Thoughts on Advent

The season of Advent lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas. At that time, the new Christian year begins with the twelve-day celebration of Christmastide, which lasts from Christmas Eve until Epiphany on January 6. (Advent begins on the Sunday that falls between November 27th and December 3rd each year.)

Advent symbolizes the present situation of the church as God’s people wait for the return of Christ in glory to usher in His eternal kingdom. The church is in a similar situation to Israel at the end of the Old Testament: in exile, waiting and hoping in prayerful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Israel looked back to God’s past gracious actions on their behalf in leading them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and on this basis they called for God once again to act for them. In the same way, the church, during Advent, looks back upon Christ’s coming in celebration while at the same time looking forward in eager anticipation to the coming of Christ’s kingdom when he returns for his people. In this light, the Advent hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” perfectly represents the church’s cry during the Advent season:

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appears.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

While Israel would have sung the song in expectation of Christ’s first coming, the church now sings the song in commemoration of that first coming and in expectation of the second coming in the future. To balance the two elements of remembrance and anticipation, the first two Sundays in Advent look forward to Christ’s second coming, and the last two Sundays (December 17th – 24th) look backward to remember Christ’s first coming. Over the course of the four weeks, Scripture readings move from passages about Christ’s return in judgment, to Old Testament passages about the expectation of the coming Messiah, to New Testament passages about the announcements of Christ’s arrival by John the Baptist and the Angels.

Best wishes ***Alan***

 **December 2017**

Welcome to St Peter’s Church, Tollerton. Our Sunday

 Services begin at 10am. Joint Sunday services

 at the Methodist Church begin at 10.30am. Please

 stay for coffee, tea or juice after the service.

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| **3rd****10th** | **HOLY COMMUNION 10am****MORNING WORSHIP 10am** |
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| **17th****24th** **25th****31st** | **HOLY COMMUNION 10am****CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT 6pm****MORNING WORSHIP 10am** **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE 4PM****CHRISTMAS DAY HOLY COMMUNION 10am** **MORNING WORSHIP10am** |

lf you know of anyone who needs a lift to church

 or who is unwell or would like a visit please let

 Ruth (937 6968) or Norma (937 3814) know.

**Church Website:** [www.stpeters-tollerton.org.uk](http://www.stpeters-tollerton.org.uk)

ST. PETER’S CHURCH, TOLLERTON

 Rector: Rev Canon Alan Howe (937 2349)

 Churchwardens: Ruth Hartley (937 6968)

 Norma Smith (937 3814)

