



St Mark's Church, Reigate

December 2025

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends,

The theologian Karl Barth once asked, "What other time or season can or will the church ever have but that of Advent?" He was reminding people that Advent names the time between the birth of Jesus and Jesus' second coming. Until Jesus returns, the Church, in some sense, remains in a suspended season of Advent. The Kingdom of God, which Jesus inaugurated, remains in a state of "not yet". Whilst the Kingdom of God is brought nearer, it is clear that God's will is not yet done on earth as it is in heaven. Indeed, we must pray it might still be so.

The church calendar invites us to linger in Advent, this year beginning on 30 November. Brokenness and pain may characterise life in this world, but Advent promises future glory. The promise of Advent is a promise of hope; that God will be present as we journey through the wilderness. Even in the gloom of December and the heart of winter, we can know that all of earth's longings will be fulfilled in Christ. God's Kingdom appears patchy on earth; it won't be fulfilled until Jesus returns. That is why we pray in Advent, "Come, Lord Jesus". But our hope that Jesus will come again to judge heaven and earth is not based on an empty promise. It's based upon the fact that God came once already. God's coming as a tiny baby into our midst, as one of us, in a faraway place named Bethlehem is a sign of things to come.

Christmas, when it arrives, reminds us that God is faithful. We celebrate the birth of a baby for whom we've spent a season praying. He comes among us in the Eucharist or Holy Communion, our food for the journey. He comes in nativity plays and in the gospel re-told at the Christingle Service in sticky oranges and sweets. He comes in the babies born on Christmas Day. We see him coming in a million different ways because of the way he once came into the world through Mary.

This is the reason for our hope; the Light of the world was born into our world, remains in our lives through the sacraments and the Scriptures, and will come again in glory. Until then, we are called to be faithful, celebrating Christmas, with joy that, despite it all, amidst it all, God is with us.

With every blessing.