



Praying Together



Fourth Sunday in Advent
Love
December 2020

Dear Friends,

I have taken a photograph of our lovely Advent Wreath sitting in it's usual place beside the pulpit at St Michael's this year. When you enter the church it almost feels as if there is nothing unusual about this Christmas and everything is in it's usual place and as it should be. But, of course, it is not. This Christmas is very different and, again, we wait for

confirmation as to what we are, or are not able to do, as regards meeting our loved ones at this special time. We are continuing with our services, and enjoyed a lovely crib service last week joined with our Christingle service in which we support the work of The Children's Society. On the second page you will see a photograph of the crib complete with Christingle Candles!

This week we light the fourth candle on our Advent wreath which represents Love. Christmas is all about love. Love came down at Christmas in the form of a helpless baby, God's Son. God's gift to us. As we heard in our service on Sunday, we can receive no greater gift on this earth than that of the Father's gift of his son to us.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."
(John 3: 16-17)

So, as we have journeyed our way through Advent by the lighting of the candles, we eventually find ourselves at the place where it all starts, the lowly manger. Maybe we could find time, in this quieter than usual season, to travel as the shepherds and the Magi did, towards the Christ-child and contemplate his love, his peace, his hope and his joy in our lives for the year to come.

Click here to listen: God So Loved the World by John Stainer, sung by The Tabernacle Choir USA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5Akz6J8Rw0>

May the trust of Mary troubled by her strange call and Joseph's encouragement beside her through it all be God's gift to us.

May the radiant brightness and light of the Star, the hope and longing of searchers from afar, be God's gift to us.

May the wonder of the shepherds surprised by God's love, the joy of the angels who came from above, be God's gift to us.

*May the peace of the Christ-child in carved trough of stone, sounding the word 'Saviour' fashioned by Grace alone,
be God's gift to us.*
(Crawford Murrey)

From the Bible: Luke 2 verses 8 to 12

'And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you; You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger'."

Let us Pray:

Babe of Heaven, Defenceless Love,
in order to come to us
you have to travel far from your home.
Come to strengthen us
on our pilgrimage of trust on earth.
Your birth will show us
the simplicity of the Father's love,
the wonder of being human.
Help us to live fully human lives for you.

Amen.

(Celtic Prayer for Christmas Eve)

Our prayer letter will return in the New Year. Until then, I wish you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas.

"Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down, fix in us thy humble dwelling, all Thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure, unbounded love Thou art; Visit us with Thy salvation, enter every trembling heart"
(Charles Wesley, 1707-1788)



Ali, on behalf of St Michael's Church, Marbury