

# Advent Reflections



**A Collection of poems, photographs  
and reflections from East Midlands Synod**

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## **Introduction**

This collection of thoughts, poetry and pictures has been compiled from around the Synod to provide a daily meditation for the season of Advent. We hope you will find these useful as you prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus in 2014.

May this Advent be pregnant with meaning and hope and may your vision of God grow ever greater.

God Bless,

Deborah

East Midlands Synod TDO

## Week 1 - PREPARATION

1st December

This is a time of year for making journeys. It is a time when families



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want to be together and to share each other's company over Christmas and the New Year. It's a time for renewing friendships and for catching up. So millions of people all over the world will take to the skies, the seas and the roads in order to make their special journeys in anticipation and excitement.

Our Christmas story revolves around journeys; the journey of Joseph and Mary and the journeys of the shepherds and the wise men, all undertaken to create the space and the time in which the birth of God could be experienced personally.

Advent, Christmas and New Year are 'journeys' for us in the Christian Church. They offer a time for reflection, for asking ourselves what needs to change, what needs to be thrown out, what needs to be taken on, what needs to be faced, in order to be true to ourselves and to our calling from God. It is a time for integrity in the deepest parts of our hearts and souls, so that they may be clean and uncluttered, to make room for the birth of God. We too need space and time over this season in which the birth of God can be experienced by us personally and powerfully. I hope that this Advent, Christmas and New Year can be such a journey of personal discovery and inner renewal for us. God comes to us and stays with us; our Wonderful Counsellor and Mighty God brings new birth and new life, so that our journey of life may continue in ever new and more wonderful ways. The zeal of the Lord Almighty wants to do this for us.

© Chris Ford

2nd December

## TAKE TIME

Take time my friend, to slow and listen to the world  
For you rush without looking at its wondrous beauty  
Take time, to feel its serenity in a lifetime of confusion  
For your life is but a blink of an eye in the vastness of our universe

Take time my friend, to do the things you have never done  
For in your rush for achievement you have missed so much  
Take time to listen to the heartbeat of life itself  
For a true life without a heartbeat is a life without soul

Take time my friend, to listen to life's soft whispers  
For when you rush they remain unheard and stay forgotten  
Take time to understand, for life is too great a treasure to lose so freely



© John Potter

For your life is a precious jewel ready to be found

Take time my friend, for this is your time to listen

Walk slowly then with the world as your companion

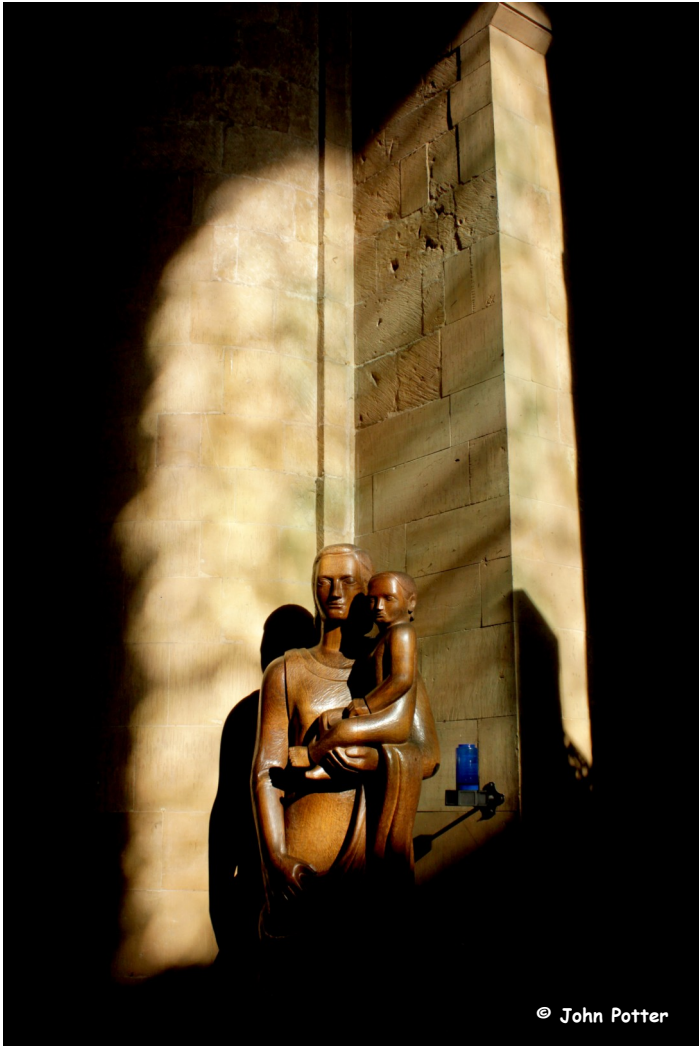
Take time to love life and fulfil your destiny

