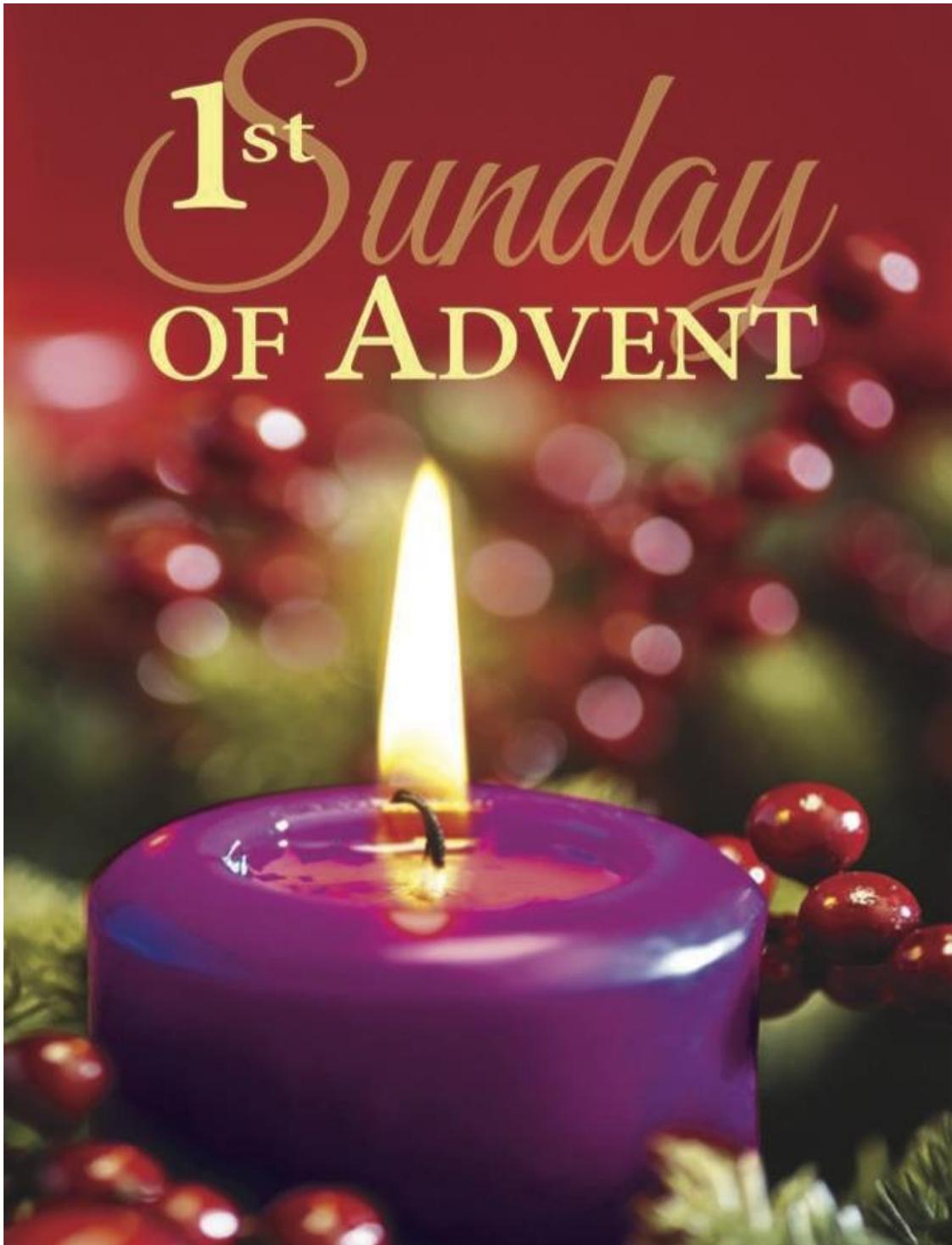


St. Mary's Church
Cubbington



Sunday 29th November

Sunday Message 29th November 2020

Greetings as always from the vicarage.

And welcome to this message on Advent Sunday.

Today is the start of a new Church Year and the season of Advent begins.

On Monday I was reminded all about Advent from the children of year 3 who came into church to record an Advent Service for the rest of the school.

In past years, the whole school would have come into church and taken part.

This year with the children of each class being kept in isolation from the other classes, things had to be done in a different way.

They made a beautiful recorded presentation, explaining the meaning of the season which will be shown via the computers to the other classes.

They even added their own take on the occasion by decorating jam jars and placing in them notes with different things that they



will be doing to help others during this season.

Jars with reminders of how to be good during Advent

For example, being kind and helping others, remembering to smile at people and helping their parents with the jobs at home.

At the end they asked me to say a few words, I thanked them for their lovely service and praised them for all their hard work.

I said it was great to see them after such a long time of not being able to go into school for the weekly assembly and said that I hoped to be with them again soon.

Earlier in the week I heard some more positive words from Boris, when he spoke about opening more shops, gyms, and cinemas.

There was no mention of Place of Worship but then we usually get lumped in with cinemas and gyms, so hopefully we too will be open for the run up to Christmas.



There was also some promising news about the vaccine which has been developed in this country, which when fully tested and rolled out should significantly boost our confidence and make a big difference to our lives

Towards the end of Boris's speech, he said "With a fair wind we should be getting back to something more normal by Easter."

Interesting how Places of Worship don't get a mention in their own right and yet it's the Christian festivals that are used to mark the important periods throughout this pandemic.

For many, Advent is a time of counting down to Christmas, a time of waiting and preparing to celebrate once again the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is correct but it is only one part of the meaning behind the season of Advent.

The other and as equally important part is the preparation of ourselves for the second coming of Jesus.

