

Paper Website *by St Anne's with St James*

Advent is about preparing for Christmas, but this year we don't know what to prepare. But if we don't prepare we won't have anything to offer.

And there are things we can't do this year or haven't been able to do, including singing together. Sadly we don't think we will be having a bit Carol Service this year.

And so we also wonder about how much we should decorate the church – we don't know.

We hope to have a Christingle Service on Dec 6th and we hope to have some Christmas services, but it is still uncertain.

We can prepare our hearts, we can prepare our thoughts and we can make space to pray and to “ponder all these things” as we read Mary did.

It will be so sad if we can't gather and sing; particularly sad not to gather and sing our favourite carols; it will be sad if the churches are not decorated as we would normally do, both because of the enjoyment of decorating together and because we will not have the finished product.

But we can all prepare for Christmas – remembering Emmanuel – God is with us; remembering that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

The first Christmas was in the home and God is with us and will continue with us in our homes.

May God give us peace and hope this Christmas.

*98% of people have a mobile phone now - why not receive one of our text prayers, every morning at 9 am?
Text 07958 293 971 to set this up.*



The Advent Wreath

How to make one

Use your imagination and creativity – Make it the size you want it and the height you want it.

You can re-cycle things you already have or go and find things.

The basics are four candles round a circle and a fifth candle in the middle. Normally the outer candles are red or purple but you can decorate them or paint them that way if you only have white candles or tealights.

Traditionally the centre candle is different and white – it can be bigger or it can be raised up a bit, or it could be yellow or gold if the outer candles are white.

The four candles are lit in stages – the first is lit on the first Sunday of Advent, then two are lit the next Sunday, three on the third Sunday (Dec 13th) and all four in the ring are lit on the fourth Sunday. And on Christmas Day we light all four round the edge AND the one in the middle.

We will provide a reading and a prayer which you can use as you light each one. You'll find them on the website and they will be on Facebook for each week. This year we are going to use the themes of Faith, Hope, Peace, Joy for the four weeks and then Love for Christmas Day. We hope this will encourage us to spend time together and reflecting on the Christmas message.

Continued...

- You might want to rest your candles in a metal or wire frame, or you can be more freestyle and have a rough circle using ivy and twigs and holly and twisting it, with space for your candles.
- You might want to name your candles / write on each, for the theme of the week.
- You might want to find some slate or something you can write the theme on and put it beside each candle.
- You might build the whole wreath in one go, or you might want to add to each section each week.

We would remind you that we would like the wreath to be at the heart of the house for Advent and Christmas so don't make it too big so it gets in the way! But make it so it is how you would like it and remember that we are doing it as we prepare for Christmas and the gift of God to us.

We think that the themes of:

Faith (in a time when we are uncertain, and many are unsure of God),

Hope (when the year has been rather bleak, and many are despairing),

Peace (when we are anxious, and the world is unsettled),

Joy (when we can feel down and we know many are dispirited) are important themes for this year.

We may not be able to GO to Church in the way we would like, but this year in particular we can prepare to let God COME to us, we can welcome God into our homes and discover He is with us.

We would love to see some pictures of your wreaths and also with the candles burning. Maybe someone can make a big outdoor Advent Wreath; Surely someone will come up with a different way – maybe up the side of the stairs 1,2,3,4 and then 5 for Christmas Day. It could be a straight line along a window sill if that is easier.



So Stir-up Sunday has previously been a fun time of year to stir a huge Christmas pudding together in Church. This year, sadly, not possible. So the Parkinson family came up with a way we could all share this special day together this year - over Zoom!

For those that don't know what Zoom is... it is video meeting software that allows multiple people to be on the same screen together. 24 families purchased pudding mixture - which was pre-delivered Covid securely, to their doors the week before - to mix and prepare together over Zoom. It was a huge success.

We can all eat Christmas pudding, on Christmas day, that was mixed and prepared by St Anne's with St James'!



Our Mission Action Planning icon is raising its profile and becoming its own feature - we hope the message is shared far and wide.