

St Paul's Church

Dear all,

This Sunday is the Second Sunday of Advent, and we will light our second advent candle in church.



That candle is lit in remembrance of the prophets from ancient times that spoke of a 'Messiah' that would come and usher in the kingdom of God. Most notably we consider words of scripture from the prophet Isaiah who said this;

**The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.**

**For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.**

**His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.**

**He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

Such words were part of the biblical inspiration for the famous oratorio, the Messiah, written by the composer George Frideric Handel in 1741. This is a truly magnificent piece of work that is often performed at this time of year – even those who have not experienced the complete work will, most likely, know the Hallelujah chorus that never fails to inspire.

My hope, and prayer, is that, despite uncertainties around the pandemic, each of us get to sense the joy, the glory and the majesty of the coming season that present a picture of something that is beyond ourselves. There is a bigger picture going on here – I cannot deny that this is difficult to grasp when life has many trials and tribulations, but I do believe it helps put things in perspective.

Please do come along to one of our services, as detailed below, whether that be Carols, Crib or Christmas Day and be part of that 'ushering in' of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

**God our Father,
you spoke to the prophets of old
of a Saviour who would bring peace.
You helped them to spread the joyful message
of his coming kingdom.
Help us, as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
to share with those around us
the good news of your power and love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the light who is coming into the world.
Amen.**

Advent blessings,
Rev Chris

The news is full of the situation concerning the new Covid variant, and the government's response. As we know they have made face coverings mandatory in shops and on public transport. This could, of course, change, but for now, in other situations, including hospitality and gatherings such as church services, the wearing of them remains 'recommended' not 'required'. The Church of England has not issued any additional directives. With that in mind I am continuing with the current policy of 'recommended' not 'required' and leaving the responsibility with individuals as to whether they wish to wear face coverings when attending services and associated hospitality – sanitizer will continue to be available and if individuals also feel safer by keeping their distance from others, then they are welcome to do so. I will be taking regular lateral flow tests, prior to worship, as part of my own precautions, in view of the part that I play in the distribution of communion.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY 5th DECEMBER – SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.30am HOLY COMMUNION (said) – Rev Chris
10am CAFÉ SERVICE – Rev Anthea

TUESDAY 7th DECEMBER

10am ADVENT QUIET TIME

SUNDAY 12th DECEMBER – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10am HOLY COMMUNION – Rev Chris
5pm CAROL SERVICE – Rev Chris & Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 19th DECEMBER – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8.30am HOLY COMMUNION (said) – Rev Chris
10am MORNING SERVICE OF PRAYER & MEDITATION – Rev Anthea

EVENTS

THURSDAY 16th DECEMBER

12 noon ST PAUL'S FELLOWSHIP - Christmas Lunch, Newnham Court Inn, ME14 5LH



Photo courtesy of Ray