



Advent  
Devotions

advent

/'adv(ə)nt, 'advɛnt/

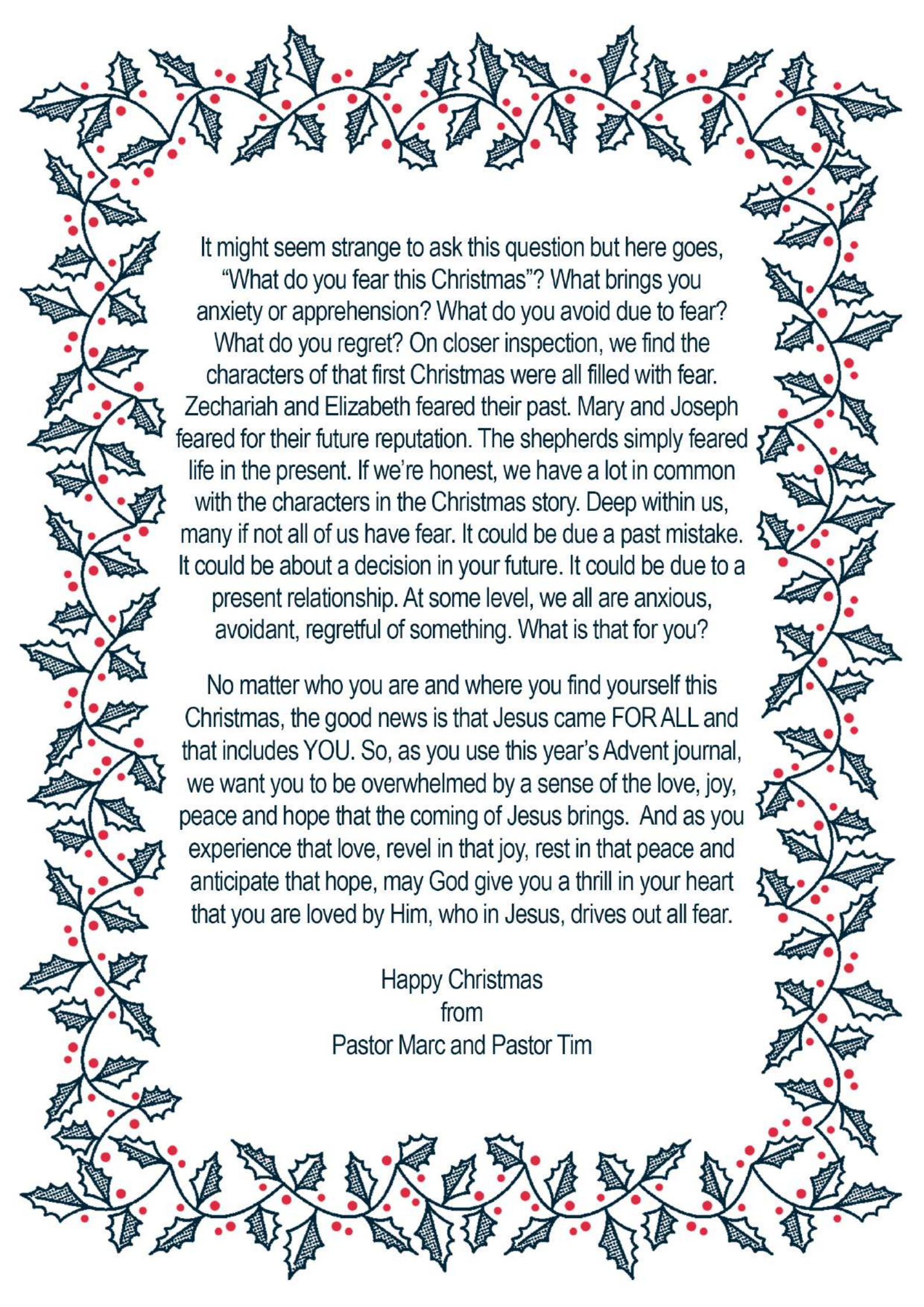
noun

noun: advent; plural noun: advents; noun:

Advent

1. the arrival of a notable person or thing.