Our gospel reading which is from **Mark chapter 13 verses 24 to the end** records Jesus' own words telling us about His return.

During this period of waiting we are in fact waiting for two separate things – but very closely related –

We are of course waiting and looking forward to Christmas – the birth of the saviour of the world along with all of its festive celebrations. –

But also, we should be waiting and looking forward to the return of Jesus and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The second coming is something that we mention on a few occasions throughout the year but is one of the fundamental

aspects of our faith.



The second coming of Jesus

And yet how much effort do we put into preparing for it?

When we think about other occasions in our lives, weddings, birthdays, holidays etc. we put immense time and effort into making sure everything will be just right

When it comes to the most significant, the single most important event of our earthly lives – how much preparation do we do?

Maybe we think – it's not going to happen in my lifetime, so why bother – after all it's been 2000 years and He hasn't arrived yet.

I wonder what the people of the Old Testament thought, they were told to expect a Messiah – a king who would lead them -

And we know that many waited and didn't see Him arrive and then hundreds of years later He did arrive in Bethlehem as a baby.

We have it on good authority – from Jesus himself - that one day He will return and we should be ready to receive Him.

As Christians we should want Christ to come, and in our lifetime, –

And so we should live all year round in an Advent Season – a period of waiting and preparing to greet Him on His return.



The big question is how do we prepare ourselves to meet the King of Kings?

The easy answer is to live our lives on earth with the standards of heaven!

Explaining what that means is a little more difficult and you will all have your own different ideas.

As a clue I would start by thinking about the teachings of Jesus.



Jesus teaching

What was important to Him must be the same for us and we must be able to demonstrate them in our lives.

Somebody once said, “Nothing is more powerful than an individual acting out of conscience, setting an example to others so that they may follow.”

If you find the above challenging and you could do with a little help, read the words of St. Paul which is our second reading.

They are from his **first letter to the Corinthians chapter one verses 3 to 9.**

Once again Paul is offering words of encouragement to help us live for Christ in our rather difficult society.

In writing to the Christians in Corinth he wrote to a society where many had turned away from God and were going their own way.

The Christians faced distractions from all around them, but Paul offered them The Peace that comes from God as a free gift through His Grace.

With all that has happened over this last year and the uncertainty of what is to come, there has never been a greater need to seek the Peace of God.

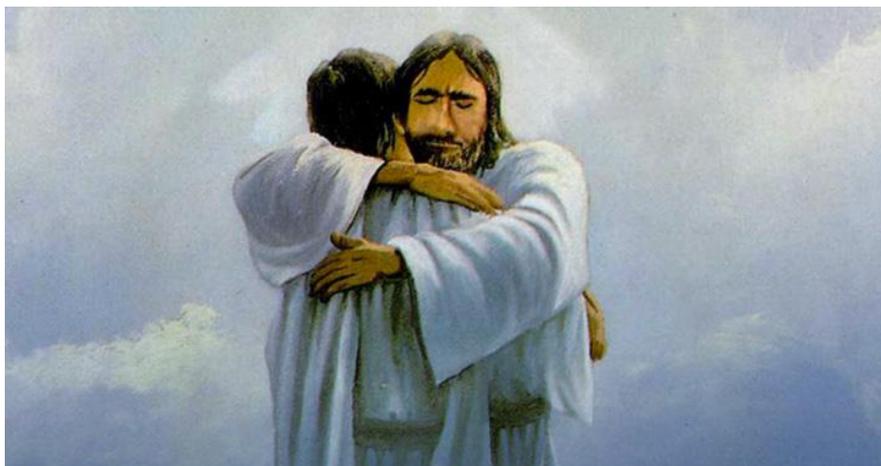
And so I encourage you over the next few weeks to take time to think about the themes of Advent and let them work in your lives.

Remember the Advent message of hope, and let it be a light into the world when you find yourself getting overwhelmed with things that are dark.

Remember to look at yourself and if needed, make changes so that you are prepared for when the Lord comes.

Not putting it off until tomorrow, the message is about being ready -

And make sure you live each day knowing that it could be the day that you see the Lord face to face.



Amen.



Collect for the
First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility,
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal,
through him who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, now and forever.

Amen.



A prayer for next week

Loving God,
your Son Jesus Christ came that we might have life
and have it abundantly,
pour out your blessing upon our nation,
where there is illness,
bring your healing touch,
where there is fear,
strengthen us with the knowledge of your presence,
where there is uncertainty,
build us up in faith,
where there is dishonesty,
lead us into truth,
where there is discord,
may we know the harmony of your love,
this we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Reverend Graham



Something to think about

- What does the season of Advent mean to you?
- What have you been missing most from not being able to attend church?
- What are your thoughts on the second coming of Jesus?
- How do/will you prepare yourself for meeting Jesus face to face?
- What do you think you need to change?
- How can you demonstrate to others that you are a Christian?
- What verse/passage encourages you and why?

SUNDAY 29th November 2020
Advent Sunday

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**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December**



**Invitation only**  
**Second Sunday of Advent**  
**10.00am: Common Worship**

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If you have Offertory Envelopes or Tower Boxes that you wish to have collected, please call **01926 312319**.
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**St. Mary's**  
**Christmas Hamper**  
**Draw**  
£1.00 per Ticket  
Tickets available  
from  
Costcutter or  
from Sue  
**01926 312319**



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2021
Cublington Calendar's
Looking back in time
in aid of the
Cliff Cleaver
Community Pavilion

B&W £5.00
Colour £7.00



For any of your family, friends
and neighbours
who have access to the internet,
you might like to suggest
that they look at the church's website
where they will be able to see this
message and other useful information.

Also, anyone you know with
Primary Age school children will find
stories from 'Open The Book'.

Tell them to Google
St. Mary's Church Cubbington.