

ADVENT REFLECTION 1

This Advent we shall produce a short reflection for each of the four weeks. These will be available on our websites with printed copies in the churches

Advent 1. Meaning in the Waiting

Christmas seems to come earlier and earlier – at least in the shops and in the media. Yet we have quite a while to go until the much-anticipated day. A long period of waiting. In the church's year we mark this waiting in the period of Advent. But this is not a passive waiting, twiddling our thumbs until the great day. We wait in anticipation. The Gospels offer many images of such waiting - of watchful, active, faithful waiting. Of waiting in hope, rooted in trust and expectation.

We live in a culture of instant gratification, where waiting is often seen as a problem to solve or a void to fill. But for Christians, waiting is not wasted time, it is sacred time.

To wait is to live in the tension of the now and not yet of God's kingdom. It is to trust in God's promises without needing to know the outcome.

When we choose to wait with intention, we open ourselves to the slow, transformative work of the Spirit. We learn to listen more deeply, to notice more fully and to discover God in the longing itself.

One of the wonders of Advent is God's invitation to wait on and with and for the one who is our salvation and hope – Jesus Christ. Jesus comes into the world as the one long waited for, as the servant who waits on others and on whom we are called to wait.

Our Advent waiting is not a waste of time, something to be tolerated until the next thing comes along to distract us. For in the sometimes challenging, difficult waiting maybe we can discover little by little, as R S Thomas describes in his poem *Kneeling* - that there is **meaning in the waiting**

Question: How does the phrase “there is meaning in the waiting” speak to you this Advent?

Prayer

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel,
Set us free to wait in longing, hope and trust;
Come into our midst again
And liberate us to serve in love. Amen*