



Advent - Anticipation, Expectation, Preparation, Waiting

Rev Steve Charman Superintendent

We journey through Advent with lots of 'pre-Christmas' activities - choir concerts, school performances, the office party, the switching-on of the tree-lights, shopping for Christmas presents, shopping for Christmas food, shopping for Christmas clothes, writing Christmas cards, wrapping Christmas presents, going to the Post Office, Christmas Fayres, Carol services, Nativity Services..... it can get rather busy!

These many and various activities can be a help on our Advent journey, but they can also be a distraction -

-they can help create anticipation in us of what is yet to come, but they can also divert our attention;

-they can help to instil a sense of expectation, but at times they can ruin the expectancy, because we find ourselves celebrating Christmas before we've even begun the season of Advent - I heard my first Christmas song (in a shop) on 3rd November!!!

-our preparation during Advent can sometimes be hijacked by getting all the practical things ready for Christmas - ie. the buying, and the wrapping, and the baking, and the making.....

-the waiting aspect of Advent can often disappear, we are so busy doing all the preparation that we don't even notice the waiting - there's no time to wait!!!

All the events and activities are great - but they are even greater when we are able to put them in the context of Advent, when we are able to take a moment to stop all the busy-ness and reflect on our journey towards the festive day -

- to take time in anticipation of the reality of Christ coming among us here and now;

- to take time to discover anew a sense of expectation that God's love is made known for all humanity, not in the past, but in the present;

- to take time ourselves for our own preparation so that we can hear the Good News in our context;

- to take time to experience the waiting, to recognise that sometimes the best things cannot be obtained instantly;

May I take this opportunity to wish you a meaningful journey through Advent you will have to wait for, anticipate and expect the festive greeting at a later stage - it is yet to be prepared.

Grace and peace, Steve

It was a privilege to welcome Mr John Bell from the Iona Community on Saturday 9th and Sunday, 10th October.

On Saturday afternoon he spoke about and we sang our way through some of the Psalms and the relevance for today to a very appreciative gathering. There was chance to browse and buy various books and CDs that John had had a hand in. There was time afterwards for John to have a walk in the woods near Calder Vale and enjoy some of the spectacular surroundings. One of the pleasures of having someone from away to visit is that you can tell them about the place where you live and the history of the mill and the village and the Chapel.

Another privilege is sitting around a meal table and just chatting. This is something I have been used to since a girl, when “the preacher” often came for tea. Did you know that the streets in Glasgow have been having an extra cleaning, even the weeds in the cracks in the pavements! We all know why.

On Sunday John’s theme was “Caring for the Earth” which went towards his “Thought for Today” on Radio 4 the following morning. Our beautiful village and surroundings even got a mention.

We think he will be back again sometime.



Our most recent “Family Time” was on the theme of “The Bread of Life”. We played games, had the story of The Feeding of the Five Thousand and, of course, made bread and pizzas. The pizzas were mostly eaten during the afternoon. The dad’s were given that privilege. The bread went home to be eaten later. We got a lovely thank you message on Our Calder Vale Facebook page, which was much appreciated.

Our next Family Time will be on 28th November before the Lighting and Blessing of the Crib.

Our CAMEO group is up and running again and on the 19th we will be trying our hands at making Christmas Cards and /or Birthday cards. You are welcome to join us at 2 pm. Our December meeting will be on 17th December and start at 11 am and be our Traditional Christmas Flower Arranging Day. We missed it so much last year. You do need to book for this one.

Sunday, 28th November at 2 pm. Family Time followed at 3.30 pm by The lighting and Blessing of the Crib.

Sunday, 12th Dec at 3 pm “A Time to Remember”

Thursday, 16th Dec. At 7 pm Lancashire Sings Christmas

Friday, 17th Dec at 11 am. Flower Arrangement Day. Booking essential

Sunday, 19th at 2 pm. Carol Service led by Deacon Jane Harper

**Christmas Day celebration at 10 am
Boxing Day service at 10.45 am**

The Silent Sermon

Luke 2:8-20

Rev Roy Burley

The comment was made several years ago in one of my churches, “Do you realise that we have a silent sermon in the Church?” I looked puzzled, but that’s not unusual for me, and the comment continued that “The Christmas tree is blocking out the view of Christ.” In one of the windows in the Church was a picture of Christ the Good Shepherd. There are many today, who will be running around doing the last minute things, and such will be the rush that those tasks will block out any view of Christ. The story is told of two ladies who were out shopping for Christmas cards, when one of the ladies exclaimed, “Look, they’re even trying to bring religion into Christmas!”

