

Advent

Reflection 12: Advent – a time of waiting

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. [...] For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Waiting is not always easy, whether it’s for our hopes and dreams, that grocery delivery that is a few moments late, or a vaccine that is so vitally important, it’s easy to be impatient.

Advent is a time of waiting, a time of countdown, waiting for something important to happen. Today we know what our advent calendars are counting down to, we know how long it is going to be until that all important 25th December. However, the Jews were waiting many, many years not knowing when their promised Messiah would arrive, what he would be like, nor how he would arrive.

Isaiah lived approximately 700 years before Jesus and yet here is a prophecy that a Messiah would come. I wonder what Isaiah thought as he expressed these words, I wonder if he thought it was imminent, I wonder if he was longing to see a Messiah come and rescue mankind. Yet he did not see it in his life time, maybe he waited and waited to see it come to pass and yet in his earthly lifetime he did not see this.

Sometimes waiting seems impossible, but when we look at it more closely we can see positives to it. Waiting does not need to be passive, we can actively wait. For example, a mother when pregnant does not just sit around waiting for her baby to grow, she takes care of herself through her eating, exercising and resting. She also prepares all she needs for when the baby comes, it gives her time to be ready. Perhaps waiting also gives us a time to reflect on what we are waiting for.

Advent currently gives us an opportunity, yes to prepare for the season, but also to reflect on what we are building up to, the birth of Jesus and all that means for mankind. The arrival of light into the world after ‘people walking in darkness’.

Peter Mallinson, Curate of Allestree St Edmund and Darley Abbey St Matthew writes:

God revealed himself in Christ, just as spring will reveal itself in new growth. In the darkness know that we are not alone in life; know that God so love the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (John 3:16) know that we are not alone.ⁱ

Whatever we are waiting for at the moment, it is good to know we are not alone. We do not need to wait any longer for Jesus to be revealed, Emmanuel - God with us.

Reflection questions:

- What are you currently waiting for? Are you waiting actively or passively? Do you know you are not alone in your waiting?
- Can you spend this advent season reflecting on what this season means to you personally?
- Can you reflect in what it means that 'God revealed himself in Christ'?

Prayer

Dear Father, thank you for this advent season, a time of preparation and reflection on your coming to earth. I pray that you will help me in my waiting, and to know I am not alone.
Amen

ⁱ <https://derby.anglican.org/en/about-us/website-reflections-for-advent.html>