

Advent, 2010



Sunday 28th November is Advent Sunday and the start of the four week season which precedes the Christmas Festival. Advent is a time of positive thinking about our human lives and how we impact on each other personally, socially and, through politics, globally. It is a season with responsibility and concern at its heart. The season has the symbols of Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end to help us keep in mind the deepest significance our lives have for ourselves, for other people and for God.

To start up the season, there will be a special act of worship at 6.30pm in the Old Church and everyone is invited to be part of this service.

In addition, members of the congregation are invited to take a short time out each day to reflect on the themes of the coming Christmas festival with words written by Neil as well as poems and pictures. A booklet to use at home will be produced and enough copies will be made so that everyone may have one.

For each other four Sundays, there will be a quotation from the Christmas narratives in the gospels and other references in the bible, followed by a longer reflection, to be read and used on each Sunday, either in Church or at home. Then will be a shorter reflection for each day of the week, to assist your quiet time at home. The benefits of this are several. You will be able to bring together the religious world represented by church service and your home life, your private spaces, and so feel that faith and life are not two but one united. The reflections will also help you think deeply about the Christmas story which can at times, suffer from feeling rather over-familiar. The work is designed to tackle some of the more difficult themes as well as those which may seem childish, impossible or just plain silly.

I hope that you will find this booklet of reflections a useful tool in making sense of the madness which Christmas sometimes brings with it. You might wish to share the quiet time with someone else in your house?

I hope that you enjoy Advent and so celebrate Christmas with joy.

Neil Richardson



Shepherds out in the fields



Rachel weeping
for her children



Travelling from afar



20th century martyrs