

HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD

Joyfully serving Jesus



Weekly devotions, prayers and news **Fourth Sunday of Advent** *18 December 2022*

On Sunday we light the last of our Advent candles. Traditionally these have been symbols of hope, faith, joy and peace. When we look back on the past year, the words 'hope' and 'peace' would not be the first ones that spring to mind, and, in an increasingly secular world, faith and joy seem in short supply. Even in our own relatively comfortable neighbourhoods we don't have to look very far to witness suffering, deprivation, fear and despair.

As foretold by the prophet Isaiah, and revealed to Joseph in a dream, Sunday's scripture readings remind us that whatever we are going through, God is with us. Like many today, Jesus was born into poverty and forced to flee his homeland for fear of persecution. He experienced life with all its joys and sorrows, and comes alongside us today as one who understands, who has felt what we've felt and understands our pain. We are promised that one day all will be made new, but until that time we are not alone. God is with us.

Jane & Brian

Church website: www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

Fourth Sunday of Advent (18th December 2022)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

Reader: Ralph Colbran

9.45 Family Carol Service & Nativity *(in church & online)*

6.00 Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols *(in church & online)*

Services during the week:

Wednesday: 10.30 Holy Communion (C. Worship) *(in church & online)*

Readings: Zephaniah 3: 14-18; Luke 1: 39-45

Thursday: 9.00 Holy Communion (Iona/Celtic) *(in church)*

Readings: 1 Samuel 1: 24-end; Luke 1: 46-56

Friday: 11.00 Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) *Readings: Fourth Sunday of Advent (in church)*

Saturday: 2.30 and 4.00 Crib services *(in church)*

11.15 Midnight Mass *(in church & online)*

Next Sunday: Christmas Day (25th December 2022)

8.00 Holy Communion *(in church)*

9.45 Family Eucharist *(in church & online)*

Bishop Ruth Bushyager will be our Celebrant and Preacher at this service

For services live on Zoom: Click the blue link on the front page of the church website

The Collect for Third Sunday of Advent

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

The Post Communion Prayer:

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Isaiah 7: 10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Romans 1: 1-7

Salutation

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1: 18-end

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel',

which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus

A thought: Advent 4 (Matthew 1. 18-end)

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:20-21

As we begin the Fourth Week of Advent, we focus ever more directly upon the miracle that took place over 2,000 years ago. The passage quoted above presents us with the words of the angel of the Lord who spoke to Joseph in a dream. This was one of four dreams that Joseph had in which an angel spoke to him concerning the Christ Child. Saint Joseph is described in Matthew's Gospel as "a righteous man" who was unwilling to expose his betrothed wife, Mary, to shame. We know the story well. Mary became pregnant after being betrothed to Joseph but before they lived together, and Joseph didn't understand how this happened. Mary's virtue and goodness would have appeared to contradict the possibility of her becoming pregnant when she did. Joseph was planning on doing what he thought was the honourable thing. He decided to divorce her quietly so that she would not endure public shame.

But God's plan was so much greater than what Joseph could initially comprehend. The Incarnation of the Son of God within the womb of Mary required supernatural understanding. And that's what Joseph was given. Though he had a dream in which an angel spoke to him, a dream was not enough. The dream also needed to be accompanied by the gift of supernatural knowledge.

Joseph listened in the dream and believed by the interior revelation of faith that this incredible reality was true. This Child was indeed conceived by the Holy Spirit within Mary's womb and Joseph accepted his God-given responsibility with the help of the gift of supernatural knowledge

A prayer for this time of Vacancy:

Send us your Holy Spirit at this time of change and uncertainty, to fill us with vision, energy and faithfulness in prayer that we may be true to our calling to bring new life to our community; and guide with your heavenly wisdom those who are to choose a new priest for this Benefice, so that the one whom we receive may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people, ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith, and to lead us by example, in loving obedience to your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen

Please remember those for whom we pray:

Immediate need: John Bernardi (priest), Paul Simpson, Martin Packham, Val Thompson, Becky Parker, George Snashall, Eileen Macdougall, Eileen Caple, Karen Leese, Hilary Turner-King

Long Term Need: Young Georgia, Joshua and Reggie, Wendy, Ann Went, Julie Sadler, Wendy Hibling, Yvonne Godsmark, Carla Spear, Pam Sagar, Eileen Knight, Maureen Griffiths, Carol Cox, Liz Graydon

Those in Care Homes: Jean Simmons, Mary Watts, Ruth Baker,, Rosemary Pardey, Janet Card

Please remember the recently departed and their families: Jill Rockey

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember: 18th Dorothy Beard, Daisy Kent, 19th Jack Fleming, 20th George Rowe, Helen Hussey, Irene Sayers, 21st John Handcock, Phyllis Bell, 22nd Maurice Donoghue, 23rd Jim Driver, 24th Amy Barnes, William McKay, Jeremy Tapp