



Buxton
United Reformed
Church
Hardwick Square East

December 2011
and
January 2012

Dear friends

Once again we are in that time of the year known as Advent. Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning 'coming', and it is a time of waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Our Saviour Jesus. Advent is a season that can be neglected, but if we do so we miss out on a valuable opportunity to deepen our relationship with God.

When we were children it seemed like Christmas would never come. We were so excited, looking forward to the great day. We couldn't wait. My sister was so keen to open her presents that she would wake up very early on Christmas morning and open everything in her stocking. That would have been fine by me, except that we shared a bed and we also received exactly the same presents in our stockings! So I always knew what was in my stocking before unwrapping the presents. I was no angel either. I crept down stairs very early one Christmas morning and opened my main present - a much waited for nurses set. I had broken it by the time my parents got up, and they couldn't mend it.

As adults we no longer behave quite like that with our presents (I hope!), but we can get so caught up with the physical preparations for Christmas that we forget to keep the season of Advent.

Christmas and Advent are distinct times. Christmas is rightly a time of celebration, of joy, for Our Saviour, Jesus, came into the world, and everything changed. Sometimes we are so familiar with the story that we forget how astonishing it is that God chose to humble himself and be born as a human being, as a helpless

baby. This was Almighty God, the maker and sustainer of all creation. At the very least He could have come as a mighty king, a great warrior, a wealthy man, a Roman citizen maybe, or someone with great worldly power and influence. But He didn't. As we sang at the opening service of our Advent Festival, 'God surprises earth with heaven, born a child on Christmas Day'. (By the way, if you haven't seen our Advent displays yet please do come along and have a look. It's well worthwhile.)



Our God does the unexpected and following Him is exciting.

I encourage you to spend some time alone with God this Advent, thanking Him for entering into the world as a child and sharing our humanity with all its joys and challenges. And however you spend this Christmas may you be very aware of God's presence with you, and be greatly blessed by Him.

Love
Alison

Alison Darby is our Church Secretary



Thank you so much!



The Advent Festival

At a prayer meeting in October Di asked me if there was to be another Advent Festival in our church. I said I had no plans to create another one. Then on the following Wednesday the RE teacher at Buxton Junior School asked her the same thing because the children missed it last year due to the severe weather.

In the following days more people outside the church circle seemed to be asking the same question too. Was this God giving us a nudge and telling us to create another one?

Since then Di and I have met every week to plan and create this year's Festival.

Altogether over 35 people from our church congregation, friends from user groups of our church building and our youth organisations helped in creating the Festival in time for the first week in Advent.

Di and I hope that many people will come and spend time considering the real meaning of Advent and Christmas through the displays.

A big thank you to all those who have given us support or will do so in the coming weeks, in one way or another. Special thanks must go to my Peter, and Di and Roger for the massive support I have received from them in so many ways. You were great.

Maybe I will have time to do the dusting and ironing at home now!

Eileen Blane

Peter and I thought you would like pictures of the Festival in our magazine as we hadn't got much else to include in it!

✻ Articles for future magazines would be much appreciated ✻



“It’s a bit different from doing it at home!”





Amy came after school on Friday to help us and then returned again to work all day on the Saturday.

It was lovely having a young person being so keen to help. She was just great!

I think she also liked the cheese scones and cake!

Dates To Remember

Lunch Club

8th December (Christmas Lunch)

at 1pm in the church hall

There will be no lunch in January

Church Meeting

Sunday 15th January

after the morning service (12 noon approx.)

Prayer & Reflection Meetings

Alternate **Mondays** at 7:30 pm

5th & 19th December and 16th January

at 7 Wyedale Close

Home group

Alternate **Mondays** at 7:30 pm

12th December and 9th & 23rd January

at 31 Temple Road

Guides/Brownies/Rainbows Carol Concert

Tuesday 6th December at 6:15pm in the church

Contributions for the magazine

to be received by

Eileen and Peter Blane by

Monday 30th January 2011

for the February publication.



WE APPRECIATE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS SO PLEASE KEEP THEM COMING.

TO ENSURE YOUR MAGAZINE IS AS INFORMATIVE AS POSSIBLE

PLEASE KEEP US UP-TO-DATE WITH NEWS AND EVENTS.

TEL: 01298 27591 OR EMAIL PETER@BLANE.CO.UK

Please also remember to send details of meetings and events to Alison Darby to collate in the church diary.

Sunday Services

10:30 a.m.

