

St. Matt's Midweek Update – 26th November 2020

This week we have a reflection from our vicar, Chris...

Looking forward to Advent

One of the highlights of the year in recent times has been getting together in Munich as a family to celebrate Carole's birthday. When you are apart most of the year, these occasions take on special meaning. I suspect that is why we are all now placing so much hope on being able to gather as families at Christmas. This year, not surprisingly, our birthday gathering in Munich was cancelled and we now hope that being together at Christmas will be possible.

Our visits to Munich have always coincided with the Christmas markets, which have been a wonderful visual (and culinary- Glühwein and Bratwurst) backdrop to our family gathering! They have also often coincided with the beginning of Advent – the season of preparation for Christmas. We seem to start Christmas earlier and earlier (and this year, for so many reasons, it will be earlier than most for many) and it strikes me as sad as we miss out on the preparation – and the anticipation too, if we are not careful. We also miss out on advent, which does look forward to Jesus' birth but also to his return. A theme that offers hope too in these dark times. Over a number of years I have noticed that, despite all the emphasis on Christmas, (you can't get much more Christmassy than Munich Christmas markets) the residents of the city also seem to know how to mark advent too.



I have suggested to Hannah that we try something like this at St. Matt's, but for some reason she seems reluctant!! But it's not just churches that mark Advent in Munich; it seems to be something the whole city does. Every restaurant has advent wreaths and candles hanging from the ceiling or on tables and the markets are full of them, not for tourist but for locals.

So this Advent, not only do I plan to make my own advent wreath, but I also hope to observe it as a season of preparation for the coming of the King, and I would love to invite you to join with me in that (you can make a wreath too if you like).

Why not choose to read something special, or to sign up for an advent devotional? Our partners Tearfund have one - you can sign up [here](#). Why not share your ideas for marking the event on Discipleship for others to see or try?

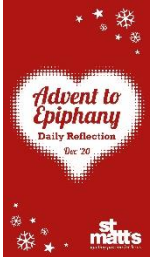
Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.



Notices



This Sunday we will still be completely online with our 10am service. However, it looks like we will be able to go back to our hybrid services, with some people in church and some online, from 6th December. We will find out later today which tier we will be going into, but it looks like places of worship are allowed to re-open in all tiers.



Advent reflections - as well as the Tearfund resource Chris mentioned above, we thought we would share our own reflections through advent. Some of you may remember this Advent booklet from about 6 years ago, that we produced as a church. We have updated it a bit (thanks Nick C!) and will be posting each day, probably on our Facebook page as this will then appear on the home page of our website as well. If you would like to be emailed the reflections each day, please let me know (I don't want to bombard everyone's inboxes!).



Don't forget to sign up to our **Christmas quiz**! It's on Friday 11th December, 7pm on Zoom, and it's going to be an evening of fun and games for all ages. You will need to join in as a household, but all the rounds will be suitable for any size of household, and for all ages and abilities! Sign up [here](#) by the 4th December please!



Suzy is organising a **virtual choir** for this year's online carol service! If you would like to be involved, please let Suzy know, or email me on this address and I'll pass your details on. Please let us know by this Sunday. You will need 2 devices to be able to take part - one to listen to the music on, and one to record yourself singing along!

Photos - Lastly, we would like 2 lots of photos, if you would like to share them! If you had a **birthday in November**, please send us in a birthday photo of you - we need these by Wednesday 2nd December please.

We would also like photos of **households with their Christmas trees / decorations**. We will share these as a slideshow over Christmas, but we may also be able to make a new Christmas countdown with them. So, as soon as you have any decorations or a tree up, please send us in a photo with you in it!

That's all for now!

Have a great weekend, and be in touch if you need anything!