesse)**

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;  
before you kings will shut their mouths,  
to you the nations will make their prayer:  
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

**20 December – O Clavis David (Key of David)**

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel;  
you open and no one can shut;  
you shut and no one can open:  
Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,  
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.



**21 December – O Oriens (Dayspring)**

O Morning Star,  
splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness:  
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death.

**22 December – O Rex Gentium (King of the nations)**

O King of the nations, and their desire,  
the cornerstone making both one:  
Come and save the human race,  
which you fashioned from clay.

**23 December – O Emmanuel (With us is God)**

O Emmanuel, our King and our lawgiver,  
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:  
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

This may all seem irrelevant in this day and age, and yet there is depth and meaning in each of these anthems that stretches back over many millennia. They take us on a journey that develops a sense of anticipation and longing for the true meaning of Christmas. In this age of ours maybe it is good to recover that sense of the gravity of what is going on here amongst the glitter and tinsel, the presents, and the festivities. I shall be saying Evening Prayer at 4pm, in St Nicholas Church, from 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> using these Antiphons – please feel free to join me (although I will ‘say’ the Antiphons, rather than sing them! My singing pleases no one!).

Please don't forget our Crib Service at 4pm on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Family Communion at 10am. Face coverings need to be worn when inside the building.

Blessings,  
Rev Chris

## **FORTHCOMING SERVICES**

**SUNDAY 19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

8.30am HOLY COMMUNION (said) - Rev Chris ([Zoom](#))  
10am MORNING SERVICE OF PRAYER & MEDITATION - Rev Anthea ([Zoom](#))

**FRIDAY 24<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE**

4pm CRIB & CHRISTINGLE - Rev Anthea & Rev Chris

**SATURDAY 25<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY**

10am FAMILY COMMUNION - Rev Chris ([Zoom](#))

**SUNDAY 26<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER – FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

10am HOLY COMMUNION (said) Red Book - Rev Chris ([Zoom](#))

**SUNDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY**

10am CAFÉ SERVICE/ALL AGE WORSHIP – Gwyn

**SUNDAY 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY**

10am HOLY COMMUNION – Rev Chris

**SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY**

10am All Age Worship – Rev Anthea

**SUNDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY**

10am HOLY COMMUNION – Rev Chris (Patronal Festival)

**SUNDAY 30<sup>th</sup> JANUARY**

10am HOLY COMMUNION – Rev Robin Williamson

## **EVENTS**

**THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY**

12 noon (for 12.30 pm) MOTHER'S UNION - Lunch at the 'Bull', Penenden Heath

**THURSDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY**

2.30 pm ST PAUL'S FELLOWSHIP - Bring and Buy Auction



*Photo by Ray*