

Bridges Group News

Date: 3rd December 2023

Sunday: Advent 1



News and Views – hosted this week by Stockton

This Sunday marks the start of Advent. This is a time of reflection in the Church calendar. The Church learned a long time ago that people need a way to come close to a mystery like Christmas. The Church set aside 4 weeks to get ready. During this time we are on the way to Bethlehem; we are all making the journey. On the first Sunday in Advent we think about the prophets who pointed the way to Bethlehem.

In reality, the run up to Christmas, is often a time of extreme busyness and stress for many. However, Christmas is a joyous time when we revisit the story of Christ's birth and come together in our Churches to celebrate. As one of the children's Christmas books puts it:

God became human that first Christmas Day
He's saying to you "You're special to me".
Worth more than you know, more than silver or gold,
From your first breath, 'til your wrinkly and old.
(God became like me. Scripture Union)

Wherever you fit on the age spectrum, take time to remember you are special to God. I hope you will find time to enjoy some of the many pre- Christmas events in our villages and Churches.

Wendy

Weekly reflection from Rev Andy

One of the things that always strikes me about the readings in Advent, is the way they often return to the theme of light and dark. And maybe for many people the world seems a pretty dark place at the moment, with the terrible conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, the challenges so many are facing with the cost of living, soaring mortgages and an NHS pushed to the limit. And for all of us when the days are dark and miserable, it affects the way we feel. Seasonal Affective Disorder they call it. We become gloomy and despondent. We forget that above the clouds the sun is still shining. The light we enjoy so much is still there but it is just out of sight for a time. But Jesus is the light of the world the Bible tells us. This is the light that came to save and not to condemn. This is the light that brings healing and forgiveness. This is light that brings life. This is the Light that is Life itself. The light is always shining, even if sometimes we prefer to hide in the dark, and sometimes the light builds gradually, like the growing dawn. In Advent the light builds as we approach the day of Jesus coming, until eventually like the sunrise it bursts over the horizon driving out the darkness, illuminating everything around us, and transforming all that we can see. Other light sources are unreliable. But Jesus the light of the world is eternal and dependable. The light coming into the world can never be extinguished. Yet sometimes, when our world seems a very dark place we need someone to lead us to the light. Maybe someone has guided us in the past, and maybe now we can lead others to the light.

Prayer

Lord, we offer up to you those we know who are going through times of darkness. We think of them and ask, gracious God, that this advent you may bring them light, hope, love and peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Looking ahead

- Building Managers Meeting 4th December
- Deanery Synod : 7th December, 7.30pm at the Tom Hauley Room in All Saints Harbury
- Stockton PCC 14th December
- Albert Hall Carols: 16th December, 9am – 8pm, please email Napton School to book tickets
- Napton PCC 18th December

Services this Sunday: 3 rd December, Advent 1	Services next Sunday: 10 th December, Advent 2
9.00am Prep for Christmas Family service at Priors Hardwick 10.30am Morning worship at Priors Marston 10.30am holy Communion at Napton 10.30am Morning Worship, Lay Led at Stockton Bible readings for the week are: Isaiah 64:1-9, Mark 13:24-end	10.30am Holy Communion CP at Priors Marston 10.30am Morning Worship at Napton 10.30am Holy Communion in the Methodist Tradition at Stockton 5.00 Evensong at Priors Hardwick Bible readings for the week are: Isaiah 40:1-11, Mark 1:1-8

OTHER SERVICES etc



SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER – 9.00AM AT PRIORS HARDWICK
 PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS - A FAMILY SERVICE
 FEATURING THE JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

WEDNESDAY 6TH DECEMBER 6.30PM – CHRISTINGLE SERVICE AT NAPTON

FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER 6.30PM CAROLS AROUND THE VILLAGE AT STOCKTON MEET AT CHURCH

SATURDAY 16TH DECEMBER - LOWER SHUCKBURGH FETE 2-4PM

TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 5.30PM CAROLS AT THE LYCHGATE AT
 PRIORS HARDWICK

WEDNESDAY 20TH DECEMBER YOUNG FARMERS' CAROL SERVICE
 WORMLEIGHTON AT 7.30PM

FRIDAY 22ND DECEMBER – 7.00PM FOREST CHURCH IN NAPTON CHURCHYARD

SATURDAY 23RD DECEMBER – TEA AND MINCE PIES IN THE CHURCH AT LOWER SHUCKBURGH

SUNDAY 31ST DECEMBER THE GATHERING AT LOWER SHUCKBURGH

HOLY COMMUNION LED BY REV MARTIN SAXBY FROM RUGBY

SUNDAY 7TH JANUARY 2024 – 9.00AM AT PRIORS HARDWICK - THE EPIPHANY
 A SERVICE FOR EVERYONE – ESPECIALLY FAMILIES
 FEATURING THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

(For more details of events and diary dates, see our website: www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk or the parish magazines)

Next Week's Bridges Group News will be hosted by Napton.