It might seem strange to ask this question but here goes, “What do you fear this Christmas”? What brings you anxiety or apprehension? What do you avoid due to fear? What do you regret? On closer inspection, we find the characters of that first Christmas were all filled with fear. Zechariah and Elizabeth feared their past. Mary and Joseph feared for their future reputation. The shepherds simply feared life in the present. If we’re honest, we have a lot in common with the characters in the Christmas story. Deep within us, many if not all of us have fear. It could be due a past mistake. It could be about a decision in your future. It could be due to a present relationship. At some level, we all are anxious, avoidant, regretful of something. What is that for you?

No matter who you are and where you find yourself this Christmas, the good news is that Jesus came FOR ALL and that includes YOU. So, as you use this year’s Advent journal, we want you to be overwhelmed by a sense of the love, joy, peace and hope that the coming of Jesus brings. And as you experience that love, revel in that joy, rest in that peace and anticipate that hope, may God give you a thrill in your heart that you are loved by Him, who in Jesus, drives out all fear.

Happy Christmas  
from  
Pastor Marc and Pastor Tim

# Christmas at Moriah

WE WOULD LOVE FOR YOU TO JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THIS SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR.

SUNDAY 16TH DECEMBER 11AM  
FAMILY CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
(WITH PARTICIPATION OF  
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL  
AND MORIAH PRE-SCHOOL)

SUNDAY 23RD DECEMBER 6PM  
TRADITIONAL CAROL SERVICE  
(INCLUDING THE CROSSKEYS SILVER BAND)

TUESDAY 25TH DECEMBER  
9.30-10.15AM  
CHRISTMAS DAY CELEBRATION

SUNDAY 30TH DECEMBER  
11AM & 6PM  
SUNDAY SERVICES

oh  
come  
let us  
adore  
him

Merry  
christmas  
from all  
at Moriah



MORIAH BAPTIST CHURCH | RISCA

She wrapped  
him in cloths  
and  
placed him in  
a manger

Monday 3rd  
1 Peter 1:8-9

What a way to begin as we move into Advent! Over the next four days, we will be using Joy as our focus, and what better way to start than the words we read in 1 Peter? These words serve as a reminder of our faith and uses this beautiful word, "inexpressible" when referring to Joy. I don't know about you, but I find I can describe most things in life. But, what a treasure we have that, through Jesus, we can have Joy that no words do justice to. So as the hustle and bustle of December sets in, make the time to stop and allow Joy (real, inexpressible Joy), to flood your heart.

Prayer Focus: Christmas Through The Keyhole

Tuesday 4th  
Psalm 30:5

Whenever I watch a film, I find that no matter how bad the situation seems for our hero, I know that, by the end, they will have overcome the baddie and survived another day. In today's verse we see that life too has its low points - situations that seem to beat us down. But then comes the morning, and with the new day comes the sound of rejoicing. Know today that Joy cuts through the weeping. Joy can be present right now no matter how you feel. Take some time to ask God to bring rejoicing today.

Prayer Focus: Operation Christmas Child (Shoebboxes)

Wednesday 5th  
Psalm 16:11

There are many things to look forward to at Christmas: presents, time off work, good food, Christmas films but I wonder if anything beats the fact Christmas is often a time when we get to be with those we love? Cards, phone calls, messages and FaceTime can only achieve so much, nothing honestly beats being in someone's presence, to be right there with them. And today we are reminded that we can have that close relationship with God, and from that closeness, Joy is found. So as you see those closest to you over this Christmas period, allow them to bring Joy to you as God himself does daily.

Prayer Focus: Night Shelter

Thursday 6th  
Romans 15:13

I wonder how often you hear people wish you well? We often say, 'sleep-well' or 'have a safe journey'. But here we read these beautiful words spoken over us "May the God of hope fill you with all joy..." Today, challenge yourself; make this your prayer for those you love, those you meet. And if you're feeling particularly brave, why don't you speak this beautiful promise of Joy out loud to someone.

Prayer Focus: Moriah Baby and Toddler Group

Friday 7th  
Isaiah 40:31

I wonder how many of us will utter these words once the festive period is over "I really need a holiday now". It's funny how some of the best things in life can leave us more tired than before they began. This verse in Isaiah reminds us: the Lord is our strength. And to be strengthened by Him all we need to do is place our hope in him. As we edge closer to Christmas, let God be your strength as you lean into Him.

