



A7 Centre of Mission  
St Peter's, St John's & St Cuthbert's Scottish Episcopal Churches  
13th December, second Sunday of Advent Newsletter

**Collect for Third Sunday of Advent**

**Stir up our prayers, Lord, and hear us: that they who are sorrowful and suffering may rejoice at the Advent of your only-begotten Son; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.**



**Advent three**

A candle burns, the sign of our faith.  
God of the Baptising One,  
come to us again this Advent.  
May we have a faith that renews our lives.  
May we live in the light of your promises. Amen

**Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11** (NRSVA)

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.  
I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

**1 Thessalonians 5.16-24** (NRSVA)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

**John 1.6-8,19-28** (NRSVA)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?'

He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

### **John's reflections for 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

#### **Why is the candle we light for the Third Sunday in Advent "rose" coloured, not dark like the other three?**

If you try to look them up you'll find there are different interpretations of the four weeks of Advent. One goes: 1. Second Coming, 2. John the Baptist 3. Joy of the coming Saviour, 4. The humility of Mary. Another: 1. the Prophets' Candle, symbolizing hope; 2. the Bethlehem Candle, symbolizing faith; 3. the Shepherds' Candle, symbolizing joy; 4. the Angel's Candle, symbolizing peace. Yet others go: Hope–Peace–Joy–Love; Faithfulness–Hope–Joy–Love; Prophets–Angels–Shepherds–Magi; Faith–Prepare–Joy–Love. In almost all of them you'll find the third Sunday in Advent is associated with Joy.

Another name for the third Sunday in Advent is Gaudete Sunday. The day takes its name from the Latin word *Gaudete* ("Rejoice"), the first word of the introduction in the Latin liturgy: *Gaudete in Domino semper: iterum dico, gaudete*. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Traditionally Advent was a penitential season, like Lent. A time for reflection and sombre preparation. Gaudete Sunday is a contrast to that and signifies the nearness of the Lord's coming. The focus throughout Advent is one of expectation and preparation for the feast of Christmas as well as for the second coming of Christ. On Gaudete Sunday the sombre preparation is suspended, as it were, for a while, in order to symbolize that joy and gladness in the promised Redemption. While the theme of Advent is a focus on the coming of Jesus in three ways: his first, his present, and his final Advent, the readings for Gaudete Sunday deal with rejoicing in the Lord – Christian joy – as well as the mission of John the Baptist and his connection with Advent.

**What is Joy?** The adverts on our television screens imply that joy comes with the numbing of pain and the getting of goods. But our ordinary human experience tells us, rather, that joy comes when we are connected in good ways with others and when we have something to look forward to. The Bible goes a step further and tells us that fullness of joy resides in coming to know Jesus, rejoicing in the fact that we beloved creatures of the God the creator, and that we have nothing less than fullness of life with God to look forward to. The theologian Henri Nouwen described the difference between joy and happiness. While happiness is dependent on external conditions, joy is "the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing – sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death - can take that love away." Thus joy can be present even in the midst of sadness. Isaiah understood this concept of joy. Today's passage from Isaiah is full of joy. It recounts the promises of restoration, comfort, transformation, justice and renewal that God makes to his people. "I rejoice heartily in the Lord," the prophet says. And why wouldn't he? He has glad tidings. The poor will be taken care of, the broken-hearted will be healed, the captives will be freed, and the prisoners will be released. Who wouldn't rejoice in these things? This passage in Isaiah must have been a favourite of Jesus. Luke tells us that it is the scroll Jesus read from to when he stood up in his home-town synagogue to deliver his inaugural address there. As he put down the scroll Jesus said: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing". What Isaiah is prophesying is not a human accomplishment. It is a deed of God. This Joy is a gift of God.

**Why should we have Joy?** Firstly to bring peace to our hearts. It brings a stillness and steadiness to us that allows us to deal with the challenges we face, even in times of suffering. Secondly to share with others. Just as God anointed Jesus to proclaim the Joy of comfort and encouragement as Jesus's followers we are also called as His people to be a comfort to those who are afflicted, broken-hearted, imprisoned by physical ailments, are spiritual destitute, and those who are hurting and mourning their losses. Jesus wishes us to bring this joy, these "glad tidings," to the poor: those with spiritual and material needs, the many people who are anxious about family problems. As Pope Francis said in a homily for Gaudete Sunday: "Bring them peace. Bring the anointing of Jesus, the oil of Jesus, which does so much good, and consoles the soul."

