

As horrible as the last nine months have been, they have perhaps prepared us well to celebrate Advent.

Let us review, through the purple lens of Advent, some of the defining themes of our recent lives:

- We have lived and are living with the darkness of fear closing in around us. Truly, we are a ‘people walking in darkness’ who long to ‘see a great light’.
- We have been and are continuing to implore God to intervene and save us from this pandemic. Truly, our prayer is ‘Oh that you would tear the heavens open and come down’.
- We hear news of something coming – the promised vaccine – that will save us. Truly, hope is glimmering on the horizon, the first light of dawn, but sunrise is still a way off.
- And so we have to **wait** for that promised something to arrive, something that cannot be hurried and over which we have no control. Truly, we have no option but to wait in hope.
- We must remain alert and vigilant while we wait – don’t be the mug who gets sick with COVID just before the vaccine arrives. Truly, we must wait well, and ‘stay awake’.

These are the great themes of Advent, and we have been living them for months.

Understand, then, the great value and wisdom of this season, so often overlooked. Take time with the Advent readings. Take time in the dark evenings to ‘kindle a flame’ and keep vigil, watching and waiting. So often we define Advent in reference to Christmas, as a time of preparation. Yet it is a season in its own right. The gifts of the Advent season, quiet and unassuming, less showy than Christmas, are precious for us, especially this year.