

Vicar's Letter for December 2018

Dear Friends

As we reach the last month of 2018 I want to begin by thanking you all for your support for our magazine over the years. As I wrote in the July issue our magazine will be ceasing in its current format at the end of 2018. I know you will want to join me in thanking Rita and those who have worked with her so faithfully and steadily to ensure that the magazine is compiled and at the printers on time so that you can receive your monthly copy. Thank you, Rita, for all your hard work over so many years!

But - and it is a big but - we will continue to have the insert CRUX available in church each month, at a cost of just 50p, together with a covering letter which will give information about what is on at St Matthew's over the coming month. And information will still be available on the website and on our Facebook page and we hope you will still feel part of St Matthew's and continue to attend social and fundraising events.

I should think we all have that 'friend' who tells us with great glee sometime in August, when the summer sun is still shining, exactly how many days there are until Christmas. I think it was actually in July that I was told brightly, 'did you know it is only x days till Christmas?' And in the hot sun it just didn't seem possible.....

Well, now it's almost upon us.

So as we look towards Advent and Christmas; as we begin the build up to the Christmas season, as we start to receive information about Christmas food and gift ideas on sale in our shops and turn our minds to buying Christmas cards and presents, I hope that you will find time to dwell on the true, simple meaning of Christmas - that God sent his Son out of love for the world, to share our life and to live among us. I hope you will be able to join us in celebrating the birth of Christ our Saviour at one of our services, details of which are to be found in this magazine.

For so many, the pressure of buying and getting themselves and their homes ready for Christmas seems to bring not joy but exhaustion and even despair - how very, very sad. So it's good to remind ourselves from time to time that there is no such thing as a perfect Christmas, despite what adverts tell us or try to make us believe in the months leading up to the big day. We don't need to rush madly and go round and round in ever decreasing circles in a panic trying to get everything just right. We really don't!! (I am telling this to myself too, you understand!). Because of course the very reason for that first Christmas is because we are far from perfect and we never will be perfect.

God comes in our midst just as we are, in all our tiredness, jadedness, mess, confusion and unpreparedness. God comes to us no matter what we are like. God

doesn't need our homes to be pristine and perfect. God doesn't need a laden table or piles of presents, God just needs us as we are, and welcomes us as we are.

Recently I heard about the Muslim weavers who deliberately work a tiny flaw into each of their works of art because they believe that only God can be perfect. My mistakes in life tend to be less carefully planned but I take heart that the message is just the same: we are not perfect, only God is.

So, in this Advent season I urge you: do try to enjoy whatever preparations you make and but also relax; God knows we are not perfect but he loves us anyway. I type these Christmas thoughts in mid November while there are still a few weeks before Advent, and share with you a Blessing for this season and into 2019:

May you find Rest in the busyness,
Stillness in the storm
And Light in the darkness. Amen.

with every blessing
Kate