Prayer Focus: The Local Schools

Saturday 8th  
Hebrews 11:1

I wonder what you hope to open on Christmas morning? Is there something you're secretly hoping people have picked up the clues about? Maybe you're less subtle and leave a 'cut-out' from the catalogue on the fridge. The problem with this kind of hope, is that it opens us up to the possibility of being let down. We hope, only to find our hopes are dashed by someone or something letting us down. The author of Hebrews reminds us that our faith is built on the confidence that our hopes in God will come to fruition; that we can have an assurance of these things, even when we can't see them. What are your Hopes in God? Spend some time praying today for those things unseen - that only God can effect.

Prayer Focus: BMS

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS... *advent calendar*





A winter landscape with snow-covered mountains and a starry night sky. The scene is dark, with the white snow contrasting against the deep blue and black of the night sky filled with stars. The mountains are rugged and covered in snow, with some peaks reaching into the sky. The foreground shows a snow-covered field with some small, dark patches of vegetation or rocks.

I BRING YOU  
GOOD NEWS

THAT WILL CAUSE  
GREAT JOY

FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

LUKE 2:8-20

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Monday 10th  
Jeremiah 29:11

If I've heard this verse once, I've heard it a thousand times. Exams, interviews... you name it, and we will tag this verse into the conversation!

So let's put down all the history we may have with this text, and today I want you to read it as if for the first time - but knowing this: the God of creation, not only created you, not only has plans for your life, but these plans are for your good, for your future. No matter what you face this Advent, know that God is looking beyond it and that you can have hopes and dreams for your future, right now, because the Lord declares is.

Prayer Focus: Moriah Ladies Fellowship

Tuesday 11th  
Hebrews 6:19

In amongst the panic of Christmas shopping, I wonder if you have ever tried to stand still in amongst the crowds? If you do, you will soon find that staying still is nearly impossible, you will quickly be swept up in the tide of people moving from shop to shop.

Life can follow a similar pattern, no matter how often we try to stop, we seem to be swept up in the tide of whatever may distract us, bring anxiety and worry. It is here we're reminded that, in spite of life battering us like waves, we can Hope in God, in his goodness and love for us, and that, that Hope is what keeps us stable, keeps us able to stand firm against the current.

Prayer Focus: Waleswide

Wednesday 12th  
Philippians 1:6

How exciting is it to know that no matter what our best hope is, no matter how ambitious it might seem, it doesn't even come close to what God is doing in us! Advent reminds us that something is coming, and while we may be excited about it, it isn't yet here. On the build-up to that first Christmas, things were happening that would change everything for the world with the arrival of Jesus. And still today, every day, He is doing good work in you. Spend some time today prayerfully letting the knowledge that God is at work in your life wash over you.

Prayer Focus: Risca Foodbank

Thursday 13th  
Colossians 3:15

All too often I find I am indecisive, and at this time of year it is even worse. Do I want extra sprouts? Is it double layer weather outside? Have I got every gift I needed to get or should I get a couple of extras 'just in case'? How often do we allow our hearts to be pulled about as our thoughts can be? Today we are reminded that we should let Christ's peace rule our hearts: not fear, not worry, nothing else should rule our hearts but peace. Today, pause and ask God to let that peace flood your heart.

Prayer Focus: Moriah Pre School

Friday 14th  
Hebrews 12:14

The year was 1996, and as Christmas drew near, there was one toy on every child's wish list: Buzz Lightyear -and supply was limited! People looked to on-line market-places to purchase the toy, sometimes paying 4 times the shop price to secure the 'must have gift' of '96. In shops, the chaos was rife, and the scene was anything but peaceful! We are called to live in stark contrast to the scene found in toy shops at Christmas. We are called to live in peace with everyone! Not just our friends, but everyone, even the person taking the last toy off the shelf you needed to buy! As you go about your day today consider this, am I bringing peace to those around me?

Prayer Focus: Risca

Saturday 15th  
Philippians 4:6-7

I love this verse, it makes a great fridge magnet! But with 10 more sleeps until Christmas, how do we practically get the peace of God in the build-up to the big day? Paul, in his letter to the Philippians tells us -by praying. So today I encourage you to make a list of all the worries you have for this festive season, and pray about them -today and tomorrow, and every day keep praying until you feel that peace that doesn't make sense and can only be from God.

Prayer Focus: Your Peace

# notes & reflections





AND WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR,  
THEY WERE SO ECSTATIC THAT  
THEY SHOUTED AND CELEBRATED  
WITH UNRESTRAINED JOY.

