Time to prepare ….Advent 2026



On Sunday 22nd we celebrate the feast of Christ the King and mark the last Sunday of the Church's liturgical year as we prepare to move into Advent. On that day we will use the prayer after communion (which is based on the Prayer Book Collect Prayer) asking God to 'stir up the wills of his faithful people' so that we may 'bring for the fruit of good works'. This has led to Christ the King also being known as '**Stir Up Sunday'** and by tradition is the day on which the Christmas Pudding mixture is stirred up and prepared.



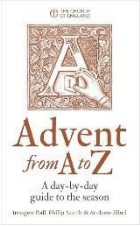
It is certainly a tradition that we try to keep in the Vicarage, and I look forward to the smell of a 'well fed' fruity mix being stirred and cooked. I don't think it is just me, but you can then tell the difference between a 'homemade' pudding and one mass produced in the shops. There is depth of flavour and texture that comes from that personal engagement and time given to preparing for the stir up.



The same could be said of our keeping of Advent and celebration of Christmas. At one level we can simply buy into the mass manufactured and created season. This will have an appearance of celebrating through the decorations, lights, food and other trimmings. But we have a choice to add to this with a deeper

and more personal engagement with what we are marking and celebrating. **We need to give time and space to reflect on the message of Advent and the meaning of Christ's birth.**

I hope that each of us will find ways in the coming days to find that time and space. This could be as simple as each day pausing for a few minutes in prayer or bible reading. If you would like suggestions on prayers to use, then talk to myself or one of the Ministry Team. It might mean making a commitment to be at Church on the 4 Sundays of advent, or to come to one of the regular weekday services (see notices for details).



In addition to this you are invited to join us in Advent in reflecting on the small book 'Advent from A to Z' – if you would like a copy, they are available on Amazon, or we can order one for you. This offers a daily 'Reading, Reflection, Response and Prayer'. There are also weekly questions for us to reflect on and talk together, In the introduction it states :

'Without making time and space to prepare, we miss the significance of this gift and the radical, transformational implications of it for our lives'

We invite you to join us for time to reflect on the questions on :

Tuesdays at St Faith's after the 9.30am Mass

(starting Dec 1st)

Wednesdays at St Mary's after the Noon Mass
(starting Dec 2nd) – bring a light lunch.

Saturdays at St Mary's with a light breakfast provided
on Dec 12th and 19th.

There will also be other opportunities in Advent, and we hope you will find some of these helpful in your preparing for Christmas :



Sunday Nov 29th Advent Sunday
6pm A Service **of music and readings for Advent**
at St Mary's

Friday Dec 4th
5.30pm 'News' Carols and Christingle at St Mary's

Saturday Dec 5th
10am Messy Advent for young children and families
at St Mary's

Monday Dec 14th
2.30pm A time of stillness and reflection at St Faith's

Sunday Dec 20th

6pm Traditional Service of 9 Lessons and Carols
at St Mary's

Tuesday Dec 22nd
6pm Carol Singing for an hour around the area

There will also be a number of other Carol Services and events at which we will need help to welcome those attending and to ensure the church (and its chairs) are ready for each event.

There will be a **Reindeer Drive** (a seasonal Beetle Drive) **at St Faith's on Saturday 12th December at 10am** this will help to raise funds to support the Christmas Voucher Scheme



Once again, we will be co-ordinating the Voucher Scheme to support 10 or so Charities and agencies. ***You are invited to donate a voucher or gift card and a Christmas card with a personal message (unsealed)*** which we will then distribute to those on the margins in our city.

Please look at the weekly notices for details of when and how you can help and support us and of other services and dates. If you would like a weekly update emailed to you then please let us know.

Whatever you do in the coming weeks we hope that you will allow God to stir up your hearts so that we may together come to bear the fruits of good works in our lives and communities.

Father Bob