

AdventWord—Week Two

December 5th - December 11th

The additional prayers are not included in this booklet once more, please use them from the 1st weeks booklet if you wish to continue to do so.

Monday 5th December - RAIN

Today's word comes from Psalm 72:6

'May the king's rule be refreshing like spring rain on freshly cut grass, like the showers that water the earth.'

Day 9

We are used to rain in the West of Scotland, it comes in all forms, from the light refreshing summer shower to the dreich day long down pour. From the mizzle that soaks you to the sick, to the big fat drops that sometimes appear to fall only one side of a street from the single cloud in the sky.

Rain is why we have such wonderful lush green scenery, it has played its part in carving out the valleys, filling our lochs, producing our crops and giving the wildlife places to play and drink. I always find it amusing after a warm dry summer, like the one we have just had, or even a shorter period of no rain, the first day of rain someone always complains about it always raining. We benefit from the rain because it is a constant in our lives, but because it is that constant we often also take it for granted and forget the blessing it is.

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Activity

If it is raining today just take some time to watch it, to ponder on where that water was before the sun lifted it into the sky to produce clouds, the wind blew those clouds high in the atmosphere until the rain was released. We are connected by water, all life needs water. Give thanks for the rain.

Extra

If it isn't raining today, next time it is raining watch a rain drop land on a window and pray a prayer of thanksgiving for water as it trickles down the pane.

Or maybe look up a charity like WaterAid and consider how you might help those who don't have rain or clean water.

Tuesday 6th December - WELCOME

Today's word comes from Romans 15:7

'Therefore, welcome each other just as Christ has welcomed you so that God will be given glory.'

Day 10

Welcoming falls into 2 categories. The welcome that makes you feel like you belong and the welcome that makes you feel like you don't.

To be truly welcoming we are urged welcome as Christ does. Without airs or graces, without conditions or exceptions, but rather; with joy and gladness, with acceptance and warmth.

Welcome goes beyond language, welcome is bigger than mere words. For a start it is woven through with love, love that interrupts the thought of; 'Will I find a welcome?' and banishes it like the storm clouds being chassed away by the sun.

In welcome we should offer and should receive, the Divine. Right there in that very first moment, the welcomed and the welcomer. Meeting the Divine in each other, not as some future promise of maybes of tomorrow, but the you are precious and beloved, right now, in this day in this moment, you are welcome.

Activity

In Mark chapter 6 we can read that a prophet isn't welcome in their home town. Why do you think that might be?

Extra

Welcoming someone doesn't need to happen in a building, it can happen anywhere. Welcoming is about more than a place it is about welcoming someone into your life. Be it for a moment in a chance encounter, or for a season or even longer.

As you go about your day today, or if you are doing this in the evening think back over your day, think of the people you met. How could/did you welcome those you meet/met into that period of your life. Think of the words you use/d. The actions you make/made. The sense of rush or stillness. Your facial expressions.

Wednesday 7th December - WINNOWING

Today's word comes from Matthew 3:12

"He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

Day 11

The dictionary definition of winnowing is:

'blow a current of air through (grain) in order to remove the chaff.'

The Spirit is often referred to as the wind. In Genesis it is the wind of the Spirit that blows over the water the action of God's word, 'Let there be light'.

Winnowing is a gentle thing, the winnowing fork tosses the threshed grain into the wind allowing it to direct the chaff away

to protect the wheat. Sometimes to act in the Spirit means to engage with winnowing.

In that other time of preparation in the liturgical year, Lent, winnowing can be more clearly seen in the giving up of those things that are negatively impacting on our lives.

God will deal with the bits winnowed away, that is not our business. The Spirit's presence from the beginning is present now, protecting and guiding, winnowing through our lives.

Activity

Spend some time to think about what the Holy Spirit might be trying to winnow out your life currently.

You might want to note them below and pray for the Spirit's help in clearing them out of your life.

Extra

Sort something, anything, socks, lego, books, whatever. Think about how you go about deciding how to sort.

