

will be taking more risk than if we kept to ourselves. Sometimes, we decide the risk is worth taking, because of the joy it will bring.

Whatever shape your Christmas will take, it will be a change to the pattern of recent months – cards, decorations, mince pies and so on. Take time to thank God for the people who love you, who will write to you and ring you up. Look forward with anticipation to whatever contact you will have over this season.

Advent 4 – 20th December. A Crib - Excitement

We're almost there! The last few days (or hours, or minutes) can be unbearable. When it comes, will it live up to expectation, or will our excitement lead us into disappointment?

In Advent we look forward not only to the celebration of Christ's birth, but also to his return. The message of Christmas is that God loves us so much, he came to be one of us in order to bring us home. Allow this message to sink into your heart. Take a few moments' quiet and remind yourself of the meaning of Immanuel: God is with us! Allow yourself to be excited that God is with you. This is the gift which can never disappoint.

Warwick Methodist Church - Advent 2020

To help us prepare for the most unusual of Christmases, we want to encourage people of all ages to engage with the Christmas story in a new way, within the bounds of what we can safely do.

For children (although adults might enjoy it too) there is an online Holiday Club. Each week there is a portion of the Christmas story to read or watch, and an item to make and display in your window, building up to a crib scene on your street.

For adults we have a series of meditations for each week, using the same symbol as the Holiday Club. You might like to use these meditations during your own prayer time – perhaps after adding the relevant symbol to your own window crib scene.

Advent 1 - 29th November. A Star - Hope

Are you broken-hearted? Do you feel trapped?

The first Sunday of Advent announces Hope. God has promised a Saviour – one who will bind up the broken-hearted, set the captives free and bring new life. When

everything is dark and we are getting weary – hope is what we need. Hope that a better time is coming; hope that someone is coming who will be able to help us.

Take a moment of quietness to remember the Hope which Advent offers: no matter how difficult things are now, they will get better. Can you see anything which helps you to believe this? Hang on to it, no matter how small. Like a candle flame in a vast dark space, it can bring light far beyond its physical boundaries. And if you can see no reason for hope, try to trust these words, which the Bible says come from God: “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” *Hebrews 13:5*

Advent 2 – 6th December. Figure of Mary - Waiting

Are you tired of waiting? Wondering if the end will ever come?

On the second Sunday of Advent, we remember Mary, who waited for those long nine months for her baby to come. When Christmas comes, it will be just over nine months since the start of the first lockdown. Babies don't always arrive exactly on time – but at least Mary had a clue! We have hints, in the form of news about vaccines, but much remains unclear.

So, we hunker down, and we wait. Take a moment's quietness and invite God to make you more conscious of his presence. You could use this prayer:

O God, you are the creator of time and space
A thousand years in your sight are like one day
And one day is like a thousand years.

I am not like that. I get tired. I lose patience. I lose hope.

Help me to hope in you. Help me to know your presence with me, now and always, Amen.

Then just sit quietly in the knowledge that God is there – until it feels like it's time to move.

Advent 3 – 13th December. Figure of Joseph - Anticipation

Are there things to look forward to? Special arrangements for Christmas – though much different than normal – brightening your spirits?

Like any expectant father, Joseph looked forward with both anticipation and anxiety. Giving birth was such a risky business in that time. And we know that, if we have taken the decision to meet up with family at Christmas, then we