

## December 2023

As I write this Advent is fast approaching and the news from around the world is horrendous with wars in the Holy Land and Ukraine, a volcano expecting to erupt in Iceland any day, people starving in parts of Africa and closer to home the cost-of-living crisis still causing financial problems for many. Advent is of course the time when we look forward to celebrating once again the birth of a very special baby in Bethlehem, but the Church also looks forward to the end times when Jesus will return and his kingdom will at last be consummated. The season of Advent is a time of waiting and wrestling with all the darkness we see around us and we look longingly for Christ to come into the world – the light that shines in the darkness – with expectation and hope. ‘O Come, O Come Emmanuel’ we sing – Emmanuel meaning ‘God with us’.

Of course we can’t and shouldn’t ignore the reality of the darkness but we have to acknowledge it, to confront it with ‘the light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness cannot extinguish’ (John 1:5). This can only be answered by the promised hope, rooted in the kingdom of God, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth and wars, suffering, hunger and mourning will be no more.

During December there will be plenty of opportunities to reflect more on ‘the light that shines in the darkness’. There will be a Benefice service of Readings, Music and Meditation for Advent in Litchborough church at 5pm on the 3rd December and carol services and Christmas Family Communion services right across the benefice – please see the service rota on the back page of this magazine for more details. It would be lovely to see you there!

Wishing you all a blessed and happy Christmas filled with the hope which Jesus brings.

God bless

Revd Sue

If you would like to talk please contact me [stanley.thehole@btinternet.com](mailto:stanley.thehole@btinternet.com) 01327 341307