

Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church

Prayer Diary - Advent 2017



'Visions of Glory'

*'Then I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more. And I saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a Bride adorned for Her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the Dwelling place of God is with the people. God will dwell with them, and they shall be God's people, and God will be with them."...And I saw no Temple in the City, for its Temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. And the City has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the **Glory** of the Lord is its Light and its lamp is the Lamb. By its Light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth will bring their **glory** into it and its gates shall never be shut by day - and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the **glory** and the honour of the nations.'* (Revelation 21: 1 -3, 22 - 26).

*'...And an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, and the **Glory** of the Lord shone all around them...'* (Luke 2, 9)

Week 1: Sunday 3rd December - Saturday 9th December

"A martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr." (T.S. Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral)

- *During your prayers this week, please think especially of all those who be hungry this Christmas season.*
- *Pray, remembering with grateful thanks the many volunteers who organise Foodbanks and arrange for food to be distributed to those who need it most.*
- *Remember those groups and organisations who will open their doors to welcome strangers, providing them with hot food, shelter, and a bed in which to sleep.*
- *Give thanks for all those volunteers who go out at night to feed those sleeping rough wherever they are...*

Please read Luke chapter 1, verses 26 - 35

Week 2: Sunday 10th December - Saturday 16th December

"Then all the winds of Heaven ran to join hands and bend a shoulder, to bring down to me the sound of a noble hymn that was heavy with the perfume of Time That Has Gone...The glittering multitudes were singing most mightily, and my heart was in blood to hear a Voice that I knew...The Men of the Valley were marching again...My Fathers were singing up there...Loud, triumphant, the anthem rose, and I knew, in some deep place within, that in the royal music was a prayer to lift up my spirit, to be of good cheer, to keep the faith, that Death was only an end to the things that are made of clay, and to fight, without heed of wounds, all that brings death to the Spirit, with Glory to the Eternal Father, forever, Amen."
(Richard Llewellyn, How Green Was My Valley)

- *During your prayers this week, please think especially of those who do not have clean drinking water at this time of year...*
- *Pray, remembering with grateful thanks for the work of WATER AID and other such charities...*
- *Remember all those who suffer from water borne infections, because they do not have access to clean water...*
- *Give thanks for scientists and engineers working hard to ensure that clean water is available even in the most inaccessible places...*

Please read Luke chapter 1, verses 46 - 55

Week 3: Sunday 17th December - Saturday 23rd December

"All such desires are cut short by the statement: The Word became flesh. It is in his sheer humanity that he is the Revealer. True, his own also see his Glory; indeed if it were not to be seen, there would be no grounds for speaking of revelation. But this is the paradox which runs through the whole gospel: The Glory is not to be seen alongside the flesh as through a window; it is to be seen in the flesh and nowhere else. If man wishes to see the Glory, then it is on the flesh that he must concentrate his attention, without allowing himself to fall victim to appearances. The revelation is present in a peculiar hiddenness." (Rudolf Bultmann, Gospel of John).

- *During your prayers this week, please think especially of those who do not have sufficient clothes to wear appropriate for this time of year...*
- *Pray, remembering with grateful thanks all those who are prepared to donate clothes of their own; the work of our church clothes bank; the work of local charity shops and other such outlets...*
- *Remember all those whose circumstances are such that they have never had the opportunity to wear new clothes, clothes that fit, clothes that suit them...*
- *Give thanks for the work of those in the garment trade, especially those who are paid a pittance so that others can profit at their expense...*

Please read Luke chapter 2, verses 1 - 7

Week 4: Sunday 24th December - Saturday 30th December

"Oh goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done, and occasioned; or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring;
To God more glory, more good-will to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound."
(John Milton, Paradise Lost)

- *During your prayers this week, please think especially of those who will be spending Christmas in hospital, in a hospice, being cared for in a nursing home or residential care, being looked after at home...*
- *Pray, remembering all those who will be working throughout the Christmas within the health and caring professions...*
- *Remember those whose ill-health - physical, mental, emotional & spiritual will prevent them from enjoying Christmas as they otherwise would...*
- *Give thanks for all who continue to work to find a cure, to discover new treatments, to provide enhanced care for all who are presently suffering because of their health...*

Please read Luke chapter 2, verses 8 - 20

Week 5: Sunday 31st December - Saturday 6th January

"We will never become the people of hope and blessing we're meant to be until we learn how to wake up and pay attention to the **glory** and pain, beauty and suffering that are in lives all around us."

