



St. George's, Christ Church and Holy Trinity

Advent 2023

Dear Friends,

How time flies! Is it really Advent, the season of waiting and preparing for Christmas, already? There is so much to do at this time of year: decorating and baking (well, not me actually?), visiting and feasting, choosing just the right gifts, and wondering what gifts might be received.

In the midst of this flurry of activity, and, generally, numerous flurries of snow(!), simple questions might pop into our heads: "Is this what it's all about?", or "Is there something more?", or even, "Have I gotten something wrong here?" Perhaps, after the food is eaten and the gifts unwrapped, you ask yourself, "Is there a gift out there somewhere that would really satisfy me?" If we are honest with ourselves, that is what we want in life – something that can meet our needs, help us with our problems and decisions, bring comfort, happiness, peace.

The good news is that there is such a gift. It is custom-made just for you and is given by someone who knows exactly what you need right now. It gives you more than anything money can buy. And it comes from someone special, who knows you and loves you deeply, and who wants only the best for you.

Does that sound like a great gift? Does it sound too good to be true? I assure you that it is true because I received that gift over 40 years ago. God, who created each one of us, who loves each one of us individually, perfectly, and without any conditions attached, sent His only Son, Jesus, to live as an ordinary human being on earth. We celebrate His birth at Christmas.

So what?? In the Bible there are four different writers' interpretations about Jesus' life. We call those stories the gospels, or "good news." Matthew, and Luke probably heard the stories second-hand; Mark and John were telling their own stories. They all wrote about what Jesus said and did, what He was like, and how He died. That's all normal for a biography but what is not normal, they went on to tell how He was alive after He died! The event which Christians call, "resurrection" changed the world, the course of history, and can also change us if we accept the gift He is offering to us.

Jesus is God's gift to us. As the Son of God, He can give us freedom from our fears and worries, forgiveness of our past, healing of our bodies, minds, and relationships, and the assurance of God's unconditional love for us. We can be free, safe, and fully alive like never before. We don't need to do anything special to receive this Gift from God; we don't have to be good (God isn't like Santa); we simply have to accept this Gift. Unwrapping it involves learning about Jesus by reading His Book, praying, which simply means talking to Him as you would to a close friend, and learning how to follow Him. Part of that learning we call, "church" which is hanging out with a bunch of people who are also in various stages of their learning about Jesus.

As we learn to trust Jesus. we will come to the point where we want to give Him a gift – that gift is our lives as obedient followers. I pray for each of you as you begin, and continue, this exciting life of following our Saviour whose birthday we are about to celebrate.

Faithfully for the Master,

Anne