

## 15/11/20 Second Sunday Before Advent

Hello to you all once again. Well we're in lockdown again so I'm Warbling once more!! Hopefully it won't be for long and we'll be back together again in church soon. It is good that it's not as restrictive as the last one back in March but it's very difficult when you're missing family and friends. The lockdown seems to be working bringing the infection rate down so we can be cautiously optimistic and pray that this will be the case.

When we meet again on 6<sup>th</sup> December (Prayers! Prayers!) we will have begun our journey through Advent as we look forward to celebrating Christmas. It *will* be different this year but maybe it will a good opportunity for people to realise that the real reason for Christmas isn't all the things we need to rush around buying and preparing, pandering to commercialism. After this lockdown, town centres will be busy as everyone hits the shops and it will probably be mayhem! Hopefully Christmas won't be cancelled, it will be reimagined. But of course, Christmas will never be cancelled as we celebrate our Saviours Jesus Christ's birth whatever the situation may be. World wars never stopped it so I'm sure neither will a pandemic!

One of the readings for this week was from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11) and it was a letter of encouragement and reassurance to the Christians living in Thessalonica to continue being faithful and carry on the good work as they waited patiently for Jesus to return. Paul gave them practical advice for living as Christians and when they felt hopeless, be always looking forward to the Resurrection and eternal life promised to all. Paul warned that the 'Day of the Lord' is coming and that it would do so unexpectedly, 'Like a thief in the night.' But for those who lived in the light, there would be no surprise when the day came as those who come to the Lord, 'Belong to the day,' are prepared and, 'Put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.'

Jesus birth was the good news for all mankind, 'A Saviour is born!' and the good news that Paul shared with the Thessalonians is for us too, especially at this time before we begin Advent as it is the beginning of the journey, from the very beginning of Jesus' life, his death and his return.

Unfortunately, many miss out because it's irrelevant to them, threatening even, and they don't see what is on offer and the difference the Gift of God's Son makes to all. It passes people by and these will be the ones to cry if Christmas is cancelled - if it comes to that. Hopefully it won't be and as the shopping frenzy begins to make up for lost time, whatever is bought, whatever the gift, it won't come anywhere close to the one that is given every day, for free, for everyone.

The faith, love and the hope of salvation which Paul proclaimed, came in the form of a child, on that first Christmas day, and the joyful expectancy of all that God promises in our life through Jesus Christ, is a prayer which should not be missed by anyone.

Amen

With Love and Prayers

Rev Tracey xx