On that first Christmas Day, it was the shepherds who saw the Christ child first. They were common, ordinary people like you and me. Their job was guarding the sheep just outside of Bethlehem. Because of the nature of their occupation, it was difficult for them to observe all of the rules and regulations of the Mosaic Law. They were looked down upon, and excluded from the company of those who were allowed into the Temple courts.

The news of Christ’s birth was not given to the priests, the Scribes, or the rulers, but to lowly shepherds. As they were in the fields keeping watch over their flocks, the word of the Lord came to them, a word of courage, in verse 10 they are told, “Do not be afraid.” I wonder what it is that concerns us? The word that the angels brought was one of good news, and the words that we receive from God’s Word are words that give courage to the fearful and discouraged. God knows what is happening in our lives, and He says to us, “Do not be afraid.”

The Silent Sermon Part 2

In these verses, we also have a word of good news, again in verse 10, “I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” The good news of God is that joy is available to all people, God does not want us to have a limited joy; He wants us to have great joy. The word great is the word megas, from where we get words such as megaton, a power that is to our minds limitless. The joy that is available from God is also limitless.

In verse 11, we have a word of hope, “Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you.” The people of Jesus’ day were looking for a Saviour from the tyranny of the Roman authorities; but they missed out, because that was not Jesus’ mission first time around. Finally, in verses 11, 12 and 15, there is an individual word, the word of God may have come to the crowd, but it was pointed at individuals. We read, “I bring you”; “has been born to you”; “This will be a sign to you.” The Word of God can only be effective when it becomes personal, and we accept it as a gift from God for ourselves.

The shepherds went back to their fields and their sheep, not in silence, but glorifying and praising God for all that they had seen and heard. The journey of the shepherds to the birthplace of the Christ child began with a step of faith, they heard the Word of God and they responded with action, they took a step of faith, based on the information that they had received from the angels. For us, I hope that this Christmas we might pause to see the Christ child and receive Him into our hearts and lives, and none of the activities will block Him out. I must stop, but the silent sermon speaks on...

Boxes of Hope

Torrisholme Methodist Church

November 2021

The Theme of our service led by Rev Roy Burley today, November 7th 2021, was HOPE.

It was for us a memorable service in two ways.....

- (1) that we at TMC were able to share worship for the first time as joint members of the Morecambe Methodist Cluster, all with a common aim, namely to worship God and to bring others to Faith here in the local area, a Faith which declares “Jesus is Lord” and**
- (2) memorable in that we were able to dedicate 103 Boxes of Hope destined for children in Romania.**



This number (far exceeding our 2020 total), was thanks to a large number of willing workers knitting hats, scarves, cuddly toys etc and lovingly assembling boxes for months, in the lead up to today. We were especially blessed this year by large and generous donations from friends unable to fill a box, but committed to helping poor children. Their money enabled us to buy more expensive items like tooth paste & brushes and helped to cover the £2 needed towards carriage costs.

In case any member of the large congregation were in any doubt as to the Hope these boxes bring, we were further helped to understand by watching a power point presentation showing children in Romania receiving their gifts in previous years.....a moving tribute in itself.

We both felt a great deal of pride and encouragement seeing so many Boxes of Hope and of being part of a service in which so many worshippers were celebrating the Hope we have in Jesus, especially with the fruits of Cop26 (or lack of them) uppermost in our mind as we contemplated the future of our children and of the millions of children worldwide who have so little of Hope to cling to.

May we all be encouraged to see in Jesus not only the light of the world, but to accept that He and He alone is the only true source of Hope we have. Let us therefore rejoice in this Hope, for as we sang in our closing Hymn. “Joy to the world, the Lord is come”. Alleluia!!

Bernard & Barbara Vause
Shoe Box Coordinators.

