

SBC News

Dec / Jan 2024



Inside this issue

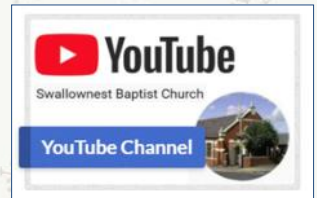
Advent Reflections

What's a Christingle?

Christmas Events

The International Christian Food Bank

Follow Us





ADVENT REFLECTIONS

Here we go again! 2023 draws to a close, and Christians around the world begin to engage in a reflective pause, turning our hearts and minds toward the timeless wisdom found in the Bible and the profound message of Advent. The pages of Scripture unveil narratives that resonate with the triumphs and challenges of the past year, inviting us to glean spiritual insights and find solace in the promises of God.

The Advent season, rooted in anticipation and hope, provides a thematic backdrop for this reflection. Isaiah 40:3, a prophetic passage, declares, "*A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'*" This verse sets the stage for us to ponder afresh the state of our own hearts and lives, as we prepare to welcome the Lord not only into the manger of our past, but also into the unfolding story of the future.

The story of Christ's birth in Bethlehem, as chronicled in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, becomes a poignant narrative for us as we reflect on 2023. The humble circumstances of Jesus' arrival, surrounded by shepherds and visited by magi, convey a powerful message of God's presence in the midst of the ordinary. It encourages us to seek the extraordinary in the everyday events

of our lives, finding the sacred in the seemingly mundane.

We have all faced times of uncertainty and challenges over the last 12 months, and yet we are reminded that the Advent message offers a ray of hope. Luke 2:10-11 recounts the angel's proclamation to the shepherds: "*But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'*" This message resonates as a beacon of hope, reminding us, that even in the darkest moments, the light of Christ shines, bringing joy and salvation to all.

As we reflect on 2023, the Advent season also prompts contemplation of Christ's second coming. Matthew 24:44 advises believers to be ready, for the Son of Man will come at an unexpected hour. This call to watchfulness and preparedness serves as a reminder that, as we look back on the year behind and ahead to 2024, we are to live with a sense of anticipation.

As thoughts turn toward 2024, we are encouraged to take the lessons of Advent into the future. The themes of hope, peace, joy, and love become guiding principles for the new year. This is needed now more than ever in our current time. Philippians 3:13-14

should move us to press on, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, as we run the race marked out for us. However, that isn't always easy!

In contemplating the challenges and opportunities that 2024 may bring, let us ready ourselves with the spirit of Advent—a season marked by expectation, preparation, and a profound awareness of God's presence. As we continue to navigate the uncertainties of the future, the lessons of Advent become a source of strength and resilience, guiding us to face the

coming year with a steadfast faith in the One who came, who is present, and who will come again.

On behalf of Julie and myself, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

God bless



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The letters are cursive and fluid.

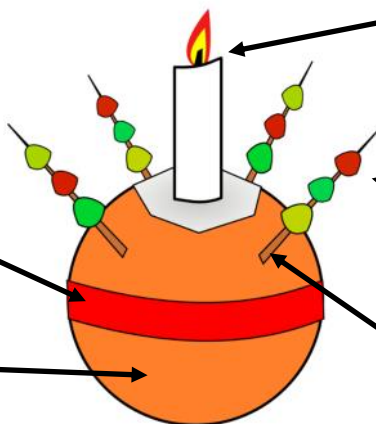
David Skeet is our Church Team Leader

What is a Christingle?

The Christingle was first created in 1747 in Germany where the Bishop Johannes de Watteville wanted a simple illustration to explain the happiness that Jesus can bring. Each element of the Christingle helps to explain the Christmas story. In December 1968, the first Church of England Christingle service was held in Lincoln Cathedral for The Children's Society.

The red ribbon represents Jesus' blood which he shed for the whole world when he died on the cross

The orange represents the World



The candle provides light in the darkness representing Jesus the Light of the World

The sweets and dried fruits represent all of God's creations—the fruits of the earth.

The 4 sticks represent the 4 corners of the world or the 4 seasons

Come and have a go at making your very own Christingle on Thursday 21st December at 6:15pm.



Come and Celebrate Christmas with us



Ladies Fellowship Candlelight Service

Mon 4th Dec @ 1:00pm

Join us for Carols and Bible readings by candlelight, as we reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.