For the life you live is the only life you have

Take time then my friend

© Christopher Froggatt

3rd December



© John Potter

'Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.'  
(Luke 2:19) NRSV

4th December

Trying to fight the pressure that mounts  
To make them all happy, yet balance the accounts  
To meet the demand that never ends  
Get the new gadget, meet the new trends



Working hard to make sure there's no disappointment in sight  
Not one frown on Christmas morning,  
nothing but delight!  
The list of what I must do gets longer  
But this overwhelmed body and mind  
gets no stronger  
While I'm rushing, busy making plans for  
so long  
I'm missing memories, my priorities are  
wrong

Being together, sharing time is more important by far  
Than anything I can buy, it won't tarnish or mar  
They won't care about that game or bike that they 'needed'  
In a few years time, when that models been succeeded

But they will have the memory, the love they could feel  
The knowledge that Christmas, in their home, was real  
That the promise and hope from one baby boy  
Was all that was needed to bring Christmas joy!

© EMS

5th December

Isaiah 40.3 : A voice is calling, "Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."



We hope the path will be smooth, but it is often littered with stones.

We hope the path will be straight, but it is often indirect and circuitous.

We hope the path will be level, but it can be a steep ascent or a sharp decline.

We hope the path will be clear, but often we have to carefully note the direction and mark it for others to follow.

We hope the path will be easy, but often we have to hack our way through undergrowth, wilderness, and open the way for others.

Living Lord, as we prepare for Christ's coming, give us the courage to prepare and walk the path you lay before us. Open our overgrown and closed hearts to hear the good news in the coming of Christ. Amen.

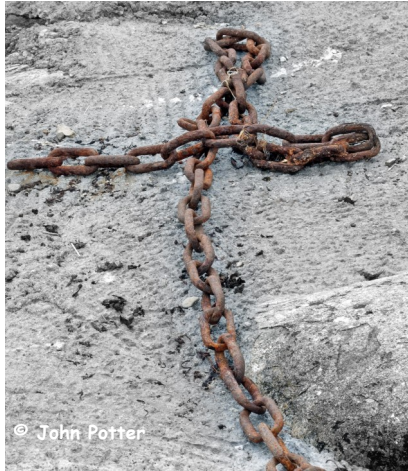
© Martha McInnes

6th December

## CHAIN WHAT CHAIN?

Before you take time to pray to your God, pause for a moment  
Close gently your eyes to the sin of this world, and pause but for a  
moment

Listen then to the heartbeat of his peace, for it dwells in us all  
Here in this place is the Spirit of God



It is here, in this place that the chains of sin are no more  
For you are and shall always be, His Child  
Cast not your mind on past memories, let them be gone  
For they cast shadows of doubt in the hearts of the pure

Pause then but for a moment, as you come before your Lord  
Pray with a heart that rejoices in his Kingdom  
Let then your heart be at peace, and your chains of doubt broken  
For when we are truly his there is only love, no chains

Pause then but for a moment

© Christopher Froggatt



## Week 2 - HOPE AND EXPECTATION

7th December

### DECEMBER THOUGHTS

December's such a special month  
A time of anticipation  
Coloured lights and Christmas Trees  
Food, gifts and celebration

December's such an awful month  
Short days, long nights so lonely  
Cold houses, even colder hearts  
Thoughts come to mind, If only...

December's such a busy time  
With shopping to be done  
Cards and paper, toys from shop  
It's such great family fun

December shopping oh so sad  
Some wishes can't be granted  
Tiredness and tragic thoughts  
Of loved ones now departed

December is a time for plays  
For parties, meals together  
For friends and families to see  
No matter what the weather  
December is a time for grief  
Of those gone not forgotten  
What used to be such happy times  
Are feelings now downtrodden

December is a time for hope  
Joy can replace despair  
Christ comes again our needs to meet  
His presence healing care.