MATTHEW 2:1-12

**3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Monday 17th  
Number 6:24-26

Have you ever handed something to someone, maybe something you've written, or something you've made for them, it could be a teacher, family member, a friend or even your boss? They study it, but you can't see enough of their face to know what they're thinking? Slowly they turn their head to look at you and as they do, with a smile, you feel that peace and joy wash over you. Today's verses talk of that reassurance, that connection, and as God turns his face towards you that peace we have read about can wash over you.

Prayer Focus: CAP

Tuesday 18th  
John 14:27

On this our final day focussing on peace, we come to this fantastic verse in John. I wonder on a scale of 1 to 10 of peacefulness, where we would find ourselves as the countdown continues? Be it Christmas, exams, interviews, or the troubles of life, so many factors can cause us to be anything but peaceful.

I want you to take a moment, maybe 5 minutes if you can spare them, and use these minutes just to pause and let God's peace to begin to wash over you. So often we're busy, on-the-go, so make a decision and right now, STOP!

Prayer Focus: Tearfund

Wednesday 19th  
John 3:16

Christmas is just around the corner, and while we may get caught up with all of the excitement/dread/joy/worry/family (delete as appropriate) we know, deep down, that it has to be more than just what we can see. John 3:16 is maybe the most well-known verse ever, and yet we seem to forget it is about that first Christmas. It is about God sending Jesus, and why would God do that? So that we could have eternal life, a gift better than any hiding under the tree.

Prayer Focus: Baptist Union of Wales

Thursday 20th  
1 John 3:16-18

Black Friday, Bank Holiday Sales, End of season clearance... there are so many things that point us towards 'more', the 'must have' of the year, the 'bargain' you just can't miss. Every day the world tells us to look out for number one, but we read here that our eyes should be looking out for others. True love, as shown by God, is acted out. How often does your love have actions? Today, challenge yourself to show your love through actions. They don't need to be huge, but let people see your love for them come to life.

Prayer Focus: The Leprosy Mission, England and Wales

Friday 21st  
Song of Songs 2:4

As Advent draws to a close for this year, I want you to stop and consider this: Song of Songs tells us that God's banner over us is love. God's willing to write it in the stars that he loves you! God's scribbling his love for you over the fields, he's poured the statement into the wonder of the written word. All of it, everything you see around you, is a resounding statement of God's love for you. And in Jesus, we see that God isn't just into beautiful banners in a chapel, he's into the skin and bones, the cross and the blood kind of love that doesn't break when life gets tough. Today, no matter how you feel, hear this truth: GOD LOVES YOU and everything, if you look for it, cries out this love to you.

