



# **Advent Reflections 2017**

This series of reflections for Advent is for you to use in whatever way is most helpful for you.  
The themes run in conjunction with the Advent course: Do not fear, which will be held on:

29th November 7.30pm St Mary's Church Walton  
6th December 7.30pm St Mary's Church Walton  
13th December 7.30pm Seaton Rd Methodist Church

Each day there is a verse, reflection and something to pray for.

Let us join together this Advent as we join with the angels to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.” Luke 2:10

## 1st December

### Isaiah 43.1

But now thus says the Lord,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.

So, through the voice of the prophet Isaiah we hear God speak into the woundedness, brokenness, and chaos of our lives.

We hear the powerful words:

“ Do, not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.”

God reminds us that we do not have to fear, that we belong to God; that God is in the saving business.

Intellectually, even spiritually, we can embrace this core faith concept that God loves us and saves us; the problem is that it is easier to say than to live out.

But God does and always will remind us that we are his, and his alone, that is all we need to remember!

**Prayer please:** WORLD'S AIDS DAY, that there will be more prevention & Treatment of this disease. At least 40 million folk suffering now.

## 2nd December

### Isaiah 43.2

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.

These words , originally to Israel, whom God 'created' in the Red Sea and other events, are a great reassurance of God 's presence and protection. Many Christians have proved it in their lives, when waters, rivers and fires are metaphors for events and relationship problems they have faced.

**Prayer please:** ANGEL TREE SERVICE, in St Mary's, 10.30am today.

WINTER WONDERLAND CONCERT, in St Mary's 7.30pm in aid of Walton Parish Nursing.

## 3rd December

### Isaiah 43.3

For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.

Let God be GOD! said Martin Luther. GOD is almighty, and this is he said verse 2. God "gives" the nations through the conquest by Cyrus and Cambyses - see Chapters 44.28 and 45.1 God uses even heathen rulers for his purposes and his glory. Who is he using now? Why?

**Prayer please:** ADVENT SUNDAY, Service of Advent Carols & Lessons, with Holy Communion, at 10am. in St Mary's.  
MESSY CHURCH at 3pm in St Mary's.

## 4th December

### Isaiah 43.4

Because you are precious in my sight,  
and honoured, and I love you,  
I give people in return for you,  
nations in exchange for your life.

Life on earth is an inevitable mix of joy and pain that can often leave us feeling lonely and unloved.

This verse is part of God's message to Israel whilst they were in exile in Babylon, no doubt feeling fairly low and abandoned. It applies just as much to us for whom God gave his Son.

This is what God says to you.

You are my Child, I love you deeply, you are precious to me more precious than diamonds. I love you with an everlasting love. I gave my Son to redeem you. I have a plan for your life. I will never leave you or forsake you.

Wow! I think that is amazing, don't you.

**Prayer please:** CRAFT2GETHER group meet at St Mary's this evening.

## 5th December

### Isaiah 43.5

Do not fear, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you;

Do not fear. How can we do that?  
Wherever we are God will find us. Wherever we are God will gather  
us.

Knowing that, surely our fear looks different.

**Prayer please:** "Open the book" team go to Grange School in the morning & Maidstone School in the afternoon.

## 6th December

### Isaiah 43.6

I will say to the north, 'Give them up',  
and to the south, 'Do not withhold';  
bring my sons from far away  
and my daughters from the end of the earth—

The nations are called to release Israel from captivity and return them to their home country. In Advent we celebrate the coming of Jesus OUR redeemer, who sets us free to live as God intended.

'Before the worlds were made I chose you.  
Chose you to be mine in love and holiness.  
In my choosing lies your choice of me,  
each for each, each in the other and all in the one in three'

Joyce Huggett Open to God

**Prayer please:** The second evening of our Advent Course, 7.15 for 7.30, St Mary's.

## **7th December**

### **Isaiah 43.7**

everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.'

This is about the gathering of the people; for Isaiah that meant the Jews.

However, the John's Gospel tells us that 'whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.' So now it is not a matter of heritage (or even church membership), but faith that brings God's people together.

**Prayer please:** Our Choir & musicians, preparing Christmas music.

## **8th December**

### **Psalms 34.1**

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

The psalms 34.1 verse shows how someone can always find a time to praise the Lord and show their faith within him. It also shows to be grateful to the Lord for all the things that he has given us. In addition to this it can represent how God is always ready to listen to our prayers.

**Prayer please:** Decoration of the Church for Christmas, may it be inspiring.

## 9th December

### Psalm 34.2

My soul makes its boast in the Lord;  
let the humble hear and be glad.

What can we put our trust in?  
The only sure refuge for us is God and so in God can our soul make  
its boast.  
And yet, how can we show humility.

We can do that, while making our boast in God, because he is the  
refuge for our souls.

**Prayer please:** INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY, for all  
who are involved in fighting this evil.

## 10th December

### Psalm 34.3

O magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt his name together.

I feel uplifted when I get caught up in worship and praise to God!  
Worshiping together can be a wonderful and encouraging  
experience.

“Magnify” means - expand, enlarge, amplify; like a magnifying  
glass.

Is our worship and praise to God growing?  
Let us sing and praise God together!

**Prayer please:** COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE, 6.30pm at St  
Mary's.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, may all be treated fairly & with dignity.

## **11th December**

### **Psalm 34.4**

I sought the Lord, and he answered me,  
and delivered me from all my fears.

What do I fear today? The Lord is waiting for me and wanting me to tell him about my day, my hopes, my fears and to hand them over to him. Help me, Lord, to do this now as I spend these few moments quietly resting in your presence. Amen.

