



# Advent

 **Narrabeen**  
ST. FAITH'S *Anglican Church*



# ADVENT

## Remembering & Rejoicing, Watching & Waiting

When many of us hear the word ‘Advent’, our minds recall cardboard calendars - ones with little perforated window flaps that reward our patience and help us count down the days until Christmas. While they’re a pleasant memory, Advent itself is so much more than that.

It’s a season for **remembering & rejoicing, watching & waiting** – and that’s because Advent is not *just* about remembering Jesus’ humble arrival that first Christmas, it’s also about anticipating his glorious second coming.

Historically, Advent is spent reflecting on Christ’s second coming and its implications for our future. It’s also appropriate to focus on Christ’s incarnation as we anticipate the saviour born in the manger - that magnificent reality that God really did humble himself and take on flesh. We’re going to do both together as a church as we celebrate Advent this year.

As we do, be encouraged to look not only to the manger, but also to the sure and certain hope we have as Christians: that Christ will return.

*“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” -John 14:3*

<b>Advent #1</b>	Anticipating a Return - Matthew 24:36-44 .....	4
<b>Advent #2</b>	Are We There Yet? - 2 Peter 3:8-14 .....	6
<b>Advent #3</b>	Recognising His Arrival - Luke 2:22-35 .....	8
<b>Advent #4</b>	Remembering His Promise - Revelation 7:9-12 .....	10

Note: At the end of each study, you will see the following box:

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This is to remind us that as we pray for each other to grow in spiritual maturity, we should pray that we will grow in these ways:

- **Faith:** That we will learn to trust God in every situation and in all things.
- **Hope:** That we will grow to set our hearts on the treasure that we have in Jesus.
- **Love:** That we will grow in self-giving love - that puts others before ourselves.

# Advent #1: Anticipating A Return

## Matthew 24:36-44

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*Anticipation can be both exciting and daunting. What's something you've anticipated over the last couple of years. Was it easy or difficult to endure? Why?*

### *Read Matthew 24:36-44*

1. Jesus' teaching here is in response to a question asked by the disciples (you can read their question back in verse 3).
  - a. What do they ask?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. What are they looking for specifically?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What significant point is Jesus making about his return in verse 36?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Surprisingly, Jesus compares his return to the events of the flood in Noah's day:
  - a. What do you think he means when he says: *"people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage"*?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Why is this worth us paying attention to?

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- c. What might it look like for us to be so wrapped up in “normal life”, that we become distracted and unprepared for the coming of Christ?
4. Given the unexpected nature of Jesus’ return (see vs39), what might it look for us to exercise trust in God, even without all the specific details?
5. Jesus concludes this section with two commands: “*keep watch*” (vs42) and “*be ready*” (vs44). What do you think each of these mean?

- ⇒ *Does this passage leave any room for us to expect to know the day of Jesus’ return? What are the implications of this for us?*
- ⇒ *Discuss the things you believe Jesus wants you to be doing, so that you are personally ready for his return (be as specific and practical as you can).*
- ⇒ *How can we help each other to be watchful and ready in this time of waiting? (Again, be as specific and practical as you can).*

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# Advent #2: Are We There Yet?

## 2 Peter 3:8-14

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*Waiting can be so difficult. What are some of the things that we struggle to wait for as adults? What helps you to endure while you wait?*

*Read 2 Peter 3:8-10*

1. What do you think Peter's main point is in vs8?
  
2. What reason does he give for Jesus having not yet returned?
  
3. Jesus' return will come "like a thief" (see vs10). What do you think that means?
  - a. According to the passage, what will happen on that day?

⇒ *Why do you think God provides these exciting descriptions of what's to come?*

⇒ *How have you failed to allow them to shape you in the past?*

⇒ *How should they shape and flavour how we live now? Why?*

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*Read 2 Peter 3:11-14*

4. What should we be doing to get ready for Jesus' return?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What do you think it means to live "*holy and godly lives*"? (See vs11)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. In vs14 we are told to make every effort to be found "*spotless, blameless and at peace with him*". How might the reality of Jesus' return encourage us to do this?

⇒ *Godliness; Holiness; Anticipating the end; Speeding it's coming: how are you pursuing each of these things?*

⇒ *Which of them could you actively pursue better in the lead-up to Christmas? What implications might follow?*

⇒ *How does 2 Peter 3 help you to grow in grace and knowledge of Christ? How can you ensure that your growth continues?*

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# Advent #3: Eagerly Awaiting His Arrival

## Luke 2:22-35

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*Do you have a bucket list (a list of things you want to do/see before you die)? If so, what's something that is on your list?*

*Read Luke 2:22-35*

1. As we read the passage, it becomes apparent that Luke wants us to know certain things. What does he want us to know about:
  - a. The context that this interaction is taking place in? (see vs22-24) Why might this be significant?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Simeon himself? (see vs26)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What was on Simeon's bucket list? (see vs29-32) How does he feel about it happening?

⇒ *Is coming face-to-face with Jesus something that you're looking forward to? Why/why not?*

⇒ *Why are Christians encouraged to look forward to that day? (see Philippians 1:21)*

3. Pay careful attention to the repetition in verses 25, 26 & 27.

a. Who is intimately involved in this sequence of events in the temple courts?

b. Why might that be significant for our understanding of what's happening?

4. What does Simeon go on to say? (see vs33-35) What event was he prophesying?

⇒ *Simeon was thrilled to see God's plans for the salvation of the world coming to fruition. What might it look like for us to share his excitement?*

⇒ *How can we let that excitement shape and flavour Christmas together this year?*

⇒ *What might it look like for us to share that excitement with people who don't yet know it themselves?*

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# Advent #4: Hanging On To His Promise

## Revelation 7:9-17

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What do you think of the saying: “Clothes maketh the man (or woman)”? Why?

*Read Revelation 7:9-17*

1. Where are we in this vision from John? What do you find encouraging about that?
  
2. What is significant about the way John describes the great multitude he sees?
  
3. How might this have encouraged the Christians John was writing to? And us today?
  
4. What qualifies this white robed crowd to be standing before God? (see vs14). What does this say about:
  - a. The significance of Christs’ incarnation (which we’re about to celebrate at Christmas)?
  
  - b. The significance of Christ’ atonement (the reconciliation of God and us through Jesus’ sacrificial death)?
  
5. What is distinct about the way they’re celebrating? Why is this important?

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6. Which of the promises of vs15-17 do you find most comforting? Why?

⇒ *How can we encourage one another to worship God now in light of the way we'll be worshipping Him for eternity?*

⇒ *How ought this vision of where we're headed shape and flavour:*

- *How we relate to those who are 'different' to us?*
- *What we look forward to as Christians?*
- *How we celebrate Christmas this year?*

⇒ *If Christianity is "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread", what might it look like for us to better point people to Christ this Christmas? How can we help one another to do that?*

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