Prayer Focus: Local council and government



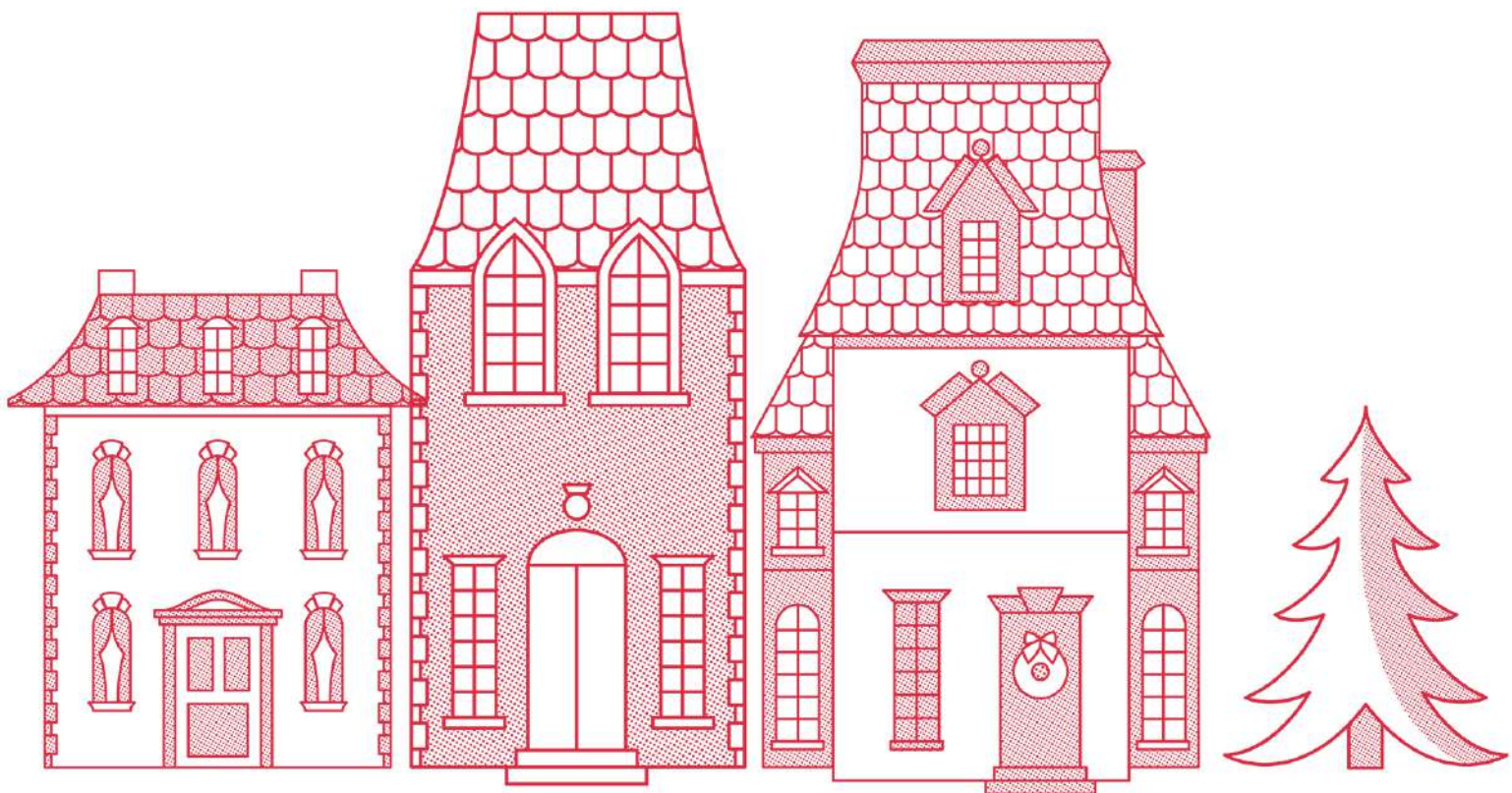
Sat 22nd  
Matthew 22:37-39

It's a complicated process. I know I need to be happy, I need to show excitement and wonder. But what if, as I unwrap the paper, the gift inside just isn't all that great? What if I don't like the present they spent hours considering? What if I don't love it?! I can fake it, smile and say, 'thanks', pretend to understand what it is and look in wonder at the back of the box, but in truth, it will go into a cupboard and not see the light of day again.

•Christmas can produce Oscar-worthy performances of love for things we never knew we wanted! And I wonder how often we can deliver this same attitude toward loving God, or others?

With only a few more sleep's till Christmas, I want today to be a challenge: How today can I love my neighbour? How can I show love as I go about my day to those around me? Start by committing your day to God in prayer, let him know you love Him, and then love others, find ways to love those you meet with today.

Prayer Focus: Coleg Gwent and the Christian Union





4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**THE WORD BECAME  
FLESH AND MADE  
HIS DWELLING AMONG US**

JOHN 1:1-4 & 14

Mon 24th  
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Tomorrow!! Tomorrow!!!!

If you're a 6am riser or a 12noon sleeper-in, a coffee and shower starter or a sat at the tree waiting for everyone else to join you morning kinda person, tomorrow is coming!

Tomorrow we celebrate all sorts: life, presents, family, friends, Jesus' birth, films, all kinds. But I wonder how many of us celebrate love, because tomorrow the root of our celebration isn't just the birth of Jesus, we celebrate the dictionary definition of love. We celebrate our God, creator of the world, entering life on earth, why? Because he loves you.

Today's verse is a lovely wedding reading, but take a moment on each statement, and consider, no matter how hard you find patience, Jesus came to love you. No matter how much you struggle to trust people, Jesus came to love you. He is the ultimate example of love and as you read, remember, His.....

Love never fails

Prayer Focus: Moriah 2019



A black and white photograph of a forest path. The path is a dirt trail that winds through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating dappled light on the ground. The text "Let earth receive her kings" is written in a white, cursive font across the center of the image.

Let earth  
receive  
her kings



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