



NOVEMBER 2024
ADVENT EDITION

AFFINITY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AFFINITY PARISHES OF ST JOHN'S CLEVEDON
AND ALL SAINTS WITH ST SAVIOUR WESTON-SUPER MARE

ADVENT EDITION

WELCOME TO OUR NEW PUBLICATION...

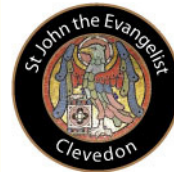
A very warm welcome to the first edition of our 'Affinity Supplement', a joint publication of our two Affinity parishes, St John the Evangelist in Clevedon and All Saints with St Saviour, Weston-super-Mare.

We hope that you enjoy the content, whether you are a regular worshipper, a visiting or occasional churchgoer, or a curious visitor who wishes to be informed.

All are warmly welcome to attend our Advent and Christmas worship and events.

*blessed is the fruit
of your womb*

LUKE 1:42



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NOTES ON THE LITURGICAL SEASON

Advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as the Church prepares to celebrate the coming (adventus) of Christ in his incarnation, and also looks ahead to his final advent as judge at the end of time. The readings and liturgies not only direct us towards Christ's birth, but they also challenge the modern reluctance to confront the theme of divine judgement:

Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty.

Charles Wesley

The Four Last Things – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell – have been traditional themes for Advent meditation. The characteristic note of Advent is therefore expectation, rather than penitence, although the character of the season is easily coloured by an analogy with Lent. The anticipation of Christmas under commercial pressure has also made it harder to sustain the appropriate sense of alert watchfulness, but the fundamental Advent prayer remains 'Maranatha' – 'Our Lord, come' (1 Corinthians 16.22). Church decorations are simple and spare, and purple is the traditional liturgical colour.

In the northern hemisphere, the Advent season falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and

Christmas.

The lighting of candles on an Advent wreath was imported into Britain from northern Europe in the nineteenth century and is now a common practice. The Moravian custom of the Christingle has similarly enjoyed great success in Britain since the latter part of the twentieth century, with the encouragement of the Children's Society; Christingle services may take place before or after Christmas.

The Third Sunday of Advent was observed in medieval times as a splash of colour in the restrained atmosphere of Advent (Gaudete or 'Rose Sunday'), and the last days of Advent were marked by the sequence of Great 'O' Antiphons, which continue to inspire modern Advent hymns and meditations.

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

Hark, hark, the wise eternal word,
like a weak infant cries!
In form of servant is the Lord,
and God in cradle lies.

Thomas Pestel

Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth, and neither of the great Christmas morning readings (Hebrews 1 and John 1) is taken from the infancy narratives. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word made flesh for our salvation.



NOTES ON THE LITURGICAL SEASON CONT'D

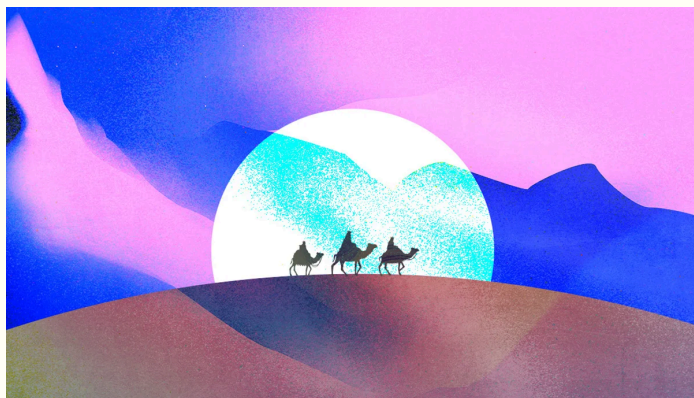
It is, of course, Christ's nativity that has provided the occasion for this festival of the incarnation, since the end of the third century.

The Christmas crib and the nativity play can both be said to descend from the tableau of Christ's birth that Francis of Assisi arranged when he celebrated Christmas at Greccio in 1223.

Christmas carols are a medieval tradition, which has been notably developed from the end of the nineteenth century. The Festival of Lessons and Carols is itself an influential English creation of the late nineteenth century, made widespread by the choir of King's College, Cambridge, in the first half of the twentieth.

The Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany. The days around 25 December are a principal holiday in the secular calendar of Britain, and commercial pressures have led to much of Christmas celebration being displaced into Advent. It has become a still greater challenge to celebrate as they deserve the saints of the Christmas season: Stephen, who first paid with his life for following the incarnate Lord; John, who was believed to have lived to great old age in profound meditation on the Word made flesh; and the Holy Innocents, who draw our attention to the plight of children in a world where the implications of the birth of the Christ-child are not yet manifest.

In the Western churches, the Epiphany ('manifestation') became an occasion to celebrate one element in the story of Christ's birth, the visit of the far-travelled magi, understood as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Matthew's account speaks simply of 'wise men from the east'; later tradition fixed their number at three, made them kings and recalled their resonant names – Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. In this perspective, Epiphany tide is an apt season to pray for the worldwide mission of the Church.



The feast of the Conversion of St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, appropriately falls in the Epiphany season, as does the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In the Eastern churches, the Epiphany is, rather, the celebration of Christ's baptism at the hands of John, when the heavens were opened and a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son. The miracle of Cana in Galilee, where Jesus 'first manifested his glory', follows immediately:

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding-guest
in thy Godhead manifest.

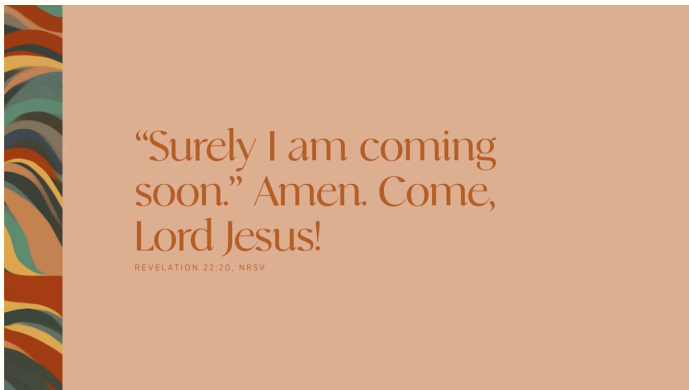
Christopher Wordsworth



NOTES ON THE LITURGICAL SEASON CONT'D

The arrangement of the Sundays of Epiphany in the Revised Common Lectionary deliberately draws out these aspects. The season of joyful celebration that begins at Christmas now continues through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas). The child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel. He is both 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'.

But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter.



The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Isiah 9:2

CHURCH CALENDAR



ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, CLEVEDON

**30th November - 5pm
An Advent Vigil sung by the
Henbury Singers**

**8th December - 4pm
A Talk by Dr Martin Firth**

**11th December - 2pm
Avon Federation of Women's
Institutes Carols**

**14th December - 7.30pm
Clevedon Choral Christmas
Concert**

**22nd December - 5.30pm
Lessons and Carols for Christmas**

**24th December - 4pm
Christingle and Crib Service and at
11pm Midnight Mass of Christmas
Night**

**25th December - 10.30am
Mass of Christmas Day**

**27th December - 10am
Feast of John the Evangelist**

ALL SAINTS WITH SAINT SAVIOUR

**23th November - 3pm
'Eternal Light' Weston Choral
Society**

**1st December - 4pm
Advent Carol Service**

**7th December - 7.30pm
Costanzi Consort 'An Eastern
European Christmas'**

**11th December - 11am Carols at
St Saviour's and at 7pm
Freemasons' annual Rose Carol
Service**

**13th December - 7.30pm
Vocalise 'Carols from the Belles'
Christmas concert**

**17th December - 2pm U3A Carol
Service**

**18th December - Carols by
Candlelight Service for Mayor with
Harmonia Sacra**

**24th December - 9pm Midnight
mass and blessing of the crib**

**25th December - 9am
Mass of Christmas Day**

THIS LIST DOES NOT INCLUDE THE DAILY MASSES, MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER, AND OTHER DEVOTIONS WHICH CAN BE REFERENCED ON THE WEEKLY PEW SHEET.



**THE AFFINITY PARISHES OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, CLEVEDON
AND ALL SAINTS WITH ST SAVIOUR WISH YOU A BLESSED ADVENT
AND A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS**

THIS SUPPLEMENT IS PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR FOR THE
CHURCH SEASONS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS, LENT AND HOLY
WEEK, EASTER TO PENTECOST AND PENTECOST TO ALL SAINTS

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