

## Dear Friends,

Sunday 3rd December is Advent Sunday this year, and we begin a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the birth, the Nativity, of Jesus on Christmas Day. Advent is the first season of the Church year.

The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin 'adventus', which means 'coming' or 'arrival' or 'presence'.

In Church we will mark each Sunday in Advent by lighting a candle on our Advent Wreath, the radiance getting brighter each week, until we light the central candle, The Christ Candle, on Christmas Day.

This Advent let us reflect on how we can prepare our hearts and our homes for Christ's birth.

There is so much pressure on getting Christmas 'just right', isn't there? The first Christmas was special, amazing, awesome and wonderful, but it was also very simple. It can be so easy to lose the true meaning of Christmas.

There is a beautiful Christmas Worship song by Ian White... 'Crackers and Turkeys'

*"Crackers and turkeys and pudding and cream,  
Toys in the windows that I've never seen,  
This is the Christmas that everyone sees,  
But Christmas means more to me.  
It's somebody's birthday I won't forget,  
As I open the things that I get.  
I'll remember the inn, and stable so bare,  
And Jesus who once lay there."*

Let's remember what we are celebrating. What does Christmas really mean to you? Jesus is the reason for the season!

I love the Carol, 'O Come All Ye Faithful', and especially the refrain, 'O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord'.

There are many opportunities to come and adore Him at St. Stephen's during Advent, Christmas and beyond, right into the New Year. These are listed elsewhere in our magazine. You will always be very welcome here.

Peace and Joy!

With every blessing for the New Year!

Keith

