

## Christmas is coming – what already!

I would probably agree with you if you said that the beginning of September is too early to start thinking about Christmas. I don't want to start buying Christmas presents or worrying about Christmas visiting until some time in November. However, like the high street retailers who are always working a season, or maybe two seasons, ahead, spotting trends and ordering stock, some of us at Holy Cross are also planning ahead. Neil, the PCC committees and the choir have always to be thinking some months ahead, so when Advent or Lent arrives we are prepared.

You may have just returned from a summer holiday, and your thoughts may still be centred on, if you were lucky, sunshine, beaches and blue seas, but we are immediately into our celebration of Holy Crosstide. The autumn is busy with All Saints and All Souls, before we arrive, at the end of November, at the season of Advent.

Given this, it won't surprise you to learn that the Worship Committee, at its last meeting, turned its thoughts to the autumn and to Advent and Christmas. As a result of those discussions I want to appeal to you to get more involved in our celebration of these seasons.

I would like to ask you to consider being involved in one, or more, of three ways:

1. **Advent service.** As well as our celebration of the beginning of Advent at our Parish Mass on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November, we usually hold a service of meditation and reflection in the evening. There is no set form for this service, but there are some traditional themes – the *Four Last Things* or the *Great O's*, which was the basis of last year's service – but many other approaches are possible. Marion Richardson and I organised the service last year, and a number of people have done this in the past; this year I would like to ask for volunteers to choose readings, prayers and hymns, and to work with the choir on any special music they would like to include. I am happy to give advice and assistance, but it would be good to have some fresh ideas and to get some of you involved in what is a rewarding experience.
2. **Carol Service.** On the Sunday before Christmas there will be a Carol Service of a familiar kind. As well as hearing less familiar carols which the choir will sing, there are opportunities for congregational singing. So if you would like to suggest carols for this service, we would love to hear from you.
3. **Sing with the Choir for Christmas.** As you all know the choir is getting thin on personnel and there has been a dearth of volunteers to join the choir, despite our appeals. I know that many people have responsibilities that make a regular commitment to a Friday evening rehearsal and a Sunday morning service difficult. So what about joining us for just a short period, to practice and perform some music for the Christmas season. You don't need to read music, but if you think you have a passable singing voice, and most importantly, enjoy singing and like the music of Christmas, why not join us for a few weeks. Children as well as adults are welcome.

Please speak to Krystyna or a member of the choir and have some fun this Christmas.

I look forward to hearing from you, and making this Advent and Christmas a wonderful experience.

**Peter Hounsell**  
**Chair of Worship Committee.**