



Sunday 19th December 2021

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Points for Prayer during advent. We pray that we will be ready whenever God comes in our lives: That the nations of the world will work for peace. That the broken will find healing.

In Memory. Cynthia Floyd, Muriel Hall, Val Denning, Marysia Willoughby and Cynthia Griffiths.

Church of England Covid Guidance. In light of the new government Covid measures, you will be guided on arrival at services and events about how each event will be managed. In broad terms mask wearing is now mandatory, sanitiser will be available, the building will be well ventilated and guidance will be given regarding seating and distancing.

Taking some space during Advent

How are you going to mark advent? - read an advent book; go for a walk each day; nominate one or two people to be your 'advent friends' and think, pray and look out for them; have a quiet day or retreat; use an online retreat resource such as the Pray-As-You-Go Advent retreat - this year entitled Stepping Beyond : <https://pray-as-you-go.org/article/advent-2021-stepping-beyond>

Compline at 7pm on Tuesdays We continue compline next Tuesday, our last compline in 2021.

Christmas Services For our Christmas services please check the latest Beacon magazine, the website and the notice boards.

Ipplepen Crib Services on Christmas Eve. This year there will be two crib services at 3:30pm and 5:00pm. Everyone will be welcomed but in an effort to keep everyone safe and allow for social distancing we are limiting numbers. Please phone Hillarie on 01803 812197 to book which service you would like to attend.

Denbury Advent Windows 2021. Look for the posters to find which new window is lighting up each evening in Advent, till all are ablaze for Christmas and into the new year.

Coffee Mates takes place in Denbury on the second Wednesday of each month, 10.30-12 noon at Church Cottage, Denbury. All men welcome to join us on Wednesday 12th January.

Readings	This week	Next week
Readings for this Sunday:		
1st Reading	Micah 5:2-5a	1 Samuel 2:18-20
Psalm	Luke 1:46b-55	148
2nd Reading	Hebrews 10:5-10	Colossians 3:12-17
Gospel	Luke 1:39-45	Luke 2:41-End

Readings for the week ahead:

Mon	20 th	Luke 1:26-38	Thurs	23 rd	Luke 1:57-66
Tue	21 st	Luke 1:39-45	Fri	24 th	Luke 1:67-79
Wed	22 nd	Luke 1:46-56	Sat	25 th	Luke 2:1-20

They can also be viewed/downloaded from <https://bible.oremus.org/>

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Today's Sunday Services

11.00 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
4.00 pm	Carol Service	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
6.00 pm	Christingle & Carol Service	- St John the Baptist, Woodland

Morning Prayer

This week morning prayer will be said at the following times:

Tuesday	9.15 am	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Wednesday	9.00 am	- Via Zoom (for the zoom password email rev.andrewdown@gmail.com)
Thursday	9.15 am	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
Friday	9.15 am	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston (A time of silent prayer and meditation)

Reflection

Our churches are open for private prayer and reflection throughout the week at the following times:

St Peter & St Paul's, Broadhempston	9am to 4pm	Daily
St Andrew's, Ipplepen	9am to 5pm	Daily
St Mary the Virgin, Denbury	10am to 5pm	Daily
St John the Baptist, Woodland	9am to 5pm	Daily

Mid-Week

Rev'd Andrew Down's Day Off on Mondays each week. Church Office open on Thursday only.

Monday	(Onwards daily)	Christmas Display & Music	- Ss Peter & Paul, Broadhempston
	3pm-5pm	T-Pot	- Church Cottage, Denbury
	7.00pm	Carols Around the Village Tree	- Ipplepen
Tuesday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
	7.00 pm	Carols in the Square	- Broadhempston
	7.00 pm	Mission Community Compline	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Wednesday	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Thursday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury

Next Friday 24th December – Christmas Eve

3.30pm & also 5pm	Crib Service	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
6.00 pm	Crib & Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
11.00 am	Mission Community Midnight Mass	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
11.30 pm	Christmas Night Prayer	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury

Next Saturday 25th December – Christmas Day

9.30 am	Holy Communion	- St John the Baptist, Woodland
10.00 am	Holy Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
10.00 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
11.00 am	Crib Service	- Ss Peter & Paul, Broadhempston

Next Sunday 26th December – First Sunday of Christmas

10.00 am	Mission Community Holy Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
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Reflection by Rev'd Anne Burden

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The days are counting down to Christmas, and for most of us it's busy, busy, busy!! Have we got the presents wrapped? Do we need another trip to the shops? Have we got enough sprouts? Many of us get caught up in frantic activity - at home and in church too. We can't help it, but we need to be careful - careful not to think that Christmas is about what we do - the arrangements and decisions we make - even when they are such worthy things as feeding the family, coming to church and being nice to Auntie Gladys. Because Christmas is not about what we do at all - but is about what God does. About what God has done for his people his people through the centuries of history, and about what he is now doing in the middle of our chaotic, Covid blighted lives. Christmas is about God's plan, and whether we choose to join in with it or not.

The Gospel reading for today is an illustration of this. It's the familiar story of Elizabeth and Mary - both pregnant in rather unusual circumstances, but where the hand of God is clearly at work. An angel tells Elizabeth that she will become pregnant when she is well beyond child-bearing age. Her baby will have the task of preparing the Jewish people for the coming of their long-awaited Messiah. Mary too hears of God's plan through an angel. She too will become pregnant, even though she is a virgin. Her baby will be the Messiah, and she is to call him Jesus. Impossible, of course - yet Mary recognises that this is God's plan, and she trusts him enough to say "yes". Here are two women who have come together to support one another and share the mystery of God's action in their lives. Jesus's birth is the fulfilment of God's plan - made possible by the willingness of his faithful ones.

This story doesn't stand alone. It is linked in our worship today with extracts from the prophet Micah, and from Hebrews - which give us the long view of God's plan. We can see God carefully, slowly, patiently, over the centuries, preparing for the revelation of himself through his Son. God's plan made deliberately as a long chain with many links - each one of them fragile, and each one of them necessary. Who knows how many times the links were broken as people rejected their place in the plan. Yet God simply mends the chain, his plan comes to fruition and Jesus is born. That's what we celebrate at Christmas.

Be sure that God is still working his purpose out in our own times. He has a plan for our church, our country, our world. The plans involve us but are not of our making. We have a part to play - by giving our "yes" to God as Mary did - by choosing to go God's way, not simply our own. We have to live the last few days before Christmas in the bustling world where there is still so much to be done and so many worries and uncertainties. But try not to lose sight of what's important to God and where he is leading us. There is much to be done when people depend on us - and I suppose it does matter (a bit) whether the turkey is cooked properly and our friends like the presents we've bought for them. But it doesn't matter much in the whole scheme of things. All that is really important is that "God so loved the world that he sent his Son". And all that is necessary for us to do when Jesus is born is to be there - to say "welcome" - and to go out and share the joy of 'Emmanuel, God with us' - not just on Christmas Day, but always and forever.

