

Dear Church Family,

28/11/21

This Sunday 28th November is the beginning of Advent, the four week period of preparation for celebrating Christmas. Usually, the themes for this season are Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Celebrations often include Advent candles that are lit, one for each Sunday, as well as Nativity scenes. All of these add to the visual aspect of the celebration. Most of you would be familiar with each of these. But what does each of these teach us about the real meaning of Advent?

A definition I found online states, “Advent, (from Latin adventus, “coming”), in the Christian church calendar, the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and also of preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.” The word literally means, “Coming”, and is referring to the birth of Jesus as He takes on flesh and comes to live among us, (John 1:14). Did you notice the last part, that adds a significant detail, “also of preparation for the Second Coming of Christ.” When was the last time you even thought about the second coming of Christ? Or when have you connected it with Christmas in any way?

This year I want to do something different at Christmas. Don't worry we will still have carols, the Nativity scene, and a theme for each week. But this year, because we will start meeting on the 5th December, we will only have three weeks to prepare for Christmas. So these are the themes for each week; Love, Faith, & Hope. These may sound familiar to you, so please take the time to read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 and take note of the last verse.

Now that you know the themes I want to encourage you to do a little preparation of your own for each Sunday. It works like this, I will give you a Bible passage for each theme and you look it up and read it. Once you read it, there are two questions you need answer.

1. How does Jesus coming into the world connect with the theme for this week?
2. How does Jesus second coming relate to the theme?

I recently told you about meditating on Scripture and that is what you are doing in this exercise. Meditating means pondering by asking questions. There are lots of questions you can ask, such as, What does this mean? Why did he say that? What am I supposed to do in response? How do I apply this to my life? I'm sure you can think of many others and you are free to ask

those questions. Remember you can ask God your questions and He might tell you the answer or a random thought may come to mind. That is one way God speaks.

Now let's look at each of the themes for the week and I will give you the references for each one. With the references I have given you a passage so you can see it in context. In each passage there are verses that relate to the theme.

5th December: LOVE is the theme.

References to meditate on: Matthew 1:18-25, John 3:9-21

12th December: FAITH is the theme

References to meditate on: Luke 1:26-38, Hebrews 11:1-3

19th December: HOPE is the theme.

References to meditate on: Hebrews 6:13-20, Luke 2:8-17

This isn't meant to be a hard task, so have fun with it see what you discover about each of these themes. When you come on Sunday the messages will be on these themes so you will have a head start on them.

Blessings to you all and I look forward to seeing you in person on the 5th December.

Don.