

The Churchwardens Write

A Season To Reflect

The media calls this time of year 'the run-up to Christmas' and that is what it is, but the other day one of the well-known furniture manufacturers gave this season a new twist in its advertisement. Order now, it said, and your new sofa would be delivered in time for Christmas, the hosting season. Pardon? Hosting season? Did we mishear? Try googling it and you will find lots of tips for making your "hosting season" a success. One particular article titled "Getting Ready for the Hosting Season" explains that this is the season when "welcoming friends and family for celebrations is the name of the game". It gives a checklist to make sure nothing is overlooked and concludes with "get in plenty of food and drink to achieve that sense of holiday cheer". The article runs to 592 words, but nowhere is Jesus or Christmas mentioned – not even once!

Now forgive us if we've got this wrong but aren't we entering, not the hosting season, but the season of Advent, a season of joyful expectation as we prepare to celebrate the coming into the world of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. It is an important devotional season during which, even though the world is filled with the 'busy' of Christmas, we need to go against the grain, slow down and reflect.

So let's reflect on this - on the night when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a small group of shepherds were quietly tending their flocks of sheep in the nearby fields. They were looking up at the stars, as we all tend to do on a clear night. Nothing seemed different. But what was about to happen would transform not only the lives of these shepherds but the lives of countless others as well. The world would never be the same. When we talk of 'looking forward to the birth of Jesus', we know that this is only a figure of speech. The birth of Jesus took place some two thousand years ago, and what we are now preparing for is Christmas, our annual celebration of His birth.

It is a challenge for us as Christians to live this Advent Season when the commercialism and materialism of the world around us has already begun its annual bombardment. We'll all be busy with our own preparations for Christmas, but we must remember to put aside some time each day, be it only a few minutes or an hour, to be with God, to reflect on the miraculous birth of Jesus, the gospel stories and the mission of Christ.

Wishing you all a Blessed and Peaceful Christmas,

David and Dejan Churchwardens