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Lockdown

As we enter another period of lock-down uncertainty, due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic both Vicky and myself thought we would share some of our thoughts as we look back over the past eight months...

We are all aware of the chaos Covid 19 has brought to our lives, not seeing friends, family, unable to celebrate birthdays and special events and, of course, the effects on worship and fellowship at St Michael's. For the first few weeks from early March, with Gordon back at home after open heart surgery and enjoying the recovery rest in the early Spring sunshine was just what the doctor ordered, even if there was a feeling of being vulnerable, even fearful of the virus and what lay ahead.

Our actions mirrored very much Middle England's response to the pandemic, lock-down, stay at home, keep safe. With the weather fair, out came the tools to carry out those long planned decorating jobs and afternoons spent tidying garden shrub beds and lawns and even for those "working at home" the days took on a completely new meaning.

Although, there has been so much negativity being highlighted in the papers and news programmes, the one great positive has been the response to the crisis from the team at St Michael's. Great credit must be given to our Rector Martin, the Wardens, Sue Reid and the team of willing volunteers, keeping the ship afloat with their inspirational organisation. St Michael's in the Market Place has been a bright beacon of hope and brings to mind Paul's Letter to the Galatians – Chapter 5 vs 22-23 in what they have all achieved.

Reflecting on the above Bible passage, we are reminded of the many roles carried out by our Church Family, keeping us all together during these times of uncertainty.

Love - The Holy Communion Team – keeping in regular contact by telephone conversations with people who normally receive Holy Communion in their homes.

Joy - seeing everyone at Sunday Services via Zoom, especially during the "Break Out Rooms" - keeping connected.

Peace - A privilege to be able to produce a video as an alternative to our annual Remembering Service (still available to view).

Patience - the challenge of waiting for us to come out of lock-down.

Kindness - Shown by members of our Church Family delivering the hard copies of the weekly sheets to people who are unable to come to church or join in the zoom services. The delivery of cards designed and produced by a member of the 9.30 am Service reminding them that people at St Michael's are thinking of them and very much in our prayers.

Faithfulness - By all the stewards who have welcomed people to St Michael's during the weeks when our Church has been open for private prayer.

The list is endless, but a timely reminder that so many people in our Church Family have helped to keep St Michael's "alive" through this pandemic.

Remembering God is alongside us in our times of trouble and his promise that he will not abandon us. A prayer from the Prayer Trust, which you might find helpful:-

Keep us safe, Lord, as with your help we seek to manoeuvre through all the obstacles of life that hinder us from arriving at our true destination with you. Amen.

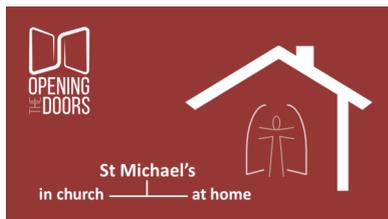
Vicky and Gordon Darlington

Join us for

Sunday Worship

St Michael's Worship 15th November 2020
Second Sunday Before Advent
ONE service this week at 10am: on Zoom

To join by Zoom click
on the image or use
Meeting ID:
939 7279 7379
Password: 01625



Service Leader: Martin Bancroft
Talk: Martin Stephens
Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Can't join us live either in church or on Zoom?

Watch the recording of our morning worship service on
Zoom at a time to suit you after Sunday lunchtime [here](#)

No Computer? No problem!

You can still join any of these Zoom meetings and services
with your landline phone

If phoning:



Dial 0330 088 5830.

