

Sunday 3rd December Advent 1

PMC (Partnership for Missional Church)

Over the last few months the PCC & I have been looking into something called Partnership for Missional Church

This is a process, a journey, that some of the other churches in Berkshire have been participating together in for the last 2+ years

I am very excited about it because it is essentially all about how each church gets to discover how they are uniquely gifted to join together with God in His mission

We believe in a God who is alive and active, a God who loves each and every one of us, each and every person in our community and parish, each and every person that He has created
And God is already working, already active, already involved in peoples lives, whether they realise it is Him or not !:-)

And God longs for us, His church, to be working, moving, loving others WITH Him

This is something that I believe deeply in my being

Pat Maureen

In our business as people and as a church we can miss these things

PMC offers us the chance to make our unique journey of discovery alongside other churches in the Diocese, facilitated by an experienced team

Important because it will encourage us when we share our stories and hear theirs

Telling you about this this morning because I would like us all to pray about the possibility of us here at St Georges starting this journey in February next year

Early in Jan Richard Lamey from St Pauls Wokingham and a couple of the team from his church will come and share with us how they have found it so far

Date to be advised. Hope that as many of us as possible will be able to come to that

Final thought from Bishop Andrew

He highly supports us in this process because "we are precious in God's mission and he thinks that we will see the congregation grows in confidence as we remember whose we are and realise that God is inviting us to be part of God's mission to this world that God loves so much."

PRAY

Advent 1

Today - first Sunday in Advent

Shortest that Advent can be

So LOTS TO PREPARE Very QUICKLY !!!! Tempting. SO like our modern culture - but NO!

In our busy-ness we can so easily miss what it is all about

Have any of you celebrated a special event or special holiday this last year?

How did you get ready?

In Britain on 25th December (3 weeks tomorrow !!) we celebrate the birth day of Jesus

The day that God Himself came to earth, in person

The Messiah had been promised by the prophets

The Jewish forefathers had waited

Mary - the young Jewish girl - was waiting

Then in a somewhat obscure and humble way Jesus was born

Christmas Day is a celebration of that event

THE moment in history when God intervened in our world in a way that was totally beyond everyones imagination

And celebration of all great events needs preparation

So Advent is our time, in the Christian calendar, when we prepare to celebrate this earth shattering, world changing event

We prepare in so many ways don't we

Shopping - a friend of mine 'popped' into Tesco's on Friday. She said it was what she would have expected on Christmas Eve

Writing cards - not started mine yet! Last posting dates for abroad fast approaching

Sending presents - not even brought some of those I need to post yet!

Preparing food

Seeing family & friends

Services in church Christingle this afternoon!

So much preparation

We can so easily miss God in it all

In our busy-ness we can miss what it is all about....

We can so easily bury Jesus under all the food and toys and tinsel and shopping and busy-ness

Christmas is a celebration of that unique, awesome, earth shattering event and it deserves our preparation

How are we going to prepare for it well and not let Jesus get buried?

Our Gospel passage this morning ends with the words 'KEEP AWAKE'

The passage is about the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem that took place in AD70

Remember that the Temple was the centre of Jewish worship. It was the holiest of holy places and a focal point for the Jewish faith

Jesus foretells of its destruction

But he is also telling them of the time that is yet to come, even for us, when He will return again 'when the Son of Man comes in clouds with great power and glory'

Jesus is telling His disciples to keep alert, keep awake

Advent is a season of preparation.

Preparation to celebrate the great and unique event that took place 2000 years ago when Jesus, the long awaited Messiah, the Son of God was born and came to live amongst us

Preparation also for the time when Christ shall come again

So how can we prepare

I encourage us all to take time. Take time to notice where God is at work, where we may see Him

It may be in the faces of other people

It may be in the world around us

It may be in scripture

But noticing takes time

Yesterday on quiet day in Finch... I went for slow walk around the church grounds

Noticed all sorts of things that I wouldn't have heard or seen or smelt if I had just walked through quickly

Learning to see and pay attention to where God is already at work is an important aspect of PMC (Partnership for Missional Church) and whether we decide to take part in that journey or not, noticing is a good habit to cultivate

On the next 3 Wednesdays we are going to be having a deeper look at the Beatitudes using a booklet written by Bishop Steven

Could make a conscious decision to set some time aside each day to prepare spiritually, in your hearts and minds, maybe praying or reading a few verses of scripture

Christmas is a celebration of that unique, awesome, earth shattering event of God coming to earth as a human, as Jesus and it deserves our preparation
Jesus explained to his disciples that He, the Son of Man would also return one day but the day and hour no-one knows and that needs our preparation

So let us take time this Advent to prepare our hearts and minds and not get so busy that Jesus gets buried under all the festivities.