



The Chapels Royal of St Peter ad Vincula and St John the Evangelist

HM Tower of London

Dear friends,

We could say that this November began with the two great church occasions for looking backwards – as we celebrated the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls – and that it nears its end this coming Sunday with a great occasion for looking forwards: Advent Sunday. Remembrance Sunday came around halfway through the month and its name suggests that it, too, is an occasion for looking backwards. A moment's reflection, however, tells us that that is a simplistic view. Whilst it is true that at All Saints and All Souls, we remember those who have gone this way before us, we believe that they have been granted the eternal life which we too hope to enjoy in our turn. Advent does mean 'coming' and it is a period of anticipation for the Feast of the Incarnation at Christmas, but it always requires us to consider where we have come from and where we are now. As for Remembrance Sunday, it is always more than an occasion of thanksgiving for the sacrifices of others. As John McCrae wrote in the final verse of his famous poem 'In Flanders Fields' which we hear every Remembrance Sunday:

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

This is more than an anthem for the dead: it is a call to action. Similarly, the feasts of All Saints and All Souls urge us not only to remember our predecessors but to emulate them in our daily lives. Advent is more than a hiatus before the joy of Christmas; it is a time for taking stock and preparing ourselves for our Lord's Second Coming. This is powerfully expressed in the Collect for Advent Sunday, below. That said, how we actually behave during Advent has long been a source of wry comment, as in John Betjeman's 1955 poem in this Newsletter. Have a blessed Advent!

With my best wishes, Cortland.

Sunday Service Details – 27th November 2022

Advent Sunday

0915 Holy Communion Chapel Royal of St John the Evangelist, White Tower
1100 Advent Carol Service

Special Service Sheet

Collect for Advent Sunday

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness,
and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life
in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility;
that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury on Sunday 11th December 2022 at 1100am

On Sunday 11th December, the Archbishop of Canterbury will be our preacher. His visit would originally have been the finale of our 2022 Platinum Jubilee celebrations. We are delighted that the Archbishop is coming to join us. After the service, there will be an opportunity to meet and chat with him over mulled wine. Do put the date in your diary.

Poem of the week

Advent 1955 by John Betjeman.

Sir John Betjeman CBE, born in 1906, was Poet Laureate from 1972 until his death in 1984. A founding member of The Victorian Society, he was a passionate defender of Victorian architecture, helping to save St Pancras railway station from demolition. He began his career as a journalist and ended it as one of the most popular British Poets Laureate and a much-loved figure on British television. The characteristic directness of his poetry, which some dismiss as facile, deliberately uses colloquial expressions and simple constructions, making it widely accessible to those who might find other poetry challenging and obscure. His gentle barbs at hypocrisy never spare himself, which removes any sense of sanctimoniousness from his work. Here, he reflects in 1955 on the commercialisation of the weeks leading up to Christmas. What would he have made of the situation today?

Advent 1955

The Advent wind begins to stir
With sea-like sounds in our Scotch fir.
It's dark at breakfast, dark at tea,
And in between we only see
Clouds hurrying across the sky
And rain-wet roads the wind blows dry
And branches bending to the gale
Against great skies all silver pale.
The world seems travelling into space,
And travelling at a faster pace
Than in the leisured summer weather
When we and it sit out together,
For now we feel the world spin round
On some momentous journey bound -
Journey to what? to whom? to where?
The Advent bells call out 'Prepare,
Your world is journeying to the birth
Of God made Man for us on earth.'

And how, in fact, do we prepare
The great day that waits us there -
For the twenty-fifth day of December,
The birth of Christ? For some it means
An interchange of hunting scenes
On coloured cards, And I remember
Last year I sent out twenty yards,
Laid end to end, of Christmas cards
To people that I scarcely know -

They'd sent a card to me, and so
I had to send one back. Oh dear!
Is this a form of Christmas cheer?
Or is it, which is less surprising,
My pride gone in for advertising?
The only cards that really count
Are that extremely small amount
From real friends who keep in touch
And are not rich but love us much
Some ways indeed are very odd
By which we hail the birth of God.

We raise the price of things in shops,
We give plain boxes fancy tops
And lines which traders cannot sell
Thus parcell'd go extremely well.
We dole out bribes we call a present
To those to whom we must be pleasant
For business reasons. Our defence is
These bribes are charged against expenses
And bring relief in Income Tax.
Enough of these unworthy cracks!
'The time draws near the birth of Christ' -
A present that cannot be priced
Given two thousand years ago.
Yet, if God had not given so,
He still would be a distant stranger
And not the Baby in the manger.

John Betjeman (1906-1984)

Remembrance 2022

On Sunday 13 November we held our Remembrance Service once more outside on Tower Green. The Constable read the Lesson and wreaths were laid by the Constable, the Resident Governor, the Chief Yeoman Warder and representatives of the Tower Warding Staff and the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.





jigsaw

The Christmas decorations are being installed across the Tower of London.

<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=1d7d8305d2da>



Prayers

Please continue to remember those on our sick list, some of whom are very ill, amongst whom we name: Deborah, Heather, Pat, Mark, Madeleine, Vivienne, Judy, Dan, Derek, Ann, Peter, Izzy, Colin, Tom and Florence.

RIP

Jim Cross; and all those who have died violent deaths, remembering especially innocent civilians killed in the conflict in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Please continue to pray for Ukraine:

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of peace. Amen

With best wishes, Cortland.



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