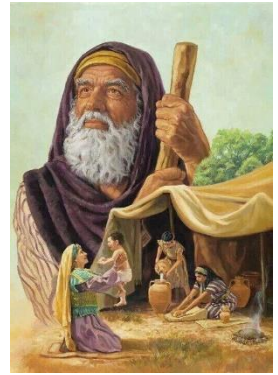




**UNITED BENEFICE OF CORLEY PARISH
CHURCH & ST MARY & ALL SAINTS
CHURCH, FILLONGLEY WITH
FILLONGLEY METHODIST CHURCH**
Anglicans and Methodists in Unity.



Dear Friends,

Christmas isn't cancelled!

You may have seen the headlines or heard the soundbites. The decision to allow us some time out of lockdown means that Christmas is back on. But Christmas has never been cancelled. Christmas, the celebration of the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas has never been cancelled. We may have restrictions on our movement and the amount of people that we can share our time with. We may have times in our lives that are difficult, when we are grieving or lonely, times when money is desperately tight or our families are in disarray. But that is kind of the point. Whatever our circumstances, feast or famine, joy or pain, loneliness or contentment the Christ Child still comes.

God in the person of Jesus Christ, broke into our history, became one of us, to be with us in good times and bad. To give us hope when we are hopeless. To give us peace when we are in turmoil. To bring love to the unloved. Freedom to the imprisoned. Justice to those who are suffering injustice. That first Christmas changed everything. God with us, Immanuel. God was not a distant deity to be feared. God with us, Immanuel, means a relationship with the living God who loves us.

But relationship is a two-way street. Being in relationship with God means that we are changed and share in the responsibilities of doing our part to bring hope, peace and justice to our world. The work of Christmas goes on every day.

A clergy friend of mine, Rev Sue Sheriff, wrote this poem when the media was full of 'Christmas is cancelled' headlines:

Christmas is cancelled?
You're having me on!
Because of a virus?
That's got to be wrong!

Every year some folk are homeless,
and some feel so sad.
For some it's a reminder
of all they once had.

So what will be missing
on the happy day
The loving? The caring?
Surely they'll be there anyway.

This year they say
money might be quite tight.
Are we worried about presents?
Surely that can't be right.

The food and the feasting,
the cup of good cheer?
For most of us at least
there's always next year.

What makes Christmas tough
is grief, loss and sadness.
Not missing out for once
on shopping frenzy madness.

No gathering of families
as everyone comes home?
For some that's quite normal
they spend each Christmas alone.

The virus can do one!
Christmas cancelled? No fear!
It's the coming of Jesus...
And don't worry, He's here!

We will be celebrating Christmas a little differently this year. But we will be celebrating (to paraphrase an old advert) the gift that really keeps on giving. The gift of hope, joy, love and peace with no gift receipt required.

Whatever your plans for Christmas, my prayer for us all is that the peace of the Christ Child will be ours this Christmas.

With love and prayers Ali

P.S. Advent begins this Sunday and there is a recorded service so we can 'gather to worship' separately and safely. But we will be back in church on the 6th December. Please keep an eye on the website for the latest service information.

LECTIONARY Readings and Prayers for Sunday 29th November 2020

The First Sunday of ADVENT

Collects

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 64: vs 1-9

Psalm 80

1 Corinthians 1: vs 3-9

Mark 13: vs 24 – end



Talk / Reflection

Revd Ali's Reflection for this Sunday is attached to this Bulletin and will be preached in the recorded service for this Sunday.

Revd Jane's Reflection for this Sunday is within the Order of Service attached to this Bulletin.

**Here is the link to our Online Recorded Service for
The first Sunday of Advent November 2020**

<https://youtu.be/1x6GPKj0bls>



HYMNS & WORSHIP SONGS

Here are the Hymns that we would have been singing in Church on Sunday ~

Advent candles tell their story (StF 165) Verse 1 only

Stay with me, remain here with me (StF 780)

Here is a nice gentle song to be singing along with this week ~

[\(42\) Stay With Me Remain Here With Me Taize Hymn - YouTube](#)

Like a candle flame, flickering small in our darkness (StF 176)

Lo, he comes with clouds descending (StF 177)

PRAYERS

We are currently observing a month of Prayer for the Nation during the second lockdown.

Please unite in prayer at 6pm each day.

A Celtic prayer for Advent

Calm us to wait for the gift of Christ;

Cleanse us to prepare the way for Christ;

Teach us to contemplate the wonder of Christ;

Touch us to know the presence of Christ;

Anoint us to bear the life of Christ.



Prayers from World Vision

Lord, as uncertainty and change continue around the world we pray for all new things. Newly appointed Leaders, changing tier and lockdown regulations, businesses re-opening and vaccines to protect us from coronavirus. We pray for all to serve us well, as we choose to respond and serve others too.







Heavenly Father, as coronavirus continues to claim and impact lives globally, we pray for your loving arms to be around all those affected. Those who mourn the loss of loved ones, those recovering from COVID-19 symptoms and those afraid of contracting or spreading the disease further.

Lord Jesus, during the season of Advent, may we each be led more by the fruits of your spirit. Together let us each increase kindness to our family, friends, and neighbours – especially the world's most vulnerable children and families that we serve. Amen



RESOURCES

Attached to this Bulletin are these items ~

-  A Reflection from Revd Ali Massey for
-  A Service of Holy Communion for the Benefice
-  A Service of Methodist Morning Worship.
-  Preparing to prepare ~ *Gordon Giles, Canon Chancellor of Rochester Cathedral*

AND FINALLY DON'T FORGET

If there is anything that you need or know of someone who would appreciate being contacted or added to the mailing list for this weekly e-bulletin, please do not hesitate to contact Revd Ali, Revd Jane or any of the Churchwardens and Church Stewards listed below. ⁱ

ⁱ *Contact Details:*

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