

## Advent Observance in the Benefice

Advent is a special and precious time of the Church Year – a time of waiting; something we are all getting lots of practice at this year.

We thought it would be good to share some reading and reflections during Advent within Walbury Beacon Benefice this year and are suggesting that we adopt Canon Arthur Howell's *'The Little Book of Advent'* to read 'together'. This 'little book' offers reflections from many well-known Christian authors, Old and New Testament Bible readings and prayers from various sources – one of each for every day from Advent Sunday until Christmas Day. As it is noncontinuous, the occasional missed day does not result in a flurry of guilty 'catching-up' – something I'm sure we have all experienced at times!



Because 'together' can be a powerful way to remind us of Christian community, we are also proposing forming a virtual 'Advent Group' so that those who wish can share via email any comments or responses to what we have read. If you would like to be part of this, please contact [jennyveasey@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jennyveasey@hotmail.co.uk) and I will create an email group to communicate with each other via Reply All. For this aspect, you would therefore need to be comfortable with this type of interaction; but if not, you can still join in, and read independently – while knowing you are part of a wider 'congregation' – or share your thoughts only with your own friends.

The book is widely available for under a fiver in a number of different formats including large print from Eden, Kindle, e-book or just plain ordinary from Smiths, Amazon etc.

In many of our churches we light candles on the Advent Wreath week by week. This year, let's share that at home, and show the Christ Light in our villages, by placing a lighted candle in our windows at 6:00pm on Advent Sunday and each Sunday thereafter until (and including) Christmas Day.

Tim & Jenny



**Sunday 29 November is Advent Sunday.** In addition to our morning service we will be zooming a time of **music and readings for Advent at 4pm**, where Chris Lambert will be playing our new Kintbury organ. We hope you will be able to join us.

## Countdown to Christmas – Advent Activity Calendar from the Church of England



# Comfort and Joy

There's something very special about the Advent Sundays leading up to when Jesus was born. Join in with these activities as we prepare for and celebrate Christmas – and as we remember the Comfort and Joy that Jesus brings to us all.

<https://churchsupporthub.org/download/comfort-and-joy-advent-calendar/>

This Christmas the Church will need, in the words of St Paul in Romans 12.15, to 'Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep'. We will aim to celebrate where we can together in one place – but also embrace a wider community that wants to join in the celebration but may not be physically able – or emotionally ready – to do so. We hope that **Comfort and Joy** will enable us to build a campaign that both enables us to reconnect with the rich and joyous traditions of the past and to offer God's consoling love in the present.

## What are the key elements of Comfort and Joy?

As in previous years, the national Church will work with dioceses and churches to make a range of digital and print content available, branded with the **Comfort and Joy** theme:

### Reflections

There will be weekly reflections published on social media and available by email and app for each Sunday of Advent. We have partnered with a number of public figures to produce short reflections exploring the theme. **Comfort and Joy: Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas** mirrors the structure of a traditional carol service, exploring both biblical texts and the words of much loved Christmas carols.

The reflections for each day from Christmas Day to 2 January feature contributions from **Kate Bottley, Jonathan Bryan, Bob Chilcott, Martha Collison, Stephen Cottrell, Guli Francis-Dehqani, Chine McDonald, Sally Phillips and Justin Welby**. The booklet is introduced by the Archbishops and has been edited by the Ven. John Kiddle, Archdeacon of Wandsworth, author of the best-selling *God With Us: Your Christmas Journey*.

They will also be made available freely via audio, smart speaker, as well as via app and email formats with accompanying prayer activities for children and families.

Working with the Archbishop of York's Youth Trust and the Evangelism & Discipleship team, we will also produce a series of youth reflections in December.

# EXPLORE THE COMFORT AND JOY BOOKLET



**Read a preview of the booklet**



**Order printed copies from Church House Publishing**

## Online services and events from The Church of England website:

In collaboration with a range of Christian charities and organisations, we will produce nine online services throughout Advent and Christmas. This will include an online service for each Sunday of Advent, a Christingle with the Children's Society, nine lessons and carols and midnight services. Charities involved include Christian Aid, Church Army, Embrace and Marie Curie. The [online weekly services](#) have been very well received on social media and continue to attract a diverse audience including regular churchgoers, people exploring faith and a wide age demographic.

### Daily Hope phone line

A free Church of England phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers with new material for Advent and Christmas. Do share the number, **0800 804 8044**, with those who may be feeling lonely and isolated.

Don't forget that the Diocese of Oxford Church at home services are available to dial into too - find out more at [oxford.anglican.org/livestream](https://oxford.anglican.org/livestream)



## Carols on the Doorstep

10 November

Here is the poster you can print off, share or download to get the message out there. The carol sheet and invitation will be ready to download hopefully by the end of the week.

# \*CAROLS ON THE DOORSTEP

\* SUNDAY 20TH DECEMBER  
5:30 PM

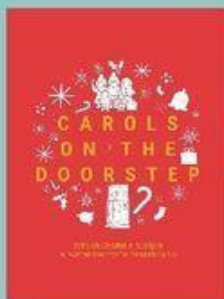
**Join us for a National carol sing on your doorstep with your neighbours.**

**It's so easy to join in....**

\*Download and print the Carol Sheet and invitation from  
www.premierchristianradio.com. or  
www.newcastlemethodistdistrict.org \*

\*Pop them through your neighbours' doors inviting them  
to join you

\*5:30pm on 20th December tune your radio to Premier  
Radio or Freeview 725 or download the Premier Radio app  
on your phone, then sing along to the Carols played. Why  
not wear your festive jumpers too and even bring out  
something to shake or rattle?



<https://www.facebook.com/CarolsOnTheDoorstep>