

Letter #85 Church Family email 25/11/2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:8)

2 Timothy is Paul’s last letter and in the final chapter he speaks about his forthcoming departure. Notice how he includes a phrase which in his thinking would apply to every believer. We are those who ‘long for Christ’s appearing’. We long for the day when we shall stand face to face before the One who died for us, who has continually loved us with an everlasting love and whose eyes will look on us filled with compassion and delight. But do we? Advent Sunday is a great time to press ‘reset’ and to remind ourselves that Christ’s personal return should be our focus. No doubt we’ll spend plenty of time and energy getting ready for Christmas ... but what about getting ready, as believers, for meeting Christ?

Advent Sunday at St Nicholas

- Our Advent book **‘The Christmas we didn’t expect’** by David Mathis is available £5 from the [bookshop](#). Also, we are hosting the Churches Together in Sevenoaks and District **Advent Praise service** at 6.30pm on Sunday evening.
- **Please pray for the preachers this Sunday** – Jamie Read is concluding his short series on Philemon at 9.15am whilst Matt Taylor will be preaching on John 6 at the 11am. I’m finishing my Judges series at Lady Boswell’s but I’ll be preaching specifically on Advent and the return of Christ at the evening Advent Praise. Please pray for the word of the Lord to ‘spread rapidly and be honoured’ (2 Thessalonians 3:1) at all our gatherings this Sunday.
- **Christmas events page** – Abby has done a fantastic job in designing a special Christmas events page accessed from our [website](#). You’ll find details about some of the main Christmas services to which you can invite friends and family. There’s also details about our Hope Explored course which will be starting in January – have a look!
- **Parish Christmas cards** – it would be lovely to share the details of our Christmas events and services with those who live in our parish. If you could help to deliver some of our Christmas cards, please do get in touch with the church office team. We are hoping to deliver more than 3,000 cards so please do come and get some asap.

Other key points to highlight:

- **(Tonight!) Thursday 25th November at 8pm ‘Engaging with Living in Love & Faith’ online** – this is a Zoom [webinar](#) where we will be joined by Bishop Keith Sinclair, National Director of Church of England Evangelical Council.

'Living in Love & Faith' is the Church of England resource designed to consider various issues relating to human sexuality.

- **Tomorrow Friday 26th November at 6pm** there will be a team going out for the Christmas Lights event in the town centre – look out for characters from the nativity looking suspiciously like members of staff. Pray that we would be able to invite many to our Christmas services.
- **Saturday 27th November at 9.30am** – Anita Jones is kindly leading a 'Litter pick' in the town centre as a means of practical service within our community – you would be most welcome to join in.
- **Church Finances** – you may have missed the video presentation last Sunday from our treasurer, John Collett, which can be located [here](#) alongside other information about giving to the Lord's work at St Nicholas.
- **Church Housing** – you can find an update from the wardens [here](#) about the purchase of a property which has recently been completed.
- **Lady Boswell School Admissions** – every seven years the School is required to consult about its admissions policy. See [here](#) for further details about how you may wish to engage with this process.

Finally, a song and a prayer

Here is a beautiful live version of '[All people that on earth do dwell](#)' from the Gettys' 'Sing!' conference.

The prayer this week is the **Collect for Advent Sunday**:

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to 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 for ever. Amen.

Warmly in Christ,

Angus MacLeay