

Church of the Good Shepherd, Low Hill

Notices December 2024

Welcome to the season of Advent

The word "advent" comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means "arrival" or "coming." The term's original meaning was the arrival of a person of noble birth. Therefore, in the season of Advent, we remember Jesus of Nazareth's three distinct and intimate arrivals: in the manger, at the end of time, and in our hearts.

The Bible says the cry, 'Come', expresses the Holy Spirit's greatest longing for Christ's return and the establishment of His kingdom. This cry emphasises spiritual renewal and personal development. The final establishment of the kingdom will be characterised by strength, glory, power, and victory.

Three lessons about Advent can be learnt from St Luke's Chapter 2 account of Jesus' birth:

- The importance of faith and obedience
- The power of God's love and mercy
- The joy of salvation and redemption

In this season of Advent, let us eagerly anticipate our Lord's second coming in His glorious, powerful, and triumphant splendour. This anticipation fills us with hope and reassurance. Come, Lord Jesus, come.



December News

Notice Board (Things that happen regularly)

Sunday Services are disrupted a little during December, so please keep this page for reference.



- 🎄 December 1st 11am, Holy Communion
- 🎄 December 8th 11am, Service of the Word
- 🎄 December 15th 11am Christingle (see separate focus)
- 🎄 December 22nd **4pm** Carol Service, A traditional service of lessons and carols, celebrating jointly with St James and followed by festive light refreshments
- 🎄 December 24th **11pm** Midnight Communion to herald Christmas Day.

- ♥ **Waking the Dawn** prayer is every Saturday, 8am - 9am. All are welcome.
- ♥ **Over 50s** will meet on December 9th and then take a break until January 6th.
- ♥ **Bushbury Youth Group** will meet as usual until December 13th and then break during the school holidays, returning on January 10th.
- ♥ **Coffee Morning**; will continue on Friday mornings until December 20th and will restart on January 10th. Pretty confident that there won't be any hint of turkey, sprouts or pigs-in-blankets, unless anyone persuades Toastie Pat otherwise. Could be a 'Toast-off Challenge'!

Other news



Parish Christmas Celebration Buffet is at 6pm in the Parish Hall on December 7th. There is a sign-up sheet in church; the last day to add names is December 4th. See Karen or Chris for more details and payment options. The suggested cost is £5 adults and £2.50 for children



The Healing Service will continue its bi-monthly pattern. The next one will be on January 12th 5 - 6pm. Note this will take place at St Mary's Church.



If you need to contact Rev Taiwo Olumuyiwa, please in the first instance speak to the **Parish Office**: 01902 782226

We can also be found on: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com> (enter The Good Shepherd, Low Hill).

<https://bushburyteamministry.co.uk/church-of-the-good-shepherd>

Or on facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CHURCH.COGS/>

December Focus

What do you get if Christopher Columbus is struck by lightning?

Answer: A Chris Tingle. Ha! Ha! Ha! (groans are optional!).



There's a lot more to Christingle than just the 'Aw factor' as the lights are dimmed and the candle light begins to fill the dark spaces, so this month I have been looking into its origins, symbolism and modern adaptations.

It was popularised in England from 1968, but it has its origins in the Moravian Church of eighteenth century Germany. There is some debate as to whether the term is derived from the German word "Christkindl" which translates as "Christ Child." (across large parts of Europe and Latin America the Christkindl is the bringer of Christmas gifts, so this would seem appropriate) however, other sources suggest that the word comes from a blending of the words "Christmas" and "Ingle." Ingle is an old Scottish word for "fire" and therefore it can be roughly translated as "Christ-light."

Way back during the advent season of 1747, a Moravian minister, John De Watteville, gave the gift of a small candle wrapped in a red ribbon to each child in the congregation. The candle's flame symbolised Jesus as the light of the world and the red ribbon represented his blood shed for the world. It went on to become an annual custom, largely celebrated in Moravian churches across the world, including Moravian churches in Britain. In 1968 the first non-Moravian Christingle ceremony was organised at Lincoln Cathedral by John Pensom, with the aim of raising money for The Children's Society. Its popularity has snowballed, and each year, during the period from advent to Candlemas, thousands of Christingle services are celebrated in churches, schools, and even online to help raise awareness of and much-needed funds for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

We give out candle-shaped collecting boxes in the weeks leading up to our Christingle (December 15th 11am) which are presented at the service as our collective response for The Children's Society - a chance to share the joy of our hope, in a very practical way. Donations are easy to make online for those who prefer (childrenssociety.org.uk) and the website has loads of information about the scope and impact of how our funding helps the work of The Children's Society.

De Watteville's original symbolism, was a simple representation of the light and blood of Jesus, but these days we are more familiar with the image of the orange and the candle, decorated with a variety of dried fruits, sweets or lollipops (don't blink as they have a habit of disappearing very quickly!) Although we can read more and more into it, the central message of the son of God stepping into our world, bringing *HIS* light into our darkness, and offering *HIS* life to save ours, remains at its heart, reminding us that Almighty God is the father of Christmas.

Do come and join us if you can - we would love to have you with us.



O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Til He appear'd and the soul felt its worth!