**Prayer please:** our READERS, ELDERS, and LAY PASTOR.

## **12th December**

### **Psalm 34.5**

Look to him, and be radiant;  
so your faces shall never be ashamed.

You know when you smile at someone - that smile is returned? I think that's how it is with God. By looking to Him we can't help but be radiant! Then when we turn to the world others will see that smile and assurance (and definitely no shame!) How wonderful!

**Prayer please:** "OPEN THE BOOK" team go to Causation School in the afternoon.

Walton & Trimley Mothers' Union Groups hold their joint CAROL SERVICE at Trimley Church, at 2.30pm. All welcome.

## 13th December

### Psalm 34.6

This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,  
and was saved from every trouble.

Jesus didn't promise us an easy life, but i feel this reminds us that no matter what, He will always be there to hear that cry. It's easy for our focus to get blurred and it's sometimes hard to re-focus. But all you have to do is call out His name and he will be there every, single, time. With such outstanding love and patience! We may not always understand what's happening, but that's ok, because the greatest comfort is knowing that with Jesus the outcome can only be good. Knowing you are never alone and He's got you is awesome!

**Prayer please:** Final evening of Advent Course, Seaton Rd, Methodist, 7.30pm.

## 14th December

### Psalm 34.7

The angel of the Lord encamps  
around those who fear him, and delivers them.

The messengers of God of all kinds come to us and speak peace.  
They tell us it is going to be ok. They tell us that God is near.  
Listen to those who call you back to God.  
God comes to us in so many ways, and continues to deliver us from  
all our fears.

**Prayer please:** St Mary's Mens' Fellowship Group & also the Trimley group.

## 15th December

### Luke 1.46

And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,

Mary's unqualified yes to God's plan for her life entailed great personal risk and suffering.

She must have endured seasons of confusion fear and darkness as events unfolded.

Her loyalty and devotion are an inspiration. She is both Mother to Jesus and first disciple.

May our life's magnify the Lord!

**Prayer please:** Churches Together in Felixstowe list for the month:- St Peter & Paul, St Andrew & St Nicholas at the Ferry (all present in interregnum), also, St Felix Roman Catholic.

## 16th December

### Luke 1.47

and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

What does it mean when Mary says her spirit rejoices? Surely it's got to mean more than words or singing. Perhaps Paul shed some light when he said 'This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught us by the Spirit ...' (1Cor 2:13).

A spiritual language then, an inner voice expressing things that words would only hinder?

**Prayer please:** our Home Groups, their Leaders & Co-ordinator, Pam Allen.

## 17th December

### Luke 1.48

for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

What most strikes me about Mary is her awareness of her ordinariness. Yet the Father blessed her with the privilege of bearing His Son; an act of grace which would be celebrated down the ages. Because of His grace to Mary, God has made a way by which ordinary people like ourselves are also blessed in becoming His children through His Son.

**Prayer please:** CANDLE-LIT CAROL SERVICE, 6.30pm at Walton and Trimley.

## 18th December

### Luke 1.49

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

Mary uses the language of two familiar Psalms (Ps. 71v19 and Ps.111v9) as she pours out her joy and excitement to Elizabeth... Despite the very practical difficulties that were facing her, Mary is totally confident that God, who performed amazing mighty deeds to help his people in the past, is in control of her life too. Total Trust ! Amazing ! What an example for us!

**Prayer please:** that God would inspire more Christians to commit to Intercessory PRAYER for our communities & nation.

## **19th December**

### **Luke 1.50**

His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

Isn't it amazing that Mary could say these words over two thousand years ago and countless generations have passed, but His mercy is still unending and freely available for us? We just need to put Him in charge.

**Prayer please:** our CHURCH WARDENS & OFFICE MANAGER

## **20th December**

### **Luke 1.51**

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

Mary reminds us of God's power, wisdom and justice. The arm is a symbol of power and strength; our awesome God the creator who is in ultimate control.

She also recognises that God knows all our inmost thoughts and can deal with those who have wrong attitudes.

**Prayer please:** the housebound & lonely at this season, that more folk will show Love and care towards them.

## 21st December

### Luke 1.52

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

God values us all the same and equally no matter who you are. Whether or not you hold 'power' you are all still equal in God's eyes. Regardless of your job or money, God will still love you the same as everyone else.

**Prayer please:** our CLERGY and all retired clergy, who assist, together with their families.

## 22nd December Margaret

### Luke 1.53

he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. This seems to be the way of our greedy, wealth-obsessed world, but Mary's vision of God's kingdom turns it upside-down. Do we live by our own strength, or depend on God's amazing, indiscriminate generosity to fill us?

**Prayer please:** the 1-2-3 Group, all families represented there and also the 'Loaves & Fishes' slot.

## **23rd December**

### **Luke 1.54**

54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

Every time we pick up the Bible we can see God's mercy at work.  
God shows mercy to all, at any time and this is for us now too.  
God is careful in all things, and so we don't need to fear.  
We can bring all and anything to him.

**Prayer please:** areas of the world where it is difficult or even impossible to celebrate CHRISTMAS.

## **24th December**

### **Luke 1.55a**

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

God's promise is one we can trust. God's promise is made for all of us, it is made with all of us.

This promise will be for all those who go after us, just as it was for those before us. How are all people to know that God's promise is for them too?

**Prayer please:** SUNDAY MORNING and CHRISTMAS EVE services.

## **25th December**

### **Luke 1.55b**

to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

This promise is for all. It doesn't matter how far you have been from God. God has come close to you.  
The joy is for you now, so embrace it.

**Prayer please:** CHRISTMAS DAY services.

The Bible readings are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.  
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