**How do we get Joy?** In today's epistle to the Thessalonians Paul gives a lots of pithy guidance on how to have joy: Rejoice always; Pray without ceasing; give thanks in all circumstances. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets - that is God's promises recorded in the bible. Test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. Christian joy comes from prayer, and from giving thanks to God. These things transcend our emotions and the difficult circumstances we may be in and focus us on God's faithfulness goodness that no circumstances can shake.

**How do we share joy?** By Listening. Many people have no one with whom to share their hurts on a deep level. Others are lonely with no one to talk to on a regular basis. As you listen you create space in which God's peace can break through. By Acts of Kindness. We often hear of random acts of kindness, which are good; but I believe we should have intentional acts of kindness toward people we know who need help. For they are signs of the joy-giving love of God. By Prayer. Someone once said the greatest blessing of prayer is not in receiving the answer but in being the kind of person God can trust with the answer. There is someone right now asking God for help for a certain circumstance occurring in his or her life, and you may be the answer to that prayer! By Encouragement. William Barclay said one of the highest human duties is the duty of encouragement. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. A word of praise, thanks, appreciation or cheer often has kept a person on his or her feet. Blessed is the person who speaks such a word! To be an encourager is to bless, praise and glorify God and others!

In his 2014 Gaudete Sunday homily, Pope Francis said that Gaudete Sunday is known as the "Sunday of joy", and that instead of fretting about "all they still haven't" done to prepare for Christmas, people should "think of all the good things life has given you." So, don't have a "Merry" or a "Happy" Christmas instead have a Joyous Christmas, and Advent! When the world seems to still be full of darkness, of sin and despair, the joy can be difficult to see or to hold onto with much conviction. But the readings today remind us that joy is there to be found, because God is coming into the world. Whether we wait for a thousand years or another two weeks, the promise of God's overwhelming, joyful return will be kept.



### **Intercessions for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Mindful of the words of the prophet Isaiah, we gather our thoughts and prayers with hope and humbly call on God to help us in our needs.

Holy God, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of Christ our Saviour we ask that you will answer our prayers and make us a holy people, fit to greet him with eager hearts. May our Church leaders be blessed with wisdom and holiness to guide us through this season of Advent despite the pandemic, to a holy, peaceful and joyful Christmas.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Creator God, help the leaders of nations to seek that justice and peace which come from the Word of God, may there be good news for the poor and the broken-hearted; release for those illegally or wrongly imprisoned and an end to the conflicts throughout the world which lead to so much grief and mourning. We pray for all those who are striving to adjust to a new way of being "normal" in these difficult times as Covid 19 continues globally,

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Father God, your son Jesus you lived an ordinary life in Nazareth, with human parents, brothers and sisters. He understands the difficulties faced in families. We pray for all of those involved in providing support for troubled families and strengthening our community life. We especially pray for our family members who have not yet heard of the coming of Christ and that this Christmas they may hear and believe the Good News and receive the gift of the Christ Child.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Merciful God, may your blessing be upon all those who are in pain or sickness, those who are anxious or troubled. We know that you are always present with us, even when sometimes you seem far away. Help us to feel your presence when we pass through dark places, and sustain us and all who suffer through our pains and sorrows.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Gracious God, may those who have died may be granted the peace of your heavenly kingdom. Give rest to the souls of those who have gone from our lives to meet with you and may they now, released from pain or sorrow, find life eternal at rest in your presence.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Faithful God, as we continue this Advent journey, teach us to turn to you in times of joy and pleasure as well as we do when faced with fear and sorrow. Help us to put our differences behind us and to unite behind the great commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations and all people.