4th December	Communion Service – Buxton URC Elders
11th December	Morning worship – Philip Bridgewater
18th December	Carol Service – Charles Jolly
25th December Christmas Day	10:00 am Christmas Day worship – Margaret Gill
1st January	Morning worship – Buxton URC Elders
8th January	Morning worship – to be announced
15th January	Parade Service – Charles Jolly
22nd January	Morning worship – Gordon Hornblower
29th January	Morning worship – John Wood
5 th February	Morning worship – Rob Williams

Waiting in Hope

Lawrence Moore, moderator-elect of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, reflects on the meaning of Advent

It's the season of Advent again. That's good and bad. It's good because it means that the period of waiting hopefully and preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world is something we do quite deliberately every year. It's bad precisely because it too easily feels like a season – a regular period or time of the year that passes and gives way to something completely different. We “do” Advent (and Christmas) and then pack it all away again in the loft for another year.

That's the problem with the church year – like the seasons, the great festivals (Christmas, Easter and Pentecost) come around year after a year in a never-ending cycle. That can be a real hope-killer. When is the cycle broken? Where is the possibility of real change – of something brand new breaking in to make a difference and release us from the endless round of “same-old, same-old”?

That's not what the seasons of the church year are about – especially Advent. Christian faith is about living out a life caught between two worlds – the present and the coming kingdom of God, or what the theologians call “the already” and “the not yet”. It's a life lived in extraordinary tension; we're to live thoroughly in this world, but to do so by the standards and norms of a different world – the world as God intended it to be at creation and will bring about. As the theologian Stanley Hauerwas puts it, that makes us “resident aliens” – aliens who nevertheless have only this world in which to live!

It is all too easy to lose sight of the Christian difference that God makes in Jesus, and to get sucked into the endless round of survival in a consumerist society. The seasons of the church year serve as a constant reminder that we live by a different rhythm and march to a different drum.

That difference is made possible because God comes among us in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises about a new world and a different world. Jesus – particularly because of the cross and resurrection – is the means by which God smashes the familiar, relentless cycle of death and despair. CS Lewis portrays this cycle wonderfully in

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Narnia, under the White Witch, is caught in the grip of a perpetual winter – it is “always winter and never Christmas”. Then, Aslan arrives to break the stranglehold of the White Witch. Like Aslan in the story of Narnia, Jesus is God’s great interruption, and nothing can ever be the same again.

Being Advent people doesn’t mean that we are a group of people who “start Christmas early”; Advent waiting is about vigilance. It’s an act of hope – a conviction that God is near and active in our world, with its tragi-comic story of humanity. It’s a time to reconnect with the roots of our hope and the energy of our Spirit-life in God. God has come among us in Jesus to save us, so that, however convincingly the “business as usual” account of reality seems to hold sway, its death-grip has been smashed forever.

Advent says: “Yes, it’s winter. But turn again towards Bethlehem. Listen to the angel song. Hear the voices of from behind the wall; they are telling us that we are not God-forsaken. Lift up your heads – Jesus is coming.”



MY DAILY PRAYER

Lord, make my mind sensitive to you

Lord, make my heart in tune with yours

Lord, make my lips willing to move for you

Lord, make my eyes open for you

Lord, make my ears sensitive to you

Lord, make my will in tune with yours

Lord, make my feet willing to move for you

Lord, make my hands open to you



Ken and Dorothy, Eileen (Easton), Noreen and Peter and Edith all helped to arrange the stain glass window displays as well as the alcove, memorial and Advent candle ring.

Phyllis Hollister representing the Trefoil Guild arranged the entrance porch flowers.



Sometimes what you need is a right good cup of tea!



Sunday Worship

Family Service 10.30 a.m.

Communion Service (1st Sunday of each month)

*We offer a sincere, loving welcome to all in Christian
Worship*

**Secretary: Alison Darby
(Tel: 01298 26260)**

Web site: www.buxtonurc.org.uk

Weekly Activities for Children and Young People

- **Rainbows:** Tues. 5 - 6pm
Leader: Stephanie Sterndale
(Mobile Tel No: 07967205209)
- **Brownies:** Tues. 6 – 7:15pm
Leader: Tracy Ryde
(Tel: 01298 79714)
- **Guides:** Tues. 6pm
Leader: Stephanie Sterndale
(Mobile Tel No: 07967205209)
- **Pilots:** Thurs. 6:30 - 8pm
Leader: Di Horne
(Tel: 01298 83328)

Other Activities

- **Home Group and Prayer & Reflection – alternate Mondays**
- **Lunch Club – 1st Thursday**