

St John's, Brooklands

Extending God's welcome to everyone!

Advent & Christmas Newsletter

Richard writes...

Our theme this Advent is found in three words: watching, waiting, anticipating. Each of these words encapsulate the idea of looking into the future with the expectation that something is going to happen. It is about learning to inhabit the "not yet". As Suzanne, William and I were counting down to the due date, we inhabited this space. We knew what would happen but not when it would happen, and so we waited: watching and anticipating. We were not passive, however, there were various jobs that needed doing as we awaited the new arrival. Our time of waiting was a time of preparing, getting ready to meet someone new.



Advent is also a season of preparation. It is thought that the season of Advent developed from a six-week period of preparation by those who were being baptized on Epiphany, celebrated on 6th January. Although Advent has now lost this baptismal focus, it nevertheless remains a season to invest our time in our relationship with God. Advent is a time to prepare to grow as we commit to our own spiritual growth and seek to deepen our relationship with God. Advent is a time for preparing, getting ready to meet Jesus anew.

To help you with this we're linking in with the "Lights in the Darkness" course that has been put together by the Diocese of Sheffield. I'd encourage you to work through it, and invite a few friends to join in with you. In January our next Alpha course will be starting, may I encourage you to think of five people that you could invite to try Alpha and pray for them during Advent, asking for an opportunity to invite them and that they will say "Yes". Finally, if you turn to the back of this newsletter you will discover some special services that I have planned for next year. Pop them into your diary and have a think about who you could invite along. As we step into an Advent and Christmas unlike any before, let us *prepare to grow* as we seek to renew our relationship with Jesus and take steps to introduce him to others.

Revd Richard Sherratt

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<https://linktr.ee/stjohnsbrooklands>

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St John's, Brooklands

We believe that God is calling us to be the missional heart of our community as we invite everyone in Brooklands to hear God's invitation of a new relationship, belong to God's family, believe the good news about what Jesus has done for us, and experience the radical hospitality Jesus extends to everyone: an invitation to sit and eat in God's kingdom.

Our Vision

Extending God's welcome to everyone

Our Mission

Welcoming you into God's family as we grow in Christ together

Our Values

We are a **welcoming** church...

Worship: growing as disciples formed by God's word and Spirit

Evangelism: making disciples as we introduce people to Jesus

Liturgical: living lives shaped by God's story

Community: belonging to our church family

Outward-looking: going out beyond our four walls

Missional: serving God's purposes for the world

Invitational: inviting everyone to know Jesus for themselves

Nurturing: equipping everyone for ministry

Generous: excelling in the grace of giving

Our Strategy

welcome to the family → grow in faith → share life together → serve in God's mission

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Our Christmas Services

Crib Service | 24th December @ 4pm



Join us online as we retell the Christmas story! You'll get the opportunity to make a DIY Christingle! You can **sign up online** through our Link Tree (see the bottom of page 1) or Face Book page and we'll email you the Zoom link.

Christmas Day Service | 25th December @ 9.30am



Our **online** service shall be streamed on our YouTube channel. There will be a link on our Link Tree. If you're not up in time you can catch up later in the day!

Christmas Day Communion | 25th December @ 9.30am



Join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. You will need to pre-book a ticket for your bubble. Tickets can be obtained **online** or you can phone Richard and he will reserve you one.

Feast of St John | 27th December @ 9.30am



Join us as we celebrate our patronal festival, the feast of St John's the Divine. You will need to pre-book a ticket for your bubble. Tickets can be obtained **online** or you can phone Richard and he will reserve you one.

Incense shall be used during this service.

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Advent Reflection

~ Isabel Bryce and Sue Withenshaw ~



The season of Advent has been described as the most beautiful and profound time of the Christian year, yet this can also be a time of great stress. For some, frantic preparation leads to exhaustion and frustration. For others it can be a time of deep sadness and regret, a time of feeling helpless and afraid.

In this time of uncertainty, we are hopeful that we may be able to spend

a little time with loved ones over Christmas but recognise that restrictions may still be in place. Advent 2020 will be different from past years, with different challenges and opportunities. However, one thing is certain ... *God is with us*, whatever our circumstances, as we journey together. Remember that God is everywhere, all around us, constantly reaching out to us, even in the most unlikely situations.

During the first lockdown, many of us spoke of being uplifted by being out in the garden, walking in the park, or simply enjoying the view from a window. It is good to take time to see what might otherwise remain unnoticed, the signs of God's presence in the world, in the people we meet and in our own lives too. The signs are there if we open our eyes!

Henri Nouwen spoke of Advent as "an active waiting in which we live the present moment to the full in order to find there the signs of the One we are waiting for."

As the first door on the Advent calendar is opened, some young members of our family, and others not so young, will tell us that we have 26 sleeps till Christmas Day! Waiting for Christmas is part of the excitement.

