



Sunday 18th December 2022

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Points of Prayer: As we prepare to welcome people into our churches and go out into the community during this season may these events bring a sense of joy and God's love.

In Memory: Kathleen Woodier, Marie Pook, Margaret 'Jean' Harvey, John Ducker, Diana Hunt, Steven Lloyd, Beryl Humphrey, Michael Retter, Bill Staff, Grace Domoney, Margaret Wakeham, Pamela Lloyd and Ian House.

Denbury's Carol Service on Sunday 18th December will now start at 6pm instead of 4pm due to the Football World Cup Final.

Denbury Advent Window Displays: A new Denbury Advent Window display will appear every day in Advent, and each will remain on display up to and including the Christmas period. For the list of addresses, please see the notice boards or the website: www.missioncommunity.org.uk

Dates Ahead for your Diary – Christmas Events and Services

Tues 20 th Dec at 4pm	Community Nativity (Starting in the church)	Broadhempston
Wed 21 st Dec at 7pm	Carols Around the Village Tree	Ipplepen
Thurs 22 nd Dec at 6pm	Carol Service	Woodland
Thurs 22 nd Dec at 7pm	Carols in The Square with Totnes Band	Broadhempston
Sat 24 th Dec at 4pm	Crib Service	Denbury
Sat 24 th Dec at 4pm	Crib Service (Churches Together at St Andrew's)	Ipplepen
Sat 24 th Dec at 9pm	Christmas Eve Communion	Denbury
Sat 24 th Dec at 11pm	Christmas Eve Communion	Ipplepen
Sun 25 th Dec at 10am	Holy Communion	Woodland
Sun 25 th Dec at 10am	Holy Communion	Denbury
Sun 25 th Dec at 10am	Family Service	Broadhempston
Sun 25 th Dec at 10am	Holy Communion	Ipplepen

Readings	This week	Next week
Readings for this Sunday:		
1st Reading	Isaiah 7:10-16	Isaiah 52:7-10
	Psalms 80:1-8, 18-20	98
2nd Reading	Romans 1:1-7	Hebrews 1:1-4, 5-12
Gospel	Matthew 1:18-End	John 1:1-14

Readings for the week ahead:

Mon 19 th	Luke 1:5-25	Thurs 22 nd	Luke 1:46-56
Tue 20 th	Luke 1:26-38	Fri 23 rd	Luke 1:57-66
Wed 21 st	Luke 1:39-45	Sat 24 th	Luke 1:67-79

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

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www.facebook.com/denburyworship www.facebook.com/Broad20/

Today - Sunday 18th December

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

Morning Prayer

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

Tuesday	9.15 am	- St Andrew's Ipplepen
Wednesday	9.15 am	- Online 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

All our churches are open for private prayer and reflection throughout the week from approximately 9am to 5pm each day.

Mid-Week

Rev'd Andrew Down - Day off on Mondays.

A new Denbury Advent Window display will appear every day in Advent and will remain until Christmas.

Monday	3pm-5pm	T-Pot	- Church Cottage, Denbury
Tuesday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's Ipplepen
	1.00 pm	Funeral Service of Pamela Lloyd	- St Andrew's Ipplepen
	4.00 pm	Community Nativity	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston
	7pm-7.30pm	Mission Community Compline	- St Andrew's Ipplepen
Wednesday	7.00 pm	Carols around the Village Tree	- Fore Street, Ipplepen
Thursday	10.15 am	Holy Communion	- Church Cottage, Denbury
	4.30-5.30pm	Sta*x Youth Choir Practice	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
	6.00 pm	Carol Service	- St John the Baptist, Woodland
	7.00 pm	Carols in the Square with Totnes Brass Band	- Broadhempston

Saturday 24th December 2022 – Christmas Eve

4.00 pm	Crib Service	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
4.00 pm	Churches Together Crib Service	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
9.00 pm	Christmas Eve Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
11.00 pm	Christmas Eve Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen

Next Sunday 25th December 2022 – Christmas Day

10.00 am	Holy Communion	- St John the Baptist, Woodland
10.00 am	Holy Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
10.00 am	Family Service	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston
10.00 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen



Reflection by Steve Sheldon

Fourth Sunday of Advent
18th December 2022

Joseph tends to get pretty short shrift in the Christmas story. But here in Matthew's short version of the story it is Joseph who gets an angelic visit, not Mary; and his response is even more immediate than Mary's who had to spend time pondering things and visiting her relatives for comfort and encouragement. But I suspect Joseph did some pondering too, thinking about how he was going to shelter and nurture this precious unexpected child.

Would it be easy to believe that you have spoken to an angel? And if you do believe God has sent you a messenger, who will believe YOU? I mean, what do you do after talking to an angel? Do you tell anyone? You don't just drop it into the conversation over tea the next day. Joseph didn't believe Mary until he got his own personal messenger from God.

Think of Joseph and Mary pondering together. When all was done and dusted, they had an ordinary little boy to take care of. They must have pondered, what's so special about him? He cries and laughs like a normal boy. He gets dirty and misbehaves like an ordinary boy. What's this all about?

It's a weird concept, this Immanuel business. Immanuel. God is with us. I think we can take for granted the Jesus that we shelter and nurture, only bringing him out when we need some help. Our faith can sometimes wander off into this kind of thinking, taking Jesus for granted. What's so special about him? This faith business is too mysterious. It's too costly. It's too painful. Faith requires perseverance, pondering, hurting, confusion, incomprehension, doubt, mystery. Obedience. Following.

During Advent we prepare to receive Jesus into our homes and our hearts. While we look forward with joy to his arrival at Christmas, there is also some real apprehension. As Thomas Merton suggested, when we pray 'Your Kingdom Come' most of us make the mental addition, "but not yet!"

That's what Advent is for, preparing a space for God within ourselves, in trust and faith.

Joseph and Mary knew that human reasoning could not fathom the miracle that was happening. But their faith was greater than their understanding of the mystery. Their faith carried them through their growing boy's rebuke of them in the Temple, his rather odd behaviour at a big wedding party, his slighting of his Mum as an excuse for a metaphor in discipleship. Faith carried Mary through that horrible day on Golgotha.

And they could have said no and disregarded the angel's messages. The Old Testament is full of Biblical heroes who thought too hard about what God was asking of them and made excuses. Abraham, Moses, Zechariah, Gideon, Saul, Jeremiah and especially Jonah all hesitated, doubted, made excuses and tried to avoid what God was asking. Only Isaiah stands out as someone faced with a request by God and says, Here I am Lord. Send me.

In those moments, confronted with messengers from God, Mary and Joseph had no role model to fall back on, no precedent or conventional wisdom, no rules or regulations to follow. They were on their own, in virgin territory. The salvation of mankind was waiting for their cooperation, taking a leap of faith doing as the angel commanded. She was a virgin, whole unto herself, unpenetrated by the concerns of conventional society and authority, heedless of the powers that be. Joseph stood by Mary as she took hold of and fully embraced God and in concert with Him facilitated a miracle.

As Mary protected the Saviour as he grew, so we promise to care for him wherever we go, whomever we meet. As she carried Jesus within her, he would become her liberator and saviour. So as we carry Jesus with us and nurture and preserve him through our faith, we also carry within us our liberator and saviour. As we carry him, so he leads us into the World.

The strength Jesus gives us, the vision Jesus gives us, the love Jesus gives us, the new birth Jesus gives us, is sheltered and nurtured by us to then share with the World.

Christmas is when we ponder the Jesus within us and say, Here I am Lord. I am God's servant; all I have is for Christ and the love he brings to this world. Let it be according to your word.