Advent Reflections

Rev Keith Borwick

**Well, it's nearly here.... seems so long since we last got to celebrate 'God with Us' at this time of year.
Was it only 2 years ago?? I can't even remember what we did last December instead of the usual services.**

**I wonder, will this year really be what we want it to be, or will there be more disappointment?
Will the celebrations have to be put off for another year ? Oh, I Hope not!**

**If these are your feelings too, as we approach Christmas 2021, I wonder how we would have coped in those 'pre-Christmas
0001' years.**

**The inter-testament centuries between Malachi 4 and Matthew 1.... Would WE / You have kept the Faith Alive that GOD IS
WITH US still?**

Then, when Christmas 0001 came along, most people missed it.... how many will miss it this year do you think?

**As I write these notes there is excitement in the air..... John Lewis have released their Christmas Advert....Seems like we
can't have Christmas without John Lewis!**

**So, how can we use the Christmas adverts to bring CHRIST into every home?
How do we connect their Strap Lines to our Message of Emmanuel?**

I've picked on 4 that maybe you can drop into conversations or on notice sheets this advent.... :-

**M & S Food – Christmas isn't about Percy Pig's 1st ever Christmas it is about Jesus' 1st
M & S - Let US "make this SEASON Anything but Ordinary"**

Very - Encourage friends that Christmas is the VERY BEST EXCUSE to come to worship!

OR Finally...

**John Lewis - It wasn't an alien that landed in Bethlehem but God's own son.....and because of who he was and what he gave
for us "WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER; HOWEVER FAR IT SEEMS!"
Let us RE-USE what TV is putting into every home, and all ADVERTISE the real meaning of Christmas and the Gift of Love for
the world.**

Advent

Ruth Champley Senior Circuit Steward

Advent is traditionally a time of prayer, fasting and repentance when we prepare ourselves to celebrate Christ's first coming as the Word Made Flesh in a stable in Bethlehem, and to anticipate His Second Coming in Glory at the end of time.

This year we have experienced many difficulties: personally, as individual churches, and as a Circuit. It has, perhaps, been one of the most difficult times that some of us can remember. We feel battered and bewildered as we face this advent season. And yet there is a great hope for us. We are looking forward to celebrating the coming of the King who loves us, and is all-powerful to help us. We are not alone: we are not without hope. Jesus is our hope. He is able and willing to help us, personally, in our churches and in the Circuit. We are His, the Church is His Church. He will lead us on if we are willing to follow.

As we look beyond Christmas to the coming of the Kingdom, let us use this season for spiritual reassessment as we seek to rebuild both our churches and the Circuit, which have suffered so much, but can be healed by the power of the One who came to set up His Kingdom in our hearts and in the world. Are we willing to commit ourselves to Him and work for His coming Kingdom?

Angels from the realms of Glory

Rev Emma Holroyd

This Advent there will be hosts of angels around the villages of Caton & Brookhouse. These angels have been created by our Caton craft group & other members of the Lune Valley cluster to bring light and hope to the local community. You will be able to find them at the various locations of the living Caton & Brookhouse advent windows calendar & they will also feature in the window created by the Lune Valley cluster which will come to light in a window at the Brookhouse building on the 17th December. Do come and have a wander around Caton & Brookhouse during the season of advent to see the various windows lit up.



**Somewhere in your silent night
Casting Crowns**

**All is calm and all is bright
Everywhere but in your heart tonight
They're singing carols of joy and peace
But you feel too far gone and too far out of reach**

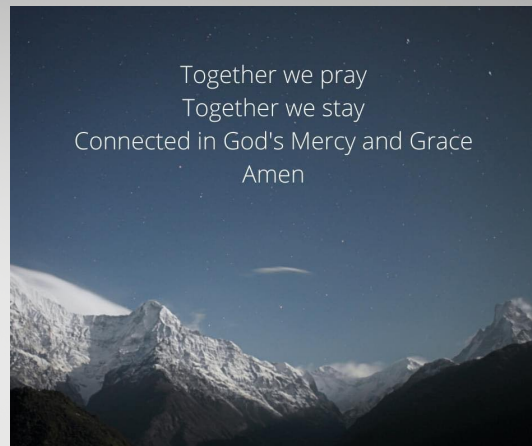
**Somewhere in your silent night
Heaven hears the song your broken heart has cried
Hope is here, just lift your head
For love has come to find you
Somewhere in your silent night**