When prompted, enter the Meeting ID
from any of these boxes followed by #

[For Sunday's service: 939 7279 7379]

When prompted, enter #



Email any [prayer requests](#) here:

Based on this week's lectionary readings:

Resources for adults and families: click [here](#)

Resources for children: click [here](#)

(or printed with your hard copy newsletter)

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JOIN US ON Zoom

CONNECT WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Wednesday Morning Discussion
11.00am to 12 noon

Join Zoom meeting [here](#)

Meeting ID: 326 496 3258

Passcode: 01625



Coffee & Chat



Apologies to those who had problems entering last week. Please use the link here from now on. Tricia



Monday House Group:

When? 7.30pm til 9pm Monday evenings

Join Zoom Meeting [here](#)

Meeting ID: 910 4838 5228

Password: 01625

We've recently been looking at Paul's letters to the Christians in Corinth, but there's also the preliminary chat/pastoral catch-up and prayer together. Join us, or for more information contact Martin [by email](#) or 01625 426110

Thursday Homegroup

We meet via Zoom at 7.30pm. During Advent we shall be discussing an Advent study book. All are welcome to join for Bible Study, prayer and fellowship, including by phone. Please contact David Mayers by [email](#) or phone 01625 420716 or 07963 802659.

DONATIONS: Donating to the church for general purposes has been made simpler. Either click on the blue Donate button or scan the QR Code.



SCAN ME

Giving to the work and
worship of St Michael's

Click here to donate towards our church's ministry →



In Loving Memory of Margaret



It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of Margaret Eastwood on Monday this week. Margaret was living in Oak Household in Belong on Kennedy Avenue, where she died peacefully.

Mo Black had actually delivered some flowers and a card to her last Friday from St Michael's Church, so

right to the very end, she knew we were all still thinking about her and she was still very much part of our church family. Margaret lost her husband, Warren, back in September 2016. She moved into Belong in 2017 and was by all accounts very happy there. She was visited regularly by her family and

members from St Michael's, including the home communion team who took communion to her right up until the pandemic meant that had to cease. Please remember her sons, Pete and David and their wives, Sue and Bea, and other members of the family in your prayers.

Margaret's funeral will take place in church next Thursday 19th November at 1.30pm conducted by Lynne Spedding. Funerals are currently limited to 30 people. If you would like to attend Margaret's funeral, please let me know so we can start a list. Once the family confirms their numbers we will then know if we can give spaces to church members.

Any donations in memory of Margaret will be divided equally between Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Alzheimers Society. Macclesfield Co-op Funeral Society are the funeral directors, or pass your donation to church who can pass onto the family for you.

I am sure that many church members will have lots of memories of both Margaret and Warren. They really were long time members of St Michael's. A real end of an era.

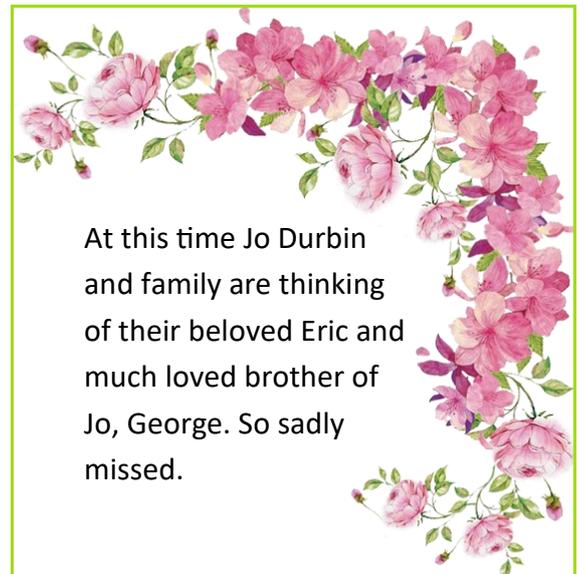
Sue

Funeral reflection for use at home [here](#)

Posada 2020

You will all recall the Posada figures of Mary, Joseph and the donkey who travel round our homes in Advent each year arriving back at church on Christmas Day.

This year we'd really like to reach out to our community with the real message of Christmas asking people to make room for Jesus in their lives. We'd like to acknowledge in particular local shops, businesses, organisations and groups in Macclesfield who have been most challenged by the pandemic. We will take the Posada figures to care homes, the hospital, shops and businesses in our town and will share Mary and Joseph's journey round our town on Facebook, our website and in our newsletter. We will collect prayer requests from them to bring to church and find out what has been bringing them comfort and joy in the pandemic and share that too. By doing this we hope to highlight our concern as a church for our town community. I've got lots of ideas on this and am seeking anyone else who'd like to get involved and help. Please let me know if you can help... Sue



At this time Jo Durbin and family are thinking of their beloved Eric and much loved brother of Jo, George. So sadly missed.

