

**St James' and St Peter's Churches, Birkdale**

# **Advent Reflections**



**Week 2 - Waiting**

It doesn't matter who you are, and where you are going. When this light goes, you stop and you wait. If you are in a car, if you are on a bike, if you are on foot, you are waiting.

Sometimes you are waiting for quite some time – isn't that always when you have somewhere you need to be? There are plenty of times in life we have to wait for things.

### **Advent is a season of waiting.**

Opening advent calenders, lighting candles, making lists – even checking them twice...

Advent waiting is different - Waiting for the birth of Christ. And waiting for the second coming of Christ.

### **Advent waiting is an expectant waiting.**

It's like waiting for Christmas to come before opening the present you've receive through the post. You've got a rough idea of what size it might be, but you don't quite know what you will get, and it's a waiting with a clear end, but an end that isn't there yet. It's expectant of something good – of a gift, but you don't yet know what appearance or form it will take. You wait with anticipation that it will be something wonderful or surprising.

Advent waiting is similar – waiting for God to move and act in a way that is wonderful, and surprising. Advent is a time when we wait expectantly for God to move in a new way.

### **Advent waiting is an active waiting.**

When you are waiting for something to happen you look for signs of it happening. You look for the bus coming on the horizon, you look for the letter that gives you the test results, you look for the shoots coming up out of the ground to indicate your bulbs are growing.

We have to pay attention to what is happening around us, to the signs of the coming of the kingdom – in Matthew's gospel we are told that we are to interpret the signs, to look for the return of Christ. To be active in our waiting, to be prepared for we don't know when the Lord is coming, we are to be ready

for his return. We are not to wait passively for God to act, we are to pay attention.

Mary and Joseph had to be pushed into the stable because there was no room at the inn, it was too full – is your heart too full? When we sing, “*Let every heart prepare him room,*” we are not retroactively chastising the innkeepers of Bethlehem; we are preaching to all within earshot to be ready to meet their Judge and Maker unafraid.

Is your life full of superficial concerns, worried about all the things you “have” to get done before Christmas, too much holiday preparation to do? Or have you made some space to once again reflect and receive the good news of Christ incarnate at Christmas. You could do this through reading the bible, listening to some worship music, I tend to listen to UCB but there is also Premier radio that is full of music and reflections this advent. Or you could listening to some good preaching and teaching, or find some devotionals to read. I tend to use the bible app’s devotional series, you could try that? I hope you have started this process by taking some time to pray and come before God as we thought about last week.

**Advent waiting is hopeful waiting.**

As we move further into winter the shorter days and longer nights can be dark, and tiring. But John’s gospel reminds us – the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. God has already given us the one who loves, redeems and restores the world – unlike that first Christmas we are waiting for something that is already here – Jesus has come, and will come again. We have encountered the living Christ and this give us hope. We have had moments where we have encountered God, he has been faithful so far and he will do it again. God’s light and love, will always shine through, no matter the darkness we encounter, be that illness, grief injustice or war. **We wait with hope, knowing that the victory is already won.**

## Questions to Consider:

1. How good are you at waiting? Is it something that comes easy to you? Why or why not?
2. We are to look for “Signs” of the coming of the kingdom (see: Matthew 24:3-31) How does this make you feel?
3. How might we be active in our waiting? Being alert and awake? (Matthew 25:1-13)
4. What might you need to change in your life to make space in your heart this Advent?
5. Have you left enough space in the busy holiday season to pay attention, to listen, to wait, and to be surprised? What practical steps can I take to both guard those quiet moments but also embrace divine interruptions?
6. John 1:5 reminds us of the “Light that shines in the darkness” Where do you need Christ’s light in your life?
7. Light can warm and it can guide, but it can also expose and surprise. What does light in the darkness mean for the world? What does it mean for my life in this season?
8. Where has God been faithful in your life? How can you intentionally remember this in tough times?

Resources mentioned in the video:

UCB: <https://www.ucb.co.uk/listen>

Premier Radio: <https://www.premier.plus/>

Bible app: <https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/>

Suggested podcasts: <https://gospelinlife.com/>

<https://www.thepastorsheart.net/>

<https://www.gr-uk.org/grukology>

<https://www.churchsociety.org/resources/podcast/>

<https://podcast.cranmerhall.com/>