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**



As part of the ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) will be broadcasting video coverage of Eucharistic services via its website, social media channels and YouTube channel. The web page is located at [www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship](http://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship)



For those who are not online the Archbishop of Canterbury has set up a Freephone Daily Hope service of hymns, prayers and readings. It is available 24 hours a day on 0800 8048044

TV and Radio Sunday Worship: BBC RADIO SCOTLAND – 7.30am Acts of Worship BBC RADIO 4 - 08:10am Morning Worship BBC 1 TV – 1.15pm Songs of Praise BBC Radio 4 Longwave – 9.45am Morning Service (Mon-Fri)

Those who enjoyed BBC Scotland's worship offering **Reflections At The Quay** when it was introduced at this start of lockdown will be pleased to know that a second series has been commissioned, starting from Sunday 6 December.

Join Pip this week at Holy Trinity at <https://www.holytrinitymelrose.org/> and click on the link - Holy Trinity YouTube channel. 11.00am <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJkxEqnglnze4SeN4I54Ecw>

St John's Selkirk now has their weekly Sunday services on their YouTube channel, with several (different) familiar voices each week, music, inspirational quotes and images at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9ITNAH6VHZkqM0NiH6Vt9w> available from 10am each Sunday morning..



11am to 11:30 every Wednesday morning.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87979280424?pwd=UEJzRXk0UFpVcnJuaUVZTzJvaE92UT09>

Meeting ID: 879 7928 0424 Password: 023545 Host: Tim Hatton



Bible Studies hosted on Zoom - all are welcome. Wednesday 7:30pm & Thursday 10:30am hosted by John Marsden Follow this

link <https://zoom.us/j/7538094986?pwd=Q0x4YVvk2b3Y5eEt0VkoxS0ZWVWxGUT09>

or use this information to open a Zoom meeting: Meeting ID: 753 809 4986 Password: 751474



Communion for the Homebound

Home Communion is only available to those people can't come out or get to church for self-isolation reasons. Please book through Sheena then Simon will contact to arrange a time.

Reserved Sacrament is still suspended until further notice due to corona virus restrictions.

### opening for communal worship from September.



St John's are overjoyed their first service in church will be in Sunday 6th December at 10.30 am.

St Peter's 10.30am services on 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays will be Communion with Simon or other clergy. 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays will be Service of the Word. Thursday mornings will be a Said Communion service.

St Cuthbert's 10.30am services on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays will be Communion, 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays Service of the Word. Wednesdays at 11.00am will be Said Holy Communion. Please remember to bring a face covering to wear unless you have health issues and the service booklet and newsletter which contains the readings etc for the week.

**WHEN YOU ARRIVE FOR THE SERVICE AT ANY OF THE A7 CHURCHES PLEASE BE READY TO FILL IN THE FORM FOR GOVERNMENT TRACK AND PROTECT.**

### Spiritual Communion

Here is a prayer that can be used at 10.30 on Sundays when Simon will be celebrating the Eucharist For an Act of spiritual Communion, the following prayer -

My Jesus,  
I believe that you are present in the most Holy Sacrament.  
I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you.  
Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.



### A7 Centre of Mission

Hello Everyone

Simon would like to know from your own understanding of what is the A7 centre of Mission and what is it all about?

Please e mail or wright down and return to Sheena as e mail [smstcg1945@gmail.com](mailto:smstcg1945@gmail.com) or talk to Simon or Tim when you see them.

many thanks Sheena



pictures of the new designs in tops that I have.

All the embroidered ones are for £12 each and the printed kaftans is for £7.

The last one is an apron with a pocket, one mitten, one pot holder and 2 tea towels. It is for £12.

I do have all the designs of the kaftans and tops along with apron set that I sent you before so, I think you could add those as well as the designs are still available.

If you would like to help the seamstresses in India please order one of these lovely kaftans from Rashi Jain. Her email address is [16rashijain@gmail.com](mailto:16rashijain@gmail.com)



### St Peter's Christmas Cards

As we can't have our usual greetings banner at the back of St Peter's this year we are planning a hand delivery to our congregation in Galashiels. If you would like to have cards collected and delivered please let Karen or Sheena know. If possible please drop your cards into the box at church by 15<sup>th</sup> December – if you aren't able to do this let us know and someone will collect them before 15<sup>th</sup> December. After 15<sup>th</sup> December you will need to send cards by Royal Mail. All cards collected for St Peter's will be hand delivered before Christmas Eve. St John's and St Cuthbert's should have their own arrangements so please contact someone from your own congregation.