Comfort
and Joy



In recognition of the pandemic the Church of England's Advent and Christmas campaign is called Comfort and Joy.

Comfort and Joy holds together the hope that Christmas will bring joy and celebration after a uniquely difficult year with an acknowledgement that – for those who have lost loved ones or livelihoods, or who are potentially still not able to be together with loved ones – it may be the Church's role, both nationally and locally, to provide consolation, rather than assume everyone will be ready to join in jubilation. This Christmas the Church will need, in the words of St Paul in Romans 12.15, to 'Rejoice with

those who rejoice; weep with those who weep'. We will aim to celebrate where we can together in one place – but also embrace a wider community that wants to join in the celebration but may not be physically able – or emotionally ready – to do so. We hope that Comfort and Joy will enable us to build a campaign that both enables us to reconnect with the rich and joyous traditions of the past and to offer God's consoling love in the present. As a church we will embrace this theme. I will shortly be circulating an individual postcard to everyone. We want you to express what has brought you comfort and joy over the pandemic this year. It might be your faith, your friends and family, music, gardening etc. You can express it however you want: a photo, a collage of photos stuck to the postcard, a drawing, a poem, random words, a quote, a verse from a song or hymn. You decide. This is your personal response. We will share these in church by displaying them through Advent and Christmas - more news on this soon, but get thinking what your response might be ... Sue

Lockdown Church at Home

Just a reminder that Sunday worship is taking place exclusively at home in this second lockdown period.

It was wonderful to see so many people worshipping together from their homes last Sunday. This screenshot taken by Tricia, our wonderful Zoom verger and host, is just one screen in gallery view of people there last week.

We will keep you informed if anything changes that permits us to worship in church again before lockdown ends.

Ed: have to giggle - isn't there some psycho-babble thing about the longer a couple spends together they end up mimicking each other's behaviours. Who am I talking about...?



Dear Friends at St Michael's

I would like to thank you very much for the wonderful donations: it's really appreciated.

Unfortunately, due to the uncertain times we're living in, we are unable to carry out our usual Christmas Day meal. We have been very fortunate that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Lions of Macclesfield have come together with some wonderful ideas. This year with all the stipulations we are hoping to do a BBQ in the square outside St Michael's. A plan and application along with indemnity insurance, have been sent in (fingers crossed). If permission is granted we will be able to give hot food and drinks out to many people who are less fortunate than ourselves. Everybody at ROAR has really missed coming to St Michael's and seeing you all. Hopefully we'll be able to meet up and see each other early next year.

We had a wonderful Remembrance Service at ROAR this morning (11th November).

Once again many thanks and may we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy new year.

Jill Millward



There will be the usual Christmas Sheep Trail around town this year, so the organisers need large numbers of sheep to be knitted for the children who will be following the trail. If you can knit and have some time on your hands(!), please help.

The pattern – if you need one – is available [here](#) For offline knitters, let Sue or Lynne know you'd like a copy and we'll get one to you.

Details to follow regarding the deadline and a collection method for completed sheep, but – meanwhile – dust off your needles and get knitting!

Thank you.

Lynne Spedding



The Office Assistants were given some time off from office duties to mark the two minutes silence on Armistice Day. We held two short acts of remembrance in church this year. Martin led one on Sunday live via Zoom at 10.55am and David Mayers led another live via Facebook at 10.55am in church on Armistice Day. And our parish scout and guide groups wore their uniforms and stood on their doorsteps to mark Remembrance Sunday.

Audio-Visual Grant

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded a grant of



£4,400 towards our audio-visual project, to assist with the purchase of equipment to enable live-streaming of services, hopefully without the many glitches we have experienced over recent months!