Aston Churches Together Crib Blessing

Wed 6th Dec @ 6pm, Aston Church Corner

A short outdoor gathering to mark the arrival of the annual community Christmas Cribbs. Refreshments afterwards at All Saints church.



Family Nativity Service

Sun 17th Dec @ 10:30am

Join us for our Junior Church Sunday service followed by a bring & share lunch.



Christingle Making

Thu 21st Dec @ 6:15pm

Have a go at making your own Christingle!



Carols by Candlelight

Thu 21st Dec @ 7:30pm

Join us for an evening of Carols and Bible readings.
Followed by refreshments and mince pies.



Christmas Morning Service

Mon 25th Dec @ 10:30am

Join us for a short family service to celebrate this special day. Don't forget to bring along a present you have received to show to everyone!



Coffee Morning

Sat 6th Jan @ 10:00am

Join us at our coffee morning for frothy coffee, tea, & bacon butties. There will also be a second hand book stall. All welcome, please pop in!



Church Family Meal

Sun 14th Jan @ 1:00pm

Join us for a Sunday roast at the Phoenix Golf Club, Brinsworth. 2 courses: £15 Adults, £10 children. Please sign up at the back of church if you would like to come. Friends and family welcome.

Regular Events

We offer an open invitation to anyone who would like to join us at any of our events. Email swallownestbaptist@gmail.com for further information.

	<p>Prospects: Learning Disability Friendly Church</p> <p>The third Sunday of each month 3:00pm</p> <p>In the church schoolroom</p>	<p>17th December 21st January</p>
	<p>Prayer & Meditation</p> <p>Fortnightly on a Monday 9:30am</p> <p>Via Zoom</p>	<p>11th December 8th January 22nd January</p>
	<p>Ladies Meeting</p> <p>Monday 1:00pm</p> <p>In the church schoolroom</p>	<p>4th December Carol service 15th January Lunch</p>
	<p>Mini Messy Church</p> <p>The first Tuesday of each month 3:30pm</p>	<p>5th December No Mini Messy Church in January</p>
	<p>The Ark Play Group</p> <p>Every week on a Tuesday 10am-11:30am 1pm-2:30pm</p>	<p>Every week</p>



Lunch Club

Every week on a Thursday

Every week

12:00pm

In the church schoolroom. We just ask for a small donation of £2 per person.



Prayer Meeting

The first Saturday of each month

2nd December

9:30am

6th January

In church



Men's Breakfast

The second Saturday of each month

9th December

8:30am

13th January

In the church schoolroom



Our **Sunday services** take place each week at 10:30am in our church building. We also livestream the services via our YouTube Channel. The first and third Sunday of each month includes communion.

Junior Church is for school-age children and meets every Sunday.

The children and young people stay in the main building at the start of the service for the time of sung worship, and then go out to our schoolroom building for their age-specific groups, where they engage with songs, bible teaching, crafts and other fun. The schoolroom is attached to the right-hand side of the main church.

Dec	
3 rd	Rob Joyce (Communion)
10 th	David Skeet
17 th	Family Nativity Service
24 th	Rob Joyce (Communion)
31 st	David Skeet



The International Christian Food Bank

We're all familiar with our local foodbank - some of you have been able to give your support by donating food items. We thank God for the many families helped in this way.

It is now possible to send (prescribed) food items around the World by means of food.gives. This is part of the ministry of Barnabas Aid to the suffering church where countless Christians face humiliation, rejection, destruction of property and life in many Countries.

Barnabas Aid's calling under God is to help fellow believers plus their families and communities. Reading this you might feel this gives you a way of doing something to help others living with poverty and hunger.

"Your gifts enable our feeding projects to transform lives and give hope and joy all over the world."

How does it work?

1

Order a box and fill it with food. The charity will provide you with a free starter pack and a list of the food items which can be included.

2

Send it to the food.gives warehouse. Helpers get a free return label for sending off their boxes using DHL Parcel UK (not DHL Express).

3

The charity will sort the food and then ship it out to the neediest places across the world including countries in Africa, Asia, South-east Asia and the Middle East. The charity is primarily supporting Christians in contexts of anti-Christian pressure and persecution. Anti-Christian discrimination can mean that Christians are the last to receive help from the government or international aid. And in many countries, each religious community is expected to look after its own. So they consider it their cause to provide food to Christians when no one else will help.

If you would like to know more or want to make a donation, please let me know. You can also obtain more information from their website: www.food.gives

Malcolm Purdy