

CHRISTMAS NOT CANCELLED! 2



2nd Sun in Advent: 6th Dec 20

Love God and Love our Neighbour

ON THE SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT MAY OUR
HEARTS BE MOVED
AFRESH BY THE LOVE OF
JESUS CHRIST, SO THAT
WE MIGHT LIVE IN
NEWNESS

READINGS:

MATTHEW CH22 V34-40

THE GREATEST
COMMANDMENT

EXODUS CH35 V30- CH36
V7

BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB

PRAYERS

Father, we pray that you would help us to live in your love and to show your glory wherever we go. Forgive us when we are so focused upon ourselves that we forget about you and your ways or fall into behaviours that do not honour you and the work of your Son at Calvary.

Like the Israelites, in our reading today, lead us to be those who would bring an abundance to you, that we would give of ourselves to see your kingdom built close by and across the world.

Take a moment to pray for all those affected by coronavirus in whatever way, the world and church near and far- lift to God the people and places that lie heavy upon your heart

*“Whoever does not love does not know God, because
God is love”
1 John ch4 v8*

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

Candle of Love

As we light the second candle on our advent wreaths today we remember the great love that God shows to us in the coming of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. That in Jesus he is fulfilling his promises and giving our lives a new purpose.

*There is a lovely wee song that reminds us that love is at the centre of what God was doing when Jesus was born in Bethlehem: **Love came down at Christmas- Love, a lovely love divine- Love was born at Christmas- Stars and angels gave the sign- Love will be our token- Love be yours, and love be mine- Love from God to all of us- Love for plea and gift a sign.***

*Look at the devotional below, the lines that are in **bold and italics** are bible verses, maybe use Bible Gateway to find out*

where the references come from and then look them up in your bible, read them again and see now the love of God is shown in all different places throughout his Word. Pick your favourite and maybe make a little bookmark, leaving it at the page where the reference is, if you ever feel sad or unloved you can always look up the verse to be reminded of God's great love for you.

Pray: *'Jesus, you are love even if we are afraid. Help us to pray to you when we are scared or fearful. Bring love into our hearts we pray so that we might live for you and help others to do so too. Amen'*





DEVOTIONAL

Love

God's love undergirds the whole story of the Bible: creation, fall, redemption, and the on-going process of restoration. It might seem strange at first to begin a reflection on Advent love all the way back in Genesis ch1, but we need to remember that God's loving plan for us started with his very first act of creation. Out of nothing, God called forth light. He separated land from the sea, created the sun, moon, and stars, and all the creatures of earth, but the pinnacle of his creation was humanity. He created us in his own image and made us to love and be loved. However, the first humans doubted the truth of God's love for them and rebelled. But even in humanity's fall into sin, we find God's loving mercy. God did not destroy Adam and Eve, and even as they began to experience the serious consequences of their sin, God made his first promise of future redemption: that Eve's own offspring would one day crush the head of the serpent once and for all time.

As we trace the story of God's people through the Old Testament, we see God's loving plan unfold. God promised Abraham that he would make his descendants a people who would bless all people. God foretold of the One, born of a virgin, who would free the captives, bear our transgressions, suffer in our place, redeem God's people, and usher in a peace unlike anything ever known. Isaiah prophesied the words of the Lord, ***"For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed"*** And though God's plan took time, he lovingly walked with his people through their suffering, temptation, loss, and trial. Hearing their cry under the yoke of slavery, he led them out of Egypt. When God's people faced exile from the land, he declared, ***"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour."*** Generation after generation, God remained faithful to his people even when they doubted him, questioned him, and turned away from him. Witnesses of God's loving faithfulness, like Nehemiah, testified ***"You are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love..."***

Revisiting the big picture of God's love for his people during Advent helps us understand the significance of that very first advent, the coming of a Saviour. For this precise reason, Matthew starts his gospel with Jesus' genealogy, tracing his lineage back through King David to Abraham. Matthew wants us to understand that this major event is connected to God's bigger story of love and redemption. Love, incarnated in the form of a tiny baby, came to fulfil a promise God made centuries before. Paul explains, ***"he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness"***. And he did it because ***"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"*** This is Advent love, ***"not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins"***