A bid was put into the All Churches Trust in August under a scheme called "Hope Beyond", which supports projects aimed at maintaining effective worship and social engagement in these difficult times.

In addition to the streaming capability, we are also planning to install a permanent projection system, with large TV monitors for the congregation (currently cardboard mock-ups are in place). The total cost for the project will be in the region of £44000.

This grant will be a great help towards the costs, but we do still seek donations from any who might feel that this is something they could support.

If you wish to donate, please scan the QR code below. Alternatively, contact Mike as above or on 01625 617678 for details of how to make an electronic transfer.



Lynne Spedding

Ed: A big thank you to Lynne for making this grant application which had to be submitted in a very short space of time.

Wednesday Morning Coffee & Chat



I really enjoy talking to friends on Wednesday mornings and I have got to know this little group of people very well during the few months of lockdown. I have been really encouraged by their willingness to talk about their Christian faith and how it affects their lives.

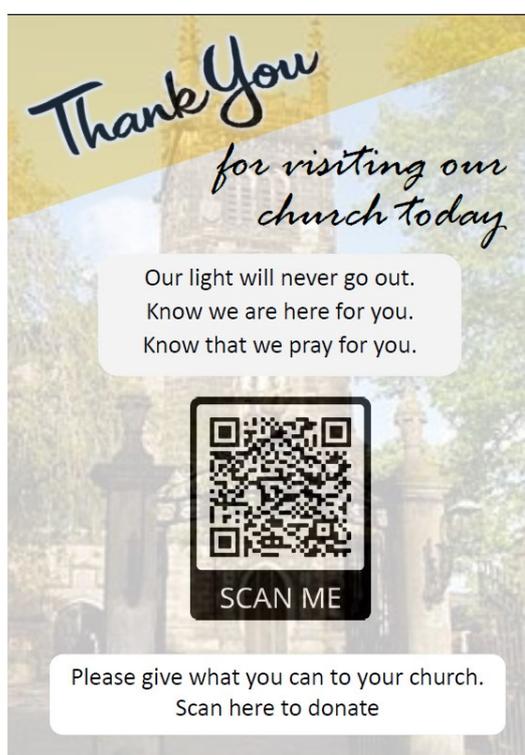
We have been reminded of how God is persistent in wanting to have a good relationship with human beings and with all of creation. We looked at the covenant that God made with Noah and ALL living things; humans broke that agreement by our treatment of the planet. Following that, God made covenants with Abraham, Moses and David – all of them were broken in the end. So, there was a need for a final and eternal solution – this became known as the New Covenant and it is forever. The agreement is that Jesus, (fully human, fully divine) has made the way for ALL creation to be in relationship with God, regardless of any sin (dust???) that would stand in the way.

This is the relationship that fuels the life of a Christian and by sharing our earthly lives together we can grow in faith to become the Church Family that God intends us to be.

Stop being babies in Christ and grow up to maturity so that when trials come you can withstand, knowing that you are loved by a generous God. Ephesians 4.14-16

Keep safe. Tricia Atherton x

ONLINE DONATIONS
MADE EASY



How to Use a QR Code for anyone unsure

For those unfamiliar with QR codes but who would like to know how to use them:

1. Put your phone or device, like an iPad, into camera mode and hover the phone screen over the black and white image as if you were taking a photo of it. (Online newsletter recipients: You do not need to print the newsletter off to do this, it will work through the screen of your device.)
2. You will see four corner shapes appear in yellow and then you should get a grey box appear at the top of your screen saying Website QR Code.
3. Click on this grey box and it will take you to the donations page where you can make your selection and enter your payment details.

We now have two QR codes set up for easy online giving through mobile and portable devices like phones and iPads. A huge thank you to Katie Wilcock for getting the main online donation QR code sorted (QR code on page 2). Posters advertising this QR code (like the one here) are now on display at various points round church. Thank you to Mike for organising the AV project QR code.

Safeguarding at St Michael's - some new faces!



Gemma



Chris



Carol

As you know the safeguarding of our young people and vulnerable adults is a vital part of our ministry at St Michael's.

