

THE CHAPTER LETTER



Sunday 25 November 2018 to Saturday 08 December 2018

Christine Wilson, *Dean* **Sal McDougall**, *Precentor* **Paul Overend**, *Chancellor* **John Patrick**, *Subdean*
Rachel Revely, *Curate*

We are approaching the season of Advent, which begins at sunset on 1st December, the first evening of Advent Sunday. It is my favourite of all the liturgical seasons, a time of expectant watching and waiting, of reading the prophets and sharing longing for justice and peace, with their warnings of apocalyptic judgement on the misuse of political power to oppress motivating us to resist those powers.

The name Advent, comes from the Latin word *adventus*, 'the coming', a translation of a Greek word, *parousia*. This was a term used in the Roman Empire for the arrival and presence of an imperial entourage marking an official visit. But in the New Testament, more than half the uses of *parousia* refer to the Christ's coming again.

It is sometimes observed that there are THREE births celebrated at Christmas. There is the mystical begetting of the Son from the Father (referred to in the prologue to John's Gospel, and found in Prudentius' hymn, 'Of the Father's Heart Begotten'). There is the birth of Jesus Christ in the flesh, born of the Virgin Mary (found in Matthew's and Luke's Gospels, and in many carols, such as 'Once in Royal David's City'). And Christ is also born in the hearts and lives of those who receive him (e.g., 'Joy to the World' includes a line "Let every heart prepare Him room" and Brook's hymn 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' shares the view that "Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.")

Advent is a season of preparation for the coming of Christ, but as with the three births of Christmas, writers have pointed to THREE comings of Christ's presence (e.g., St Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo 5, In Adventu Domini*). Christ came in the flesh in the past at Bethlehem, which we look back to and will celebrate at Christmas. Christ comes to us each day in the present. Christians meet Christ in our neighbour in need (Mt. 25:), in the scriptures and in the Eucharist, and in prayer. And we imagine that Christ will finally come again in glory to bring judgement in the future when, as Charles Wesley put it, "Every eye shall now beyond him, robed in dreadful majesty".

Inevitably, there is a flavour of Christmas during Advent. While some feel it distracts from the Advent season, it is surely right that by holding carol services we can share the gospel story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem with those who are keeping a festive season. But we do need to remember that Advent is not all about the past coming of Christ in the Middle East: it involves us in the present attentiveness to the Christ who invites us to open our hearts now. The imagination of a future judgement gives us reason to consider our present hospitality and our work for justice and peace now.

Paul Overend, *Chancellor*

Lectio Divina: Bible Reflection Group: The Chancellor is reviving and reforming a bible study into a new 'Spiritual Reading' (*Lectio Divina*) group engaging with the lectionary readings. It will begin in the new lectionary year, Year C, which begins in Advent and will generally explore Luke's gospel. The first few dates are Saturday 8 December, Saturday 29 December 2018, and Saturday 19 January 2019, all from 4pm-5pm at 27 Minster Yard, Lincoln.

Spiritual Classics Reading Group: This is an open group in which members read a book prior to the meeting, and discuss them together, exploring what we each made of them. The books we will discuss in the coming months are as follows. Saturday 12 January, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* by William Law (1728) and Saturday 23 February, *Ety Hillesum, A Life Transformed* by Canon Patrick Woodhouse. Refreshments from 10.30am, meeting at 10.45am-2pm at 27 Minster Yard, Lincoln.

Stillpoint: Finding silence in a busy world: You are invited to 45 minutes of guided silent prayer in the Ringers' Chapel of, Lincoln Cathedral on the following Saturday mornings: Saturday 29 December 2018 from 9.30am-10.15am, and then Saturday 26 January 2019 at the new time of 9am-9.45am

The Resilient Disciple: A part of our Cathedral engagement for Lent will be with a new Lent publication by The Ven Justine Allain Chapman, The Archdeacon of Boston. A book launch for this book (a free event) is on Tuesday 22 January 2019 4.15pm-5.15pm, followed by evensong. The book will be available to buy then, or through the Cathedral shop once published. Thereafter there will be reflective sessions in the Cathedral Centre, on Saturday 16 February 2pm-5pm, Monday 18 March 1pm-4pm, and Saturday 6 April 2pm-5pm. These will be £10 each, or it will be possible to book for the three workshops together for a discounted price of £25. Information will follow on how to book for these.

Supporting Worship and Mission: Regular giving is an important source of funding for the Worship and Mission of Lincoln Cathedral. If you would like to set up regular giving to support the Worship and Mission, or indeed any other aspect of the Cathedral, standing order forms are available from the tables in the north and south Choir Aisles. These can be returned to the chapter office by hand, or by using the freepost address at the foot of the form. Thank you for your support.

Community Association News: At the AGM held on Monday 5 November, Alison Eagleton was elected as the Lay Vice Chair of the LCCA and Chair of the Executive Committee.

‘Disability is not Inability’ : Help launch a unique radio station providing work and training for disabled people, especially blind and low vision, in rural Tanzania. Visit <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/mvumifmtanzania>. For more details, contact Brian and Aleen Medcalf (07812 983 432 briancm@outlook.com) who work with the team in Tanzania and the UK.

La Nativite du Seigneur: On Sunday 16 December at 5.30pm Organist Laurate, Colin Walsh, plays Olivier Messiaen’s 1935 masterpiece. This is a festive tradition in the Cathedral and not to be missed. Tickets available for just £6. For further information and tickets visit www.lincolncathedral.com or phone 01522 504 394.

The Snowman with Live Orchestra: On Friday 4 and Saturday 5 January at 1.30pm, 3pm and 7pm the screening of the film accompanied by live orchestra and Cathedral chorister. Tickets available from just £6. For further information and tickets visit www.lincolncathedral.com or phone 01522 504 394.

Ceremony of Carols: A seasonal favourite as the Cathedral Choir performs Benjamin Britten’s Ceremony of Carols at 2pm and 7pm in the Chapter House of Lincoln Cathedral. With Thea Butterworth as harpist. Under the direction of Jeffrey Makinson – Assistant Director of Music. Performance at 2pm followed by Gluhwein and a Christmas Biscuit; And 7pm followed by wine, canapes and a lantern light tour of the Cathedral. For further information and tickets please visit www.lincolncathedral.com or phone 01522 561 644.

Bible Readings

Sunday 25 November

Sung Eucharist
Mattins
Evensong

Christ the King / Sunday next before Advent

Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14; Revelation 1: 4b-8; John 18: 33-37
Isaiah 32: 1-8; Revelation 3: 7- end
Daniel 5; John 6: 1-15

Sunday 2 December

Sung Eucharist
Mattins
Evensong

1st Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33: 14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3: 9-end; Luke 21: 25-36
Isaiah 51: 4-11; Romans 13.11-end
Joel 3: 9-end; Revelation 14: 13-15.4

Sunday 9 December

Sung Eucharist
Mattins
Evensong

2nd Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3: 1-4; Philippians 1: 3-11; Luke 3 1-6
Isaiah 64: 1-7; Matthew 11: 2-11
Isaiah 40: 1-11; Luke 1: 1-25