Thursday 8th December - BREATHE

Today's word comes from Isaiah 11:4

'With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, he shall breathe and destroy the wicked.'

Day 12

Suddenly from one day to another the winnowing breathe that gently separates becomes a destructive breathe.

I struggle a lot with this Old Testament imagery of God being vengeful and destructive, ruling by dispelling fear. I am pretty sure that such imagery is unpalatable to many today, especially when it is easy to look back through history and see where injustices have been wrote in the name of faith. Destructive forces have been used to create misery, destruction, even death. I do not doubt for one second God has the power to do such a thing, but I doubt that the God of love I believe in would do such a thing. But we are stuck with such words, and sadly

people still use such words today to destroy and cause misery. People destroy, God doesn't, God creates, God redeems, God breathes life.

So where does that leave us? Even if you wish to believe that God is a God of destruction, it leaves us with it is God and God alone that does so. Only God knows the heart of someone, only God knows why and how they act, only God knows if they are truly wicked or just in need of knowing they are loved and forgiven. If they don't know God, the only way they are going to know that is if those who do example God's love and forgiveness.

Activity

Sit with your feet flat on the floor, your hands resting gently on your knees. Close your eyes and breath in through your nose. Hold your breathe for a count of three and then breathe out through your mouth. As you breath in silently pray; 'Jesus I welcome you into my life.' As you breath out silently pray; 'Jesus, cleanse us from all that isn't of you.'

Friday 9th December - FIRE

Today's word comes from Matthew 3:10

'Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

Day 13

I don't know about you, but me I love a bonfire. It brings back happy childhood memories, and even memories more recent, when friends and family gathered around fires, Sometimes with treats to eat and drink, sometimes with sparklers to decorate the chilled air with, sometimes to toast some marshmallows, and of course there is the Easter fire.

It is easy in verses such as this to think of the destructive power of fire, however the Bible also takes about it's refining qualities. Fire is used to purify in both instances. This seemingly destruction is actually to give room for growth, good growth.

Activity

Light a candle. The flame is of course fire, a fire that we recognise in Church as being a symbol of Christ's presence in the world. Think of the people, places, situations where you saw the light of Christ today.

Extra

Write a prayer of thanksgiving for those Christ Lights you have seen.

Saturday 10th December - FLOURISH

Today's word comes from Psalm 72:7

In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

Day 14

To flourish is to become all that we can be. God wants us to flourish, wants us to be every thing we can be.

Just as a rose can only flourish as a rose, a daffodil only a daffodil and a poinsettia a poinsettia.

You can only be you and I can only be me, however what God wants is for you to be the best version of you ever and for me to be the best version of me ever.

We have a life time to get it right but it will be oh so much easier if we get it right sooner rather than later. Advent is a time to make another step towards that flourishing which God wants for us. Maybe only a little step, but one little step forward is way better than a massive step backwards.

Flourishing brings peace, as our anxieties, worries and fears vanish and we are content in God's love and blessings.

Activity

Give someone a flower. It can be a cut flower, a flower in a pot on a plant, a paper flower, a flower brooch, a wool flower, a flower of any kind at all. Don't just restrict your flower gifts to females!

Sunday 11th December - MESSENGER

Today's word comes from Matthew 3:1

'In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness as a messenger and began preaching.'

Day 15

Angels are messengers of God. So in one sense John the Baptist, is an angel. As the writer to the Hebrews was to write, it is often without knowing we entertain angels unawares.

Angels come in the most unexpected of forms, and sometimes speak the most unwelcome of words, yet we are still urged to welcome them.

Some received John the Baptist's preaching, some didn't. So it has always be, so it is still is. Messengers are not always welcomed, even when the message is good news. Herod for one wasn't happy about the arrival of Jesus, and later on there were plenty of others who didn't see the Messiah's arrival as Good News.

Sometimes messages aren't what we want to hear, even when we know they are true. Advent is a time for really opening our ears, our hearts and our minds to listen to what God's message for us is.

Activity

Read Genesis 19.

Extra

Write a letter to someone you might have not written to for a while, even if it is someone you have seen more recently.