After nine years in the role Paul Spedding has decided to step down from the Parish Safeguarding Officer role.

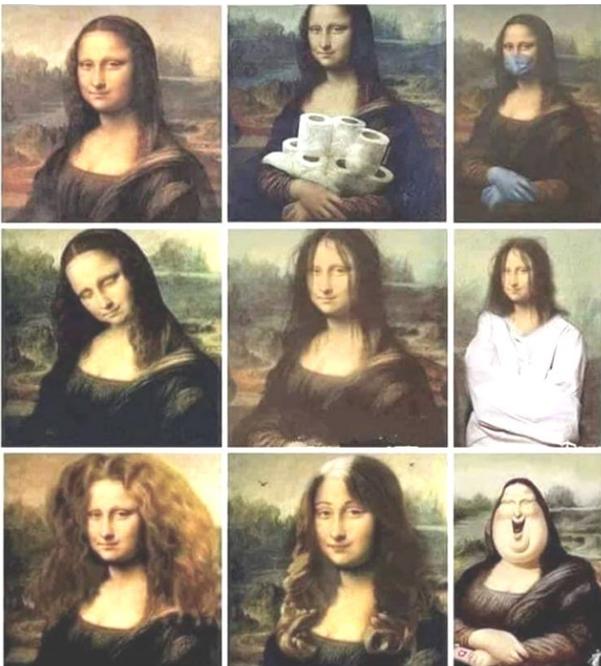
Gemma Shepherd-Etchells has agreed to take over in the major role as PSO but it is intended to run it on a slightly different basis. Gemma will take on the overall co-ordinator role for St Michael's and the link person for the Diocese, but as part of a team of three within St Michael's.

Chris Bentley has also been involved in this vital work and is happy to continue. Carol Riesen has generously agreed to come on board and the idea is that she and Chris know (and are known by) different parts of our church family.

As always, if you have any concern about a possible safeguarding issue, please contact Gemma, Chris or Carol.

Alternatively if you feel more comfortable going outside the parish, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Pauline Butterfield, at pauline.butterfield@chester.anglican.org or 01928 718834 ext 221 or 07703 800031

Stages of Lockdown Part 2: How are you doing this time?



No Nativity this year because the 3 Wise Men face a travel ban. The shepherds have been furloughed. The Inn keeper has shut under tier 3 regulations and had a slump in bookings. Santa won't be working as he would break the rule of 6 with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner and Blitzen. As for Rudolph, with that red nose, he should be isolating and taking a test. 😂😂

Pray for Our Nation during November 6pm each evening

Join with other Christians across the country to pray for our nation at 6pm throughout November. Pray for different groups each day. Attached again to this newsletter and hard copy for the offline readers are the suggestions for prayer each day. Below is the weekly prayer for the week ahead.



Some thoughts on my New Normal Day

by one of riper years, Norma Stanway

Inspired by Sue's contribution last week about the pandemic which gave me food for thought; it prompted a few of my own thoughts. Thought you might like to have an oldie view...

Most of my thoughts can be encapsulated in three songs from the Olden Days as I've been around a long time!

No.1 Busy Doing Nothing

Somehow there is always something to be done and get on with, maybe it's been in the 'obeyance box' for some time and takes longer to accomplish. I'm fortunate to have a small garden and it's good to see the efforts of my labour from my kitchen sink.

Then it's lovely to have calls from family and friends - also doing nothing, or little they would like to.

There's also more time for prayer and reflection and Bible Study and walking round the block and seeing and appreciating the nearby countryside.