### A letter from Ireland

Dear St Peter's,

How are you all? I know these are difficult and confusing times where everything seems to change just as you make yourself a routine.

Two weeks before Britain went into lockdown I arrived back in Scotland. Ireland was preparing to lockdown and we didn't know if I would be able to leave afterwards. I remained in Scotland until the last week of August when I returned to Ireland. This meant I spent nearly five months at home unable to see many people and without any work to distract myself.

The pandemic has led to many people struggling with their mental health. The isolation and fear of illness has caused many to become depressed or extremely anxious. These feelings are completely understandable and should never be something you feel ashamed of (you, as a congregation and friends, taught me that). I wanted to give some advice about how to help combat these feelings.

One of the best suggestions I have is to keep a notebook where you can write down how you are feeling without requiring you to filter or edit it. Write exactly how you feel. Don't worry about whether it makes sense, sometimes our brain gets confused and needs to explode over a page in order to reboot. There is no pressure to write in it daily, just write whenever you feel inclined or if you believe it will help.

Secondly, find a new hobby. This can be something you've always wanted to try or have seen on tv and fancy trying. Don't get bogged down in whether you can do it well or as well as your friends. If it makes you happy, keep going. You don't have to be good at something to take part. When we are all able to meet up again you can tell us all about your new interest.

Lastly, set yourself a daily task. This doesn't have to be a big task. Maybe something you've had on your to do list for months and haven't got around to. Perhaps a treat for yourself, or a phone call with someone. Giving yourself a task each day will reduce any feelings of uselessness and is more likely to make you productive.

I have used these three methods to help me with my mental health. Whilst I never say that I am cured, these help me to understand how and why I feel how I do and reduce any anxiety surrounding those feelings.

This letter is slightly different to those I have written in the past, but everything is a little bit different at the moment.

I hope these methods help someone and I hope to see you all soon, happy and healthy.

Love from

Elsbeth

P.S. I try my best to join the Wednesday night Bible study and I would love to see some of you there to contribute to the interesting discussions.



To Wendy Smale on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December December. Best wishes from us all.

### IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

Priest in charge of St Peter's, St John's & St Cuthbert's Rev Simon Cake 07710523856 [cakekands@btinternet.com](mailto:cakekands@btinternet.com)  
St Peter's pastoral support contact Monica Reynolds 01896 757114 [monica@tempelstowe.com](mailto:monica@tempelstowe.com)  
St Peter's prayer support Muriel Lounsbach 01896 831418 [gordon.lounsbach@btinternet.com](mailto:gordon.lounsbach@btinternet.com)  
Tim Hatton (A7 Church Army) 07784872307 [tim.w.hatton@gmail.com](mailto:tim.w.hatton@gmail.com)  
St Cuthbert's pastoral and prayer contact Sue Crozier 01450 376499 [susancrozier17@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:susancrozier17@yahoo.co.uk)  
St John's pastoral and prayer contact Margaret Moyes [mmoyes2@gmail.com](mailto:mmoyes2@gmail.com)



On a beach in Pembrokeshire

Isn't this a beautiful rendition of the Nativity

### What I Learned About Love, I Learned From My Dog.

*Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride together. Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.  
When loved ones come home always run to greet them.  
When you want treats, practice obedience.  
Let others know when they've invaded your territory.  
Take naps together and stretch before rising.  
Run, romp and play daily.  
Be loyal.  
If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.  
When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.  
Thrive on the attention and let people touch you.  
Avoid biting, when a simple growl will do.  
When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.  
No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout...  
Run right back and make friends.  
Delight in the simple joy of a long walk together.  
Love each other unconditionally.*

### It is Well with My Soul - Hugh Bonneville Christmas Concert Narration

For a wonderful and uplifting production do go to Youtube and find Hugh Bonneville and the Tabernacle Choir



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