(Richard Dahlstrom, *The Colours of Hope: Becoming People of Mercy, Justice, and Love*).

- *During your prayers this week please think especially of those who will 'celebrate' New Year in prison, continuing to serve their sentence, dealing with their guilt (or not), struggling to cope with being 'locked up'...*
- *Pray, remembering all who work in the Prison Service; Governors, Officers, Chaplains, Support Staff of every kind...*
- *Remember those who are prisoners 'of conscience', 'political' prisoners, whose only 'crime' was to be on the wrong side of the argument...and for those agencies who campaign for their release...*
- *Give thanks for all those who work with those who have been released from prison to help them reintegrate into society, recovering a sense of dignity and self-worth for themselves...*

Please read Luke chapter 2, verses 25 - 40

And as we leave the holiday season behind, the ordinariness of everyday life proves to be a welcome relief, but it brings with it its own challenge...

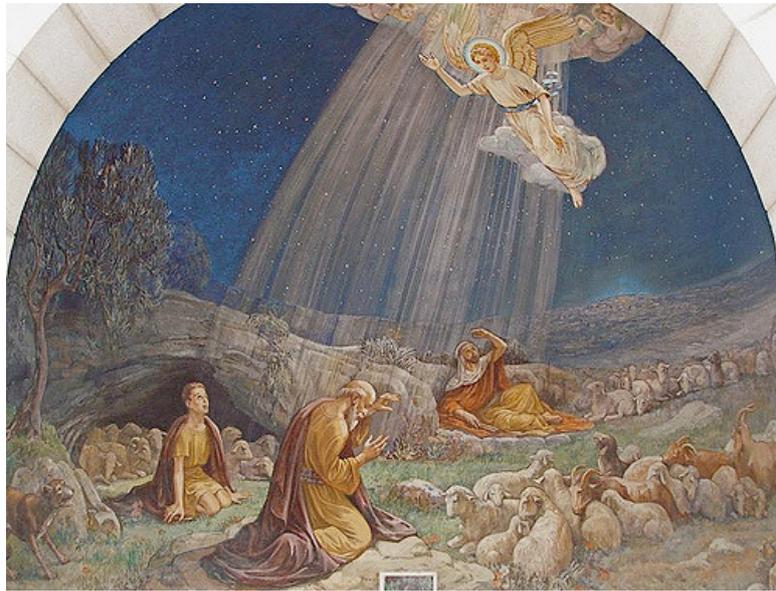
"We must practice the presence of God. He said that when two or three are gathered together, there he is in the midst of them. He is with us in our kitchens, at our tables, on our breadlines, with our visitors, on our farms. When we pray for our material needs, it brings us close to his humanity. He, too, needed food and shelter; he, too, warmed his hands at a fire and lay down in a boat to sleep."
Dorothy Day, (The Reckless Way of Love: Notes on Following Jesus)

The challenge for us, each one of us, and all of us together is to continue to be faithful in the practicalities of life...

- To feed the hungry
- To give the thirsty a drink
 - To clothe the naked
- To welcome the stranger
 - To care for the sick
 - To visit the prisoner

This is the ministry to which we are called, and in which we will be blessed...

*'Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the **glory** of the Lord will be your rear guard.'* (Isaiah 58, 8)



During Advent:

Study group on an Advent theme:

Monday 4th, 11th, 18th December 10am -12

Church open for you to pray, read, or reflect:

Tuesday 5th, 12th, 19th December 10am - 12

EVERYBODY WELCOME!

....and finally... Christmas embodies the Peace, Joy, and Hope of the nativity. It can also be a time when some experience loneliness, difficult memories, family tensions, and anxiety. You do not have to be a member of this church to contact me to scream, chat, or pray.

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