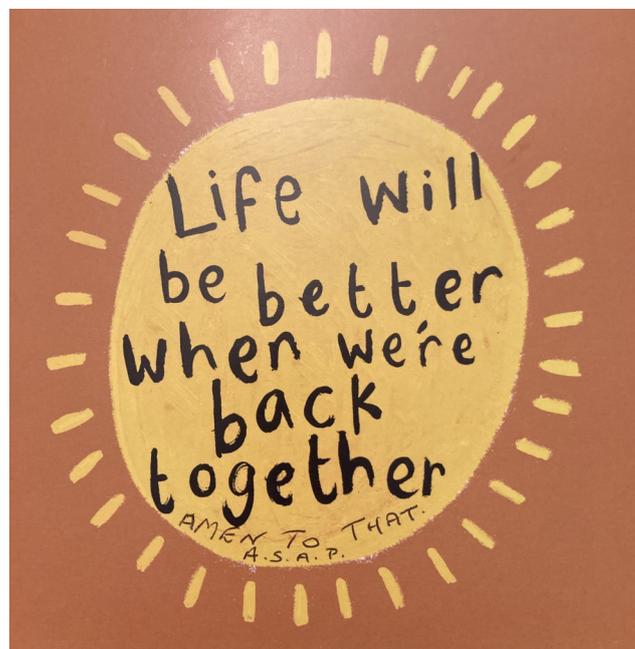
No. 2 Life gets tedious don't it?

Yes it does at times with the confining restrictions now. Hard to see where one is going with a mask befogging your glasses and not being able to see how I'm paying in a shop, or hear what's being said. Still, we're fortunate to have help available from our key workers and chats to the girls in the shops. However, the sun still shines (now and then) and the birds don't know about Covid.

No 3. Little things mean a lot

Though no social life is possible any more, it's good to phone family and friends and receive their "news".

A smile and wave from a little toddler on his Dad's back walking ahead of me made my day recently as do the familiar dogs awaiting a pat.



Last week the bus stopped as I did the usual walk round the block and the driver handed me a lost umbrella through his window. If possible they drop me off at the top of the road - no significant places round here. How kind is that?

I find great solace in music and I've somehow come to think in it these days. From an early age, I've sung in mainly church choirs, so church music and hymns ancient and modern plus recent worship songs come to mind and give me a lift. Classic FM is always on and is a great companion and the presenters cheery and informative. Who else but Bill Turnbull would think of doing a programme on Bonfire Night to keep the nation's pets calm?! In these sad bleak dark days of November and lockdown once again, it's easy to dwell on the dire state of world wide suffering. Our hearts go out to the many who have experienced loss of loved ones and ill health, those who are jobless now and homeless. Lord may Thy Kingdom come and may they find hope, help and succour in their hour of need.

How I miss music at St Michael's, in worship with Karen's organ, the music group and magnificent choir and singing the hymns and songs.

The Remembrance hymn "O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come" is particularly relevant now, as is "Faithful One, so unchanging - your love is the anchor, my hope is in You alone." My favourite since hearing it on a friend's car radio years ago is: "Thank you oh my Father for giving us Your son and leaving His Spirit til the work on Earth is done".

Amen to that.

We'll meet again.
Norma

0800 804 8044
DailyHOPE
A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

Advent Reading

the Hope Centre is still able to obtain and supply these books. [Email Emily](#) to place your order.



Advent is just a few weeks' away (starts 29th Nov). Why not order a book from the Hope Centre?

Even better, share the Advent journey with others too .. join one of the small groups* meeting online? Contact Rachel Mayers, Tricia Atherton or

Martin Stephens to express interest in joining a small group to journey through Advent together. *(As well as your name, let them know which book you intend to use, and whether you'd prefer an evening or daytime group.)*

Note: These groups would not be 'discussion' or 'study' groups, *per se* – rather an opportunity to share this time in Advent with others through what you've been reading together.

Hope

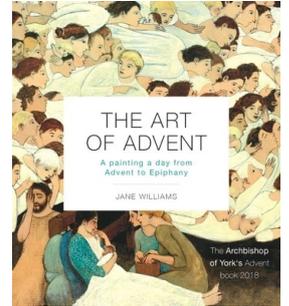
The Art of Advent

by Jane Williams. SPCK Publishing. £7.99

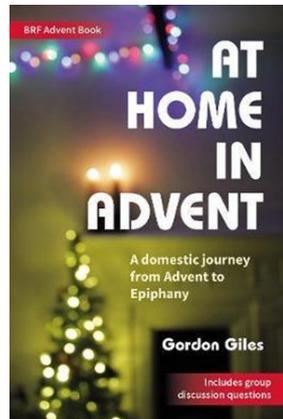
Join Jane Williams on a journey from Advent to Epiphany, and discover the timeless wisdom to be found in some of the world's greatest paintings.