Today, we look back and remember that first advent. We see God's promise of redemption fulfilled and we know that a new era of God's restoration has been ushered in. But what are we called to do now as we wait upon the second advent of Jesus Christ? The answer is simple. We are to do what Christ does, love. When his critics tried to test him, asking which commandment is the greatest, Jesus answered ***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself"***. And so this Advent, let us ask how we can love God and love our neighbour more fully, so that we might fulfil the call of Jesus Christ.

***Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down:***

***fix in us Your humble dwelling,
all Your faithful mercies crown***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOTICE OF BEREAVEMENTS

It is my sad duty to report the deaths of Mrs Dorothy Pollock, formerly of Rochester Road and Mrs Sadie Harvey, formerly of Newtownbreada Road. Please remember both their family circles in your prayers at this time.

FOODBANK

Over the course of the next two months we are hoping to have another collection for the foodbank, if you would be willing to donate long life foods or household supplies, they can be dropped off at the church on weekday mornings or brought along on Sundays when we open for public worship again.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS AND WORLD DEVELOPMENT APPEAL

Normally we at Cregagh hold our special festive offering for the building fund; however we are aware that many of the mission projects that we are committed to supporting have not had the opportunity to fundraise as they normally would. To that end the Christmas offering this year will go towards those Mission projects including Emmanuel Ministries Calcutta and PW. Envelopes are available in the pews alongside World Development Appeal envelopes which this year will support the Moderator's Christmas Appeal.

OPEN CHURCH

The church building is open for private prayer on Fridays 10am-12noon. There is also the facility to drop off offering envelopes.

MORNING WATCH

Morning Watch will resume on Tuesday 15th December at 10:45am

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

13th Dec: 12noon KidZone Christmas Service, 7pm Candlelight Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Gifts may be brought on 13th for Belfast Central Mission, and placed under the Christmas Tree, please place presents in bags rather than wrapping them

20th Dec: 12noon KidZone Christmas Service, 7pm Candlelight Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

***Sunday 13th and 20th will have the same services repeated, we would encourage folk to attend one 12noon service and one 7pm service, so that they will only be coming to church once each Sunday.

Please make sure to register, especially for the Carol Service, by contacting Michael Graham on michaelgraham112@gmail.com or 07548635075, as we cannot guarantee a seat, in the church, for those who turn up unregistered***

Fri 25th Dec: 9am Christmas morning service ***Please be sure to register***

27th Dec: Last services of 2020 10am and 12noon

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

The last zoom bible study, until the new year takes place on Monday evening at 7pm, all are welcome

DECORATION OF THE CHURCH

Decoration of the church for the Christmas season will take place on Friday 11th December from 12noon. Gifts of holly, ivy, greenery, suppresses etc. for the decoration would be welcomed and may be left at the church any morning from Mon 7th to Fri 11th (9:30-11:30am)

A NEW YEAR QUIET MORNING

Unfortunately we had to cancel our Advent Quiet Morning but will hold another on Saturday 9th January. More details later.

EVERGREENS

The Evergreens are planning "An Afternoon of Christmas Cheer" on Wednesday 16th December at 2pm. All are welcome to join us, including members of PW and Tea and Talk. However, due to current restrictions we need people to register their attendance for contact tracing. Please phone or text Carol Ferguson 07880672836 or email her at carolaferguson@sky.com if you would like to come. We will be meeting in the church itself which is well set out for social distancing. Sanitizers are available and masks must be worn. On arrival enter via the Welcome Centre and you will be shown to a seat.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER

"Unfortunately a small number of contributions by standing order to United Appeal and CPC Missions were not included in the recent update sent out recently to all members. I will be in touch with those affected but rest assured that your contributions to CPC will be accurately represented in the annual report. Apologies for any confusion caused". Gordon Dunlop

GET IN TOUCH

Please do not hesitate to get in touch

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