



St Giles Church  
Together in spirit on  
Sunday November 29th 2020

## First Sunday of Advent

### Comfort and Joy

Christmas this year will feel different. The family gatherings may well be smaller. For at least some of us, we may be joining in the familiar carols online rather than in church. But it will still be – as always – a time to care for one another and to be together. It will be a time to look back on a year when so much has changed. To remember those who have died, to support those who have lost jobs, to be thankful for all who have cared for the sick and the vulnerable. What has not changed is the story and the meaning of Jesus' birth. God is with us. With us in the mess as in the good, in the disappointment and the difficulty, in sorrow and in celebration.

To help us all focus our prayers and celebrations the Church of England has put together a comprehensive set of resources to guide us through this season. Click [here](#) for information on the history of Advent and Christingle services, as well as information about online services during the period and [here](#) for resources and to sign up to daily Advent and Christmas reflections.



## WOW!!

In less than a week we have filled all 30 slots to buy Christmas gifts for young children in our area who are facing a Christmas without presents or treats. What a truly amazing church family we have at St Giles!

If you were hoping to help but didn't have chance to sign up for a present, you can still join in. We also hope to bless the families with food parcels so are looking for donations of Christmas crackers, mince pies, custard, sweets, squash and crisps as well as the practical food families always need like long-life milk, tea, coffee, sugar, pasta, rice and tinned food.

Drop-off for gifts/food is Sunday, December 6th at 10am at the Main Hall. If you would rather donate money or need your donation of a gift or food collecting, please contact Jen on 07 866 615 873 or email her [jenwatson.stgiles@gmail.com](mailto:jenwatson.stgiles@gmail.com)

*Thank you*

### Lighting up our parish

There's still time to join in our 'Living Advent Calendar' windows plan. Simply choose a well-lit window easily seen from the street, choose a day between 1 and 24, which will be the day you open (light up) your window, and let loose with your creative skills! Your design can be anything Christmassy – your favourite carol, a design inspired by scripture or a general festive scene. Light up your window and keep it on display until Christmas. If you're joining in, please let us know your address and the date of your window (if you're happy to do that) so others can enjoy your creativity.



# tearfund

### A message from tearfund

Please pray with us during the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, 25 November – 10 December. Click [here](#) for more information and click [here](#) for 16 short reflections from around the world to help focus your prayers.

## Gospel reading for this week



### **Mark 13:24–37**

‘But in those days, following that distress,

“the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light;

the stars will fall from the sky,

and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

‘At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

‘Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: as soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The day and hour unknown

‘But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

‘Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the

house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!”



### Prayers for our church, our parish and our world

At the start of Advent we pray that we will be alert and watchful and keep ourselves ready for Christ's coming.

Pray for all our Church leaders that they will have the courage and wisdom to say the right words and confront things which are wrong in our world today. Give thanks and continue to pray for Gail as she leads us through these difficult times. Pray for peace in our world and an end to all strife. Give thanks for the work of our scientists, for the development of vaccines which will enable us to return to a new normality. Pray that at the end of this pandemic we may all be kinder and more appreciative towards one another. Monday 30th November is Saint Andrew's Day. Let us join with our Scottish brothers and sisters in giving thanks for the life and ministry of Saint Andrew. Continue to pray for all key workers, especially doctors and nurses and all who work in the NHS. Pray for those in our community who are sick, anxious or grieving at this time and give thanks for those who are well again.

### Collect for this week

Almighty God,  
as your kingdom dawns,

turn us from the darkness of sin to the  
light of holiness,  
that we may be ready to meet you  
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**Please keep in touch!**

The parish office is closed at the moment but Penny is still working so please get  
in touch via email  
[office@stgileschurchexhall.info](mailto:office@stgileschurchexhall.info)

Our website is updated regularly so please check in when you can  
[www.stgileschurchexhall.info](http://www.stgileschurchexhall.info)