

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH GRAFHAM

'THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK'

23rd December 2020

Since I wrote the last 'Thought for the Week' it has been all change for Christmas plans yet again! Fortunately places of worship are still allowed to hold services whichever tier they are in, though you should not go to a church outside your own tier. At the time of writing, Grafham is in Tier 2 and we are expecting to go ahead with our Christmas services as planned. However many, if not all, of us are facing some disappointment about not being able to meet with families and friends in the way we had hoped - and some of us may not be able to do so at all.

But despite the newspaper headlines, Christmas is NOT cancelled! We can still celebrate and give thanks for the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation - God taking on human flesh as a vulnerable baby in a backwater of the Roman Empire. God still comes again to us this Covid Christmas: in words from one much loved Christmas carol, 'where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in'. He enters into the mess of our world and brings hope. The poem by Ann Weems, which was included in our November / December newsletter, seems to me particularly appropriate this year and so I am repeating it here.

The Christmas Spirit

The Christmas spirit
is that hope
which tenaciously clings
to the hearts of the faithful
and announces
in the face
of any Herod the world can produce
and all the inn doors slammed in our faces
and all the dark nights of our souls
that with God
all things are still possible,
that even now
unto us
a Child is born !



(from 'Kneeling in Bethlehem')

I wonder what each one of us might do in the next few days to bring that message and hope to others. Another carol exhorts us 'and with true love and charity each other now embrace'. We can't do the embracing bit - at least not physically - but how might we show kindness, care and compassion to those who are hurting in our communities? A small gift on a doorstep, a 'phone

call, a card we don't usually send? Reaching out to others might also cheer us too.

As a result of Covid 19 we are holding our Christmas services outdoors. Some members of the PCC thought I had finally lost the plot and, I must admit, as I stood in torrential rain minutes before the Carol Service last Saturday, I wondered if they were right! However the joy of being together and able to sing carols more than made up for the weather. As we are going to be outside, there wasn't much point in putting the Christmas tree *inside* the church. An unexpected benefit of this is that it is now very visible from the A281 and together with our wonderful manger scene in the lychgate has raised many people's spirits.

I realise that I've quoted from two carols in this 'Thought'. Over the next few days you might like to read your own favourites and perhaps choose one or two lines which are especially meaningful to you this Christmas.

There won't be 'Thought for the Week' on 30th December so as well as wishing you a blessed and peaceful Christmas, may I also wish you a happy and healthy new year.

With my love and prayers

Camilla

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