**From heaven's height to manger low
There is no distance the Prince of Peace won't go
From manger low to Calvary's hill
When your pain runs deep
His love runs deeper still
He has always loved you, child
And He always will**

**Somewhere in your silent night
Heaven hears the song your broken heart has cried
Hope is here, just lift your head
For love has come to find you
Somewhere in your silent night**

**Lift your head
Lift your heart
Emmanuel will meet you where you are
He knows your hurt
He knows your name
And you're the very reason that He came**

**Love will find you
Love will find you
Love will find you**



Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

**GOD BLESS
JO X**

Worship Leader Training

Do you feel called to be involved in leading worship in your local church? To help prepare, plan and lead worship on a Sunday or during the week.

As we adapt to the post-pandemic context, we are discovering that our churches are facing a variety of different challenges and opportunities - one such thing is how we oversee our worship. If you feel that God is prompting you to be involved, talk to your Minister, an existing Local Preacher or Worship Leader. If you feel that someone in your church is called by God to be involved, speak to them - perhaps you are the person that God wants to use to encourage them to get involved.

We will explore topics such as: WHAT IS A WORSHIP LEADER? UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP; WHAT A WORSHIP LEADER NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO DO; PRAYER AND INTERCESSION; THE AGES OF WORSHIP; ARTS & TECHNOLOGY IN WORSHIP; LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS.

We are planning to have the training at one of the churches, but we also want it to be available online using Zoom, for those who cannot attend in-person - and if we can deal with the technical challenges, we might be able to have 2 or 3 churches 'hosting' a zoom session - so that people can attend somewhere a little closer than the 'main venue' (if that is too far to travel). Those possibilities will be dependent upon who wants to be involved and where they are located.

We are planning to have about 6 or 7 sessions at some point after Christmas - but we want to know what would be best for the participants:

- which day of the week would be best?**
- what time of day - morning, afternoon, evening?**
- how often - weekly? fortnightly? monthly?**
- your location?**

If you would like to be involved, please let us know your response to the questions about day/time etc. by emailing Jo Towers - circuit@northlancsmethodist.org.uk

Please respond by 6th January so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT BARE

**Christmas Coffee Morning Saturday 27th November at
10am**

Coffee and seasonal refreshments

Cake stall Books and jigsaws

Monday 29th November 2pm Monday Fellowship

Advent Reflection - Ruth and Andrew Champley

Monday 13th December 2pm Monday Fellowship

**Christmas Celebration - singing, quiz and afternoon
tea**

Sunday 19th December 2:30pm Carol Service

Tuesday 21st December 10am Men's Fellowship

Christmas Celebration

Christmas Day 10am service - Rev Andrew Champley

***'It's Hard to be Merry' Reflective Worship, at The Cornerstone & via
Zoom***

Wednesday 22nd December 6.30pm

Christmas will be difficult for many people this year. As we have done in previous years, we are holding a 'Hard to be Merry' Service just before Christmas - this will be a reflective service for those who may find Christmas difficult. If you or someone you know would find this helpful, please come along either in-person or via Zoom.

**The Zoom login details and the service sheet will be sent out by email nearer the time, if you would like to receive the details, please contact Jo
circuit@northlancsmethodist.org.uk**

Services for Christmas

Christmas Eve

11.15pm Caton @ Parish Church

11.15pm Galgate - Keith Borwick

4pm Lancaster, Scotforth Road - Steve Charman

6pm Trinity, Goosnargh - Christingle - Keith Borwick

5pm Wesley, Heysham - Crib Service - Roy Burley / Jenny Macking

Christmas Day

10am Bare - Andrew Champley

10am Calder Vale - LA

10am Caton - Emma Holroyd

10am Hollins Lane (with Scorton) - Denis Yates

10am Torrisholme - Roy Burley

10am Warton - Paul Turner

10am Wesley - Susan Wilson

10am Dolphinholme - Steve Charman

10.30am Lancaster, Scotforth Road - Helen McGregor

10.30am Trinity, Goosnargh - Keith Borwick

11am Silverdale - Bill Seville