

December 2022 Edition 83

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)

Advent 2022: Preparing to Give and Receive



Are you patient? Or do you consider yourself to be rather impatient? Do you find it easy to wait for things? Or would you prefer to have what you want immediately?

Our current culture encourages us to expect that we can have what we want immediately. Whether it's instant news, immediate comment via Social Media, or the ability to have items we purchase delivered almost immediately. How hard it is when we have to wait – whether for test results or for a much-needed operation.

Throughout our lives, we often don't have the choice about whether we will have to wait for something. As children we often have to wait for our parents or those who look after us until we are able to begin the day's activities. At school, the day is defined by the ringing of a bell. We have to wait until the end of the day until we are allowed to leave.

Whether it's university or a job, even if we decide what we would like to do or where we would like

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to go, we have to wait until others agree and offer us the place that we hope for. We might think that as we get older we are more used to waiting – after all, we have done it all of our lives. And yet that doesn't necessarily make it any easier.

I wonder what it is that can make waiting so difficult. Perhaps it is in part a sense that we are in limbo. That we know what we want to be doing or where we want to be, and we can't really begin until we get there.

But what if there can actually be a purpose in waiting. What if we reframe the time that we spend waiting as something valuable, in which we are able to grow and develop. The church marks Advent each year as a time of waiting. This is now quite counter-cultural, but invites us to pause and explore the richness of waiting.

This year we will begin the season of Advent with an evening service on Sunday 27th November at 6pm. During this time we will explore ways in which we can prepare ourselves during Advent to receive the gift of Christmas anew.

On Sundays 4th, 11th and 18th December at 11am, we will have Advent Storytime. We are used to reading stories to children, but these will be opportunities to listen to two stories. Each one explores ideas relevant to Advent: What is the significance of gifts? What does it mean to get to our destination by a route we couldn't envisage? What do we discover when things don't turn out as we expect?

During the sessions on 4th, 11th and 18th December we will simply listen to a story and then have time for silent reflection. There will then be an opportunity to share any insights or thoughts that have come to mind. We will close in prayer. The sessions will last for no more than an hour.

If you enjoy reading, you will know that one of the great joys of stories is that we can really enter into all that they are describing. This can mean that we get emotionally involved. The sessions are deliberately reflective to give time for personal prayer or speaking to a trusted friend after we've heard the story.

Sometimes during the run-up to Christmas the expectation can be that we are always excited and happy. That can feel a little hollow. These stories encourage

us to dig a little deeper so that when Christmas comes we understand a little more about the nature and depth of God's love and the joy that it can bring.

Admission to Holy Communion

On Sunday 20th November, the feast of Christ the King, three children who regularly worship and attend Sunday Club at St Mary's were admitted to Holy Communion.

During preparation sessions, Annabel, Lara and Zachary explored the church building, learnt about please, thank you and sorry prayers, talked about favourite Bible stories and re-enacted the story of the Last Supper. They then explored the vestry and discovered how Holy Communion is itself a re-enactment of the Last Supper.

During the service on 20th November, Lara led the congregation in the confession, Zachary read the Bible reading, and Annabel led the congregation in the creed. After confirming that they would like to receive Holy



Communion, they helped to set the altar, then stood behind the altar during the Eucharistic Prayer, asking and responding to questions.

It was a joy to welcome many of the children's parents, grandparents, godparents and friends. Please continue to pray for them all as they take this next step in their faith journey.

December Services and Events

Saturday 3	11 till 2	Christmas Outdoor Market
	11 till 2	Christmas Crib Exhibition in Church
Sunday 4	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
	11.00	Advent Storytime
	19.00	Epsom & Ewell Silver Band Concert
Sunday 11	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion
	11.00	Advent Storytime
Monday 12	19.30	Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room
Wednesday 14	19.15	Men's Group Christmas Meal
Thursday 15	14.30	Afternoon Club in the Cuddington Hall
Saturday 17	10.00	Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 18	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion with Children's Nativity
	11.00	Advent Storytime
	18.00	Service of Readings and Carols
Saturday 24	16.00	Christingle and Blessing of the Crib
	23.30	Midnight Communion
Sunday 25	10.00	Christmas Family Communion with Carols

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome

