

Connecting faith and daily life

Are you prepared?

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-end and Matthew 24:36-44

In the run-up to Christmas some years ago, a British supermarket became the first in the country to open its doors for twenty-four-hour shopping. At last it was possible to shop at two, three or even four in the morning – and shop people did. The first night's opening was a resounding success in retail terms – and a dismal failure in terms of peace and goodwill. In the scramble, many of the "luxury" items sold out. The consumer frenzy gathered pace, and by midnight people were pinching things from each other's trolleys. In the early hours, the store ran out of trolleys and was forced to close for a while in order to restore order.

In today's reading from Matthew, Jesus looks back to the time of Noah, when the terrible flood took people with little warning. He offers the example of ordinary, day-to-day life for people before the flood. So it will be when the Son of Man returns. The message is clear – be prepared. Being prepared, however, means spiritual rather than material preparedness. Being prepared means being prepared in day-to-day life in the supermarket every bit as much as in church on Sunday. The supermarket shoppers were so wrapped up in material things that they forgot or disregarded the true spirit of Christmas.

This year, are we prepared to forego or share the trimmings of Christmas, if that's what God calls us to do? 🍷

Lord God, in all our preparations this year, keep our sights on what really matters. Amen.

Advent and Christmas in the hospital

by Ricarda Witcombe

This year we got a real Christmas tree for the garden by the hospital chapel. We got some solar lights and carefully erected the little solar panel in the ground, and waited. For days, nothing happened. The

weather was grey and dark. Then one evening as I left the chapel at the end of a long day, I saw what looked like a ball of fire at the foot of the tree. The sun had shone, the panel had worked and the lights were blazing. I rushed outside and trailed the lights around the tree. It was such a beautiful sign of hope; the truth that in the midst of the darkness, and even in the midst of our powerlessness, light seeps in and then the whole world looks different. Advent is a season that invites us to look for signs of hope – what might you see this week? 🍷



World Aids Day

by Lisa Tulfer

1 December marks World AIDS Day, designated by the United Nations in 1988. Although the virus was only identified in the 1980s, it has killed some 35 million people worldwide, making it among the most destructive pandemics in human history. Today, 101,000 people in the UK, and more than 36 million people around the world, live with HIV/AIDS. Three quarters are in Africa, where women are especially vulnerable to infection, and where AIDS has created a generation of orphans.

The Anglican Communion, alongside other denominations, actively supports World AIDS Day, which raises the profile of the scientific battle against the disease, supports those who live with it (often suffering stigma, prejudice and isolation), and remembers those who have died. Despite scientific advances which mean that a diagnosis is no longer necessarily a swift death sentence, each year there are nearly two million new cases, five thousand in the UK alone. 🍷

Lisa Tulfer is a freelance writer and consultant. Her academic background is in church history, and she has worked extensively in parish consultancy, with a special interest in multi-parish ministry.

“What you are is God's gift to you, what you become is your gift to God.”

Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988), Swiss theologian and Catholic priest

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice

Session Clerk: Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.

Intimations

Tues 3rd Dec - 7pm - 8pm – Fellowship in the kirk hall. Reflecting on Adam and Eve.

Tues 3rd Dec - 8pm – Choir in the kirk hall

Thurs 5th Dec – 10am – 12noon Community Café in the kirk hall

Saturday 14th Dec

For Christmas, the windows will display a Christmas flower arrangement. If you'd like to lead/do a window arrangement, please speak to Kathryn. The kirk will be open on 14th December to complete the arrangements (No lilies to be used, please.)

Sunday 15th Dec – 7pm - Christmas Concert in the Kirk

Friday 20th Dec – 2pm - School Service in the Kirk

Sunday 22nd Dec – 11.15am Christmas Service

Tuesday 24th Dec – 11.15pm for 11.30pm – Watchnight Service

Readings: Romans 13: 11-14

Matthew 24: 35-44

Hymns:

284 Advent Hymn, verse 1

273 O come, O come, Emmanuel

438 The head that once was crowned with thorns

477 Lo he comes

657 Father most loving, listen to thy children*

459 Crown him with many crowns

Communion Responses:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

And here we offer and present to you our very selves for your acceptance;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Through him, with him, in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours,
almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.**

Doxology Hymn 786

May the God of peace go with us, as we travel from this place
May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.