Advent is an exciting time to come afresh - or even for the first time – to God's word, because it is a time of new beginnings. With Mary and Joseph and all creation we wait expectantly for a birth. Every birthday can be a time of reflection, wonder and hope, but surrounding *this* birthday is a simply breath-catching expectancy, for it celebrates the birth of God's Son, the Word made flesh. Emmanuel, God with us.





Seeking to build on the success of #FollowTheStar the Church of England has launched a new campaign: **Comfort and Joy**. It seeks to reflect the hope that Christmas will bring both joy and celebration after a uniquely difficult year as a result of the pandemic. At the same it recognises that many of us still long for comfort in the face of the hardship and loss we have endured this year, be that the loss of livelihoods or loved ones.

This series of short reflections seeks to help us navigate a difficult Christmas season by exploring the themes of comfort and joy. It shall be based on the structure of the traditional carol service of Nine Lessons and Carols and as such it will explore the biblical texts associated with Christmas as well as and the words of much-loved Christmas carols. These reflections shall cover every day from Christmas Day up until the 2nd January. They will also be made available freely via audio, smart speaker, as well as via app and email formats with accompanying prayer activities for children and families. You can also purchase physical copies. If you'd like a physical copy please contact our vicar and he'll get one to you (*suggested donation of £1*).

To find out more: www.churchofengland.org/ComfortAndJoy



Alpha Online

Ask the big questions from the comfort of your home. Try Alpha Online

#AlphaOnline



You're invited to explore life and the basics of the Christian faith in a friendly, open, and informal environment.

Alpha provides you with the chance to ask the big questions in life and to share what you think with a small group of people just like you. Each session looks at a different question around faith and is designed to

create conversation. No matter who you are Alpha is for you! It's fun, relaxed, and there's no pressure.

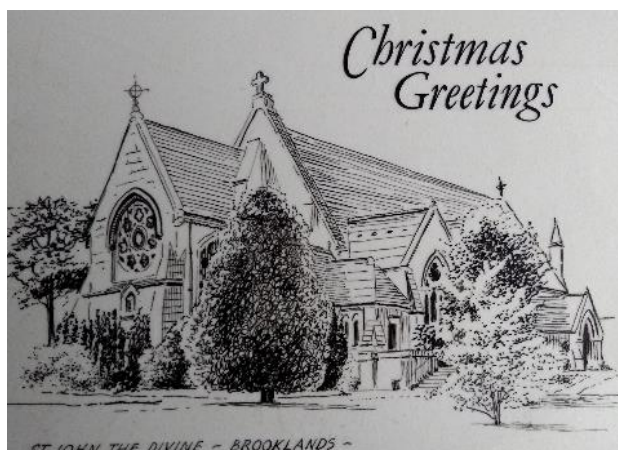
Alpha Online will meet using Zoom at 8pm on the following dates. If you're interested you can register on our website or by contacting our vicar directly. #TryAlpha #ExploreFaith

Date	Topic
27 th January	Alpha Taster - Life: Is this it?
3 rd February	Jesus: Who is he?
10 th February	Cross: Why did Jesus die?
24 th February	Faith: How can I have faith?
3 rd March	Prayer: Why and how do I pray?
10 rd March	Bible: Why and how do I read the Bible?
13 th March	<i>Saturday "Away Day"</i>
17 th March	Telling Others: Why and how should I tell others?
24 th March	Healing: Does God Heal today?
31 st March	Church: What about the church?

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Christmas Gift



Could you give a Christmas gift to the St John's family?

2020 has been a year like no other and your financial commitment to St John's during this challenging season is greatly appreciated as we seek to make disciples, bless our

community, and see lives changed.

As we enter the Christmas season and look ahead to next year are you in a position to make a one-off Christmas gift to St John's?

There are **two** easy ways to give:

- 1) If you bank online you can make a payment direct to our bank account, using the bank details below
- 2) You can send a cheque made payable to 'St John the Divine, Brooklands' to our treasurer: Mrs Adele Lane, 81 Broad Road. Sale. M33 2EU.



Our Bank Details

Bank: NatWest

Sort Code: 01-07-71

Account No: 02596334

Account Name: St John the Divine, Brooklands

Reference: *Please use your full name*



Looking ahead...

*Places shall be limited at these services and you will need to book a ticket in advance.
Services may be cancelled depending on the restrictions in place at the time.*

Epiphany | 6th January @ 8pm



Join us as we journey with the magi and celebrate their arrival to worship Jesus. This special service of Holy Communion shall include . **Incense** shall be used.

Candlemas | 2nd February @ 8pm



Join us as we celebrate the presentation of Jesus at the temple and reflect on what it means for him to be the light of the world. This special service shall include a candle-lit procession. **Incense** shall be used.

Messy Church | 7th February @ 4pm



We're going to restart Messy Church in February and explore Candlemas. We'll meet on the first Sunday of each month. Messy Church values creativity, hospitality and celebration so come along and have fun as you and your family explore faith together!

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