

Comfort and Joy



Christmas will not be cancelled this year!

Let's rediscover the **comfort and joy** of Christmas together.

From Tuesday 1 Dec, online

Online Denham **Advent Calendar**

Online **Advent Prayer** Mon-Sat 6pm

From Sunday 6 Dec, St Mary's Christmas Trail around St Mary's Church, Denham Village

From Monday 7 Dec, out and about "Spot the Angel" treasure hunt around Denham (hints online!)

From Sunday 13 Dec, St Mary's Community Christmas Trees around St Mary's Church

Sat 19 – Wed 23 Dec
St Mary's, 3.00–3.30 pm

Carols around St Mary's

Pick up your **"Christingle in a Bag"**

Donate a new toy for RNIB
Sunshine House School Northwood

For latest updates and all online links, go to our web page or Facebook page
www.facebook.com/denhamparish.church
St Mary's Church Office: 01895 832771 | office@denhamparish.church
www.denhamparish.church/christmas

Sunday 20 Dec
4.00 pm, online
Online Community Carol Service
for all ages!

5.00 pm & 6.30 pm, St Mary's
Candle-lit Carols

Please register online beforehand!

Mon 21 to Wed 23 Dec, outdoors
Carols in the Streets

Invite us to come and sing carols in your street! Email rector@denhamparish.church

Thur 24 Dec: Christmas Eve
4.00 pm, online

Online Christingle Crib Service
11.30pm, online

Midnight Holy Communion
(Pre-recorded at St Mary's)

Fri 25 Dec: Christmas Day
9.30 am, St Mary's

Christmas Holy Communion
Please register online beforehand!

10.30 am, online
Christmas Family Service



PAROUSIA

Weekly News and Service Sheet

29th November 2020

1st Sunday of Advent

Welcome! At the time of going to print we are clarifying whether our 9.30am service at St Mary's can resume from Sunday 6 December. Please check our website or call the church office nearer the time. No matter what the new rules will be, the life of our church is not being put on hold and God remains active in his world! This news and service sheet is one way of keeping in touch and worshipping together. The inside pages provide you with a simple service so you can worship at home.

Christoph Lindner

Holy Suspense by *Christoph Lindner*

Christmas Eve was the big day for us when I grew up in Germany. We knew that we were going to unwrap presents in the evening. During the day, my parents would decorate the tree (the door of the living room was locked) and put the presents under it. As children we had this great sense of anticipation, but we were also impatient - we couldn't wait to get there! It was a Holy Suspense!

I would make a special effort to be nice to my sisters and mum and dad - I didn't want to spoil the special day. I knew something great was about to happen! And of course we would put on special clothes before we went to the crib service, which was the true beginning of Christmas. When I stepped into the church in my Sunday best, the church brightly lit with candles, the organ and trumpet playing, I knew that Christmas was here. What joy!

In a sense, the morning of Christmas Eve is the time we are living in as followers of Jesus. Jesus' first Advent was 2000 years ago - the beginning of his kingly rule as the one who represents God, who shows us what God is like, who is God in human form. And we know he's coming again - his second Advent - but he has not returned yet.

How then should we live? Questions to ponder

We prepare for that great day! It's the morning of Christmas Eve! We get ready.

- If I knew that Jesus was coming back this Christmas - how would my life change over the course of this coming month?
- Is there something that God has been saying to me since lockdown began in March? Have I put it into practice?
- Am I longing for Jesus' return?

"God, give us a longing for Jesus' return. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen."

email: office@denhamparish.church

phone: 01895 832771

WELCOME

If you have an advent wreath or candle at home, please light the first candle.

OPENING PRAYER

The first candle in our crown is lit for the first time Jesus came to earth.

A shining example of how we should live, Light of the World from his humble birth.

Jesus, help us live more like you,

O come, O come Emmanuel.

Spirit-filled and shining bright,

O come, O come Emmanuel.

HYMN

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set they people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.

Born thy people to deliver;
born a child and yet a king;
born to reign in us for ever;
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit,
rule in all our hearts alone:
by thine all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

When the Lord comes, he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

Heavenly Father, you have created a universe of light: forgive us when we return to darkness. Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world: cleanse and heal our blinded sight. Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit, you give us light in our hearts: renew us in faith and love.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

BIBLE READING: *Mark 13. 24-37*

'But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.' But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his

work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION (or read page 1)

A PRAYER OF LAMENT

We join with the psalmist, their spirit in anguish: **How long, Lord, how long?** We join with the broken, the beaten, the famished:

How long, Lord, how long?

We join with those suffering discrimination:

How long, Lord, how long?

We join with the scapegoats in every nation: **How long, Lord, how long?**

We join with the woman whose voice has been silenced:

How long, Lord, how long?

We join with the girl who is subject to violence: **How long, Lord, how long?**

We join with the martyrs, their voices as one: **How long, Lord, how long?**

Waiting and longing for justice to come: **How long, Lord, how long?**

We join with our Lord, as he hangs on the cross: **How long, Lord, how long?**

Bearing our pain as he suffers with us: **How long, Lord, how long?**

We join with the earth as it groans for release: **How long, Lord, how long?**

We long for your Kingdom of rightness and peace:

How long, Lord, how long?

We pray the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father...

HYMN

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice, rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee,

O Israel.

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

THE BLESSING

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

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Let's pray together ...

- pray with thanksgiving for the world God has entrusted to our care.
- For medical experts, politicians and public leaders – for wisdom, compassion and integrity.
- those who are sick and those suffering from bereavement, especially the family of Helen Brooks.