

The Parish of Halas

Together in Christ

CRADLEY HALESOWEN HASBURY LAPAL ROMSLEY



Dear friends in Halas,

Here we are at the end of our liturgical year, a year as no other has been! We begin Advent with a heightened sense of watching and waiting as a community, as a nation, as a world.

Perhaps these difficult circumstances in which we find ourselves can help us keep this Advent 2020 in a way in which we would never otherwise be able to. We are being stripped to the essential in so many more ways than just being allowed to shop for what is essential, and only travel when essential. Advent is a time when we come back to the essentials of our faith as we prepare to welcome Christ the Saviour and Christ the Judge. With life feeling so precarious, can we find it in ourselves, even in the midst of a pandemic, to rejoice in the fullness of life which Christ promises us through the healing and restoration that his death and resurrection open for us? When things feel so unpredictable, can we find solid ground in God's love that holds us no matter what? As we journey together through Advent, may we know that we travel in community with one another and with the Comforter sent to journey with us. Let us be Christ's hands and feet and voice to one another and to our communities.

Christmas 2020 is also going to be like no other. We don't even know if we will be able to gather together in person for worship this year. Dudley is a real hotspot for Covid at the moment. I am sanguine about whether we will be coming out of lockdown on the 2 December. I suspect that Dudley will continue in the most restrictive tier for a while yet.

We are planning for our Christmas Services in all of our churches, with the Covid safety measures in place. We hope also to be livestreaming some of these services for those of us who cannot come to church. However, we have to hold all of these plans lightly because we may have to adjust them significantly. Who knows, we may gather like many Russians Christians did, outside in the cold for short services this Christmas. But we're not planning any baptisms in frozen lakes!

Do look out for the Church of England provision for Advent and Christmas 2020 entitled Comfort and Joy. Do also look out for Doorstep Carols which may happen in your community on 16 December 6pm. We may wish to publicize this on our social media platforms.

Spiritual Holy Communion will be provided for the First Sunday of Advent (29 November) at 9am on Facebook. Some have asked to have the opportunity to partake in Spiritual Communion when we are not in church. We will reassess the situation when the new guidelines come out on 2 December 2020. Our practice has been to offer Spiritual Communion when the churches are shut but not when the churches are able to be open for worship and we are able to provide home communions.

Please do let us know if there is any other provision we could be making to bring Comfort and Joy.

With our love and prayers,

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