

From your LinkUp Churches

Church at Home for December

*A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God'.*

Isaiah 40:3

Christmas is not cancelled

This year will feel very different, as we come to the festive season. All the turkey growers are not selling their larger birds as the likelihood of large gatherings diminishes; airlines and hotels have few customers booked; Abridge Lights had no crowd to watch them switched on; and the churches may be uncertain whether they will be able to sing carols.

Yet Christmas is not cancelled. The reason for the season is still here. Bethlehem 2020-ish years ago still reminds us that God in Jesus enters our world as it is. What he did then, he does now - shares our lives, on the COVID ward, in the care home, in the White House and in the Kremlin. From the powerful to the powerless, from Vancouver to Victoria, God seeks to be alongside us, sharing our pain, our struggles, our hopes and our dreams; weeping with those who weep, and rejoicing with those who rejoice.

So this Christmas let us welcome Jesus into our lives and we wish you a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Some Sunday Bible readings for Advent

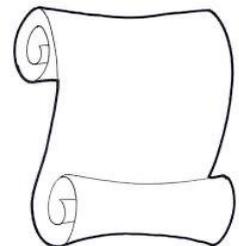


On each of the 4 Sundays leading up to Christmas, churches traditionally light candles on an Advent wreath. It's like a countdown to the great day, with a final central, white candle being lit on the 25th December. Each candle represents a clue to the coming of Jesus into our world: the words of the prophets, the preaching of John the Baptist, the promises to King David, and the message that comes to Mary. God planned Christmas long ago as the way to put the world back together again through Jesus.

Advent Sunday-29th November - The Prophets

Isaiah 64:1-9

What do you long for on behalf of our hurting world? What should God do to help?





6th December - John the Baptist

Mark 1: 1-8

How can we get ready for the coming of Jesus? What might it mean for our lives?

13th December – The angel appears to Mary

Luke 1: 46-55

How has Mary's song come true in your experience? How can we live by these values?



20th December - In David's town, Bethlehem

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

What sort of new King will Jesus be? Where will his Temple be now?

Christmas Day: John 1: 1-18 *'The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish'. (The Message version of verse 14)*

A hymn for the month

O come , o come Emmanuel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcllZpnZPgo>

Lambourne School assembly link for school families

The Monday morning assembly team has enjoyed sharing the story of Simon with you this term and how everything changed for him when he started to follow Jesus.

Simon learnt about *forgiveness* when he saw the roof of his house opened up and a man lowered into the middle of the crowd around Jesus. And Simon learned about *prayer* by seeing how important it was to Jesus. And as Simon chatted with those who came from Nazareth, including Mary, he would have heard the amazing story of how Jesus was born in Bethlehem.



We hope you'll enjoy finding out more about the story of Christmas this year from **The Christmas Journey Trail** around the village that the churches are organising. There will be 20 boards in different homes – maybe in gardens or windows - and as you find each one, there will be something more to discover about why Christians feel Christmas is so special. We'll arrange to get Christmas Journey sheets to you as soon as possible! Do let us know how you get on.