This book provides a painting a day from Advent to Epiphany. Each day ends with a couple of questions and a collect. *The Art of Advent* takes up two seasonal themes: namely, the first coming at Christmas, and the second at the moment of death or the end of time. The pictures are varied and lovely, and the text unstintingly theological and classical.

Illustrated in full colour with nearly forty famous and lesser-known masterpieces of Western



Peace



At Home in Advent

by Gordon Giles. BRF (The Bible Reading Fellowship). £8.99

"Explore hope, expectation and trepidation through everyday objects"

This book travels through Advent to Christmas and beyond in the company of familiar seasonal and domestic objects and experiences. Focusing on the everyday stuff we typically associate with this time of year, including some things not so

festive, Gordon Giles reflects on their spiritual significance, meaning and message in today's world.

Beginning with chapters on journeying and travel, the book moves through major Advent themes of expectation, waiting, mortality and hope to the joy of incarnation and salvation.

At Home in Advent is intended both for individual use and for groups.

"With daily thoughts accompanied by questions, activities, and prayers, it offers "a domestic journey from Advent to Epiphany". The unpretentious text takes account of the coronavirus threat without traumatising the reader. Its very domesticity would make this book the perfect present for someone on lockdown."

Joy

Into the Heart of Advent

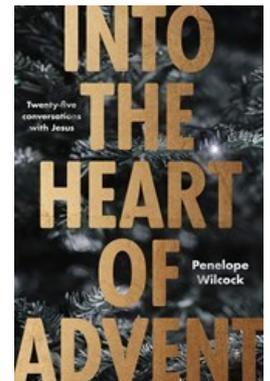
by Penelope Wilcock. SPCK Publishing. £9.99

Imagine meeting up with Jesus for a heart-to-heart conversation. What would you say to him? What might he say to you?

Penelope Wilcock takes us into the heart of Advent in this engaging devotional that offers a unique take on the Christmas season.

In a series of twenty-five reflections, she invites you to listen in on conversations with Jesus about the Christian journey and the meaning of Advent for our lives today. Full of thought-provoking wisdom, this is a bold, imaginative Advent book for 2020.

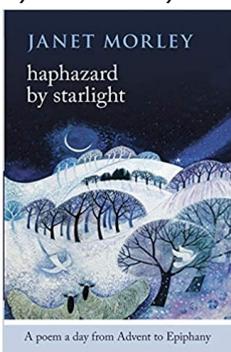
Covering a variety of topics, from families, gifts, angels, homes and hospitality - and more besides - these are Advent reflections that speak to the core of the Christian faith. This is a book for anyone who has wondered what talking with Jesus might be like, or anyone who is looking for a fresh, alternative way of engaging with the Advent season.



Love

Haphazard by Starlight

by Janet Morley. SPCK Publishing.



Subtitled 'A Poem a Day from Advent to Epiphany', this book takes its title from a poem by UA Fanthorpe: 'Walked haphazard by starlight straight into the kingdom of heaven'. What a wonderful image!

With Advent being celebrated when the year is becoming darker and colder, moving into the death and dormancy of winter we engage with themes that are

challenging and occasionally fearful before we can greet the coming of the light. Like the magi who travelled a long distance to search out and adore the infant Jesus, and who took some wrong turnings on the way, we too have a journey to undertake, before we find that we have. Here, the reader is given an opportunity to engage in a pilgrimage of the heart, through Advent and Christmas to the feast of the Epiphany. Each day, from 1 December to 6 January, offers a poem (sometimes explicitly Christian, often not) and an accessible commentary that is both critically informed and devotional in intent.