© Shirley Eastman

8th December

## HOPE

When your day feels broken  
When yesteryears joy seems to be gone  
When loving words are left unspoken  
And Loneliness has been suffered for too long

Hope has not deserted you  
You have closed your eyes, hidden your face  
Forgotten the promise that remains true  
The gift that was given by God's grace

In him is the hope, the end of your plight  
Don't hide from the joy, walk with him in the light

© EMS

9th December

'May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy and  
peace in believing, so  
that you may abound in  
hope by the power of  
the Holy Spirit.'

(Romans 15:13) NRSV



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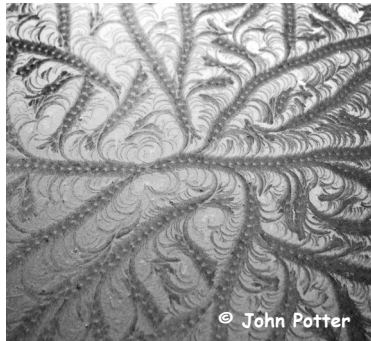
10th December

### ADVENT THOUGHTS

Advent is a special time  
To wait in preparation  
And once again together  
we can have that celebration

Advent's such a perfect time  
to search for gospel treasure  
To read the stories, sing the songs  
To feel and know such pleasure

Advent is a time of hope  
Of peace, and love and joy  
When lonely hearts are melted  
by that special baby boy



Advent is the time to know  
that God's love has no end  
It's always there for you and me  
Love from that special friend

Advent is the time to know  
We need never be alone  
For God is always with us  
His love is for everyone

© Shirley Eastman

11th December

'...and a little child shall lead them.'  
(Isaiah 11:6) NRSV



12th December

### YOU CHOSE ME

You chose me, for all that I am and will be  
You chose me, to shadow within your light  
You chose, to save me from all my dark  
You chose to love and to live with me  
I will be whole, I will belong to you  
I will live pure coz I want to be like you  
You are the father, you are the son, you are the holy one  
I will be whole, coz I want to be like you  
You gave me life in the depths of sorrow  
You gave me moments of grace divine  
You gave me all I could hope to feel  
You gave me the power to stand and fight

© Lauren Froggatt

13th December

WAITING

Waiting	But God	On earth
So long	Is here!	Just like
For what?	And God	It is
For Godot?	Was birthed	In heaven
But Godot	Joy to	Heaven and
Never comes	The world!	Earth united
For life	So why	I'm busy
To take	Do I	Waiting
A turn	Wait, for	
For the better?	What do	
Keep waiting!	I wait?	
For birth	For him	
New birth	Who has	
Hope, promise	Come and	
For God?	Will come	
For God	For the	© Peter Meek
	Will of	
	Him to	
	Be done	



## Week 3 - REJOICING

14th December

### THE JOY OF JESUS

There's a joy in my heart, a peace so profound

The singing of angels such a pure sweet sound

Can you all hear me? Can you all see?

My precious Lord Jesus has just set me free

Freed from my evil, darkness so deep

Now always laughter no more to weep

© Christopher Froggatt

15th December

'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God...' (Luke 2:13) NRSV



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16th December

## THANK YOU JESUS

Lord Jesus let me thank you for what you've done for me  
Not just for your friendship but that you've set me free  
Freed from my dark days and evil now surpassed  
Your friendship and your love I know will forever last



Great Gifts are in abundance and all of them are free  
None for anyone special, but for him and you and me  
So Lord Jesus when I see the gifts, that you so freely give  
Are working in my heart that others might now live  
It brings a sense of purpose a reason for it all  
Thank you Jesus, thank you Lord, that I received your call

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17th December

## CHRISTMAS CHILD

A star shines bright with angels glow  
Shines down on Bethlehem below  
The light of God shines on the ground  
Peace and beauty are all around  
In a stable amongst the hay  
A tiny child is born on this day  
Son of God so pure and true  
Sent to this world for me and for you  
Born to suffer and born to die  
So man could know the reason why  
This Christmas child so full of grace  
Looked upon this human race  
Born to suffer all our sin  
Put back goodness where sadness had been  
This Christmas child so pure and right  
Of virgin birth by God's great might  
Innocent smile no hatred inside  
Shall show man there's no need to hide  
He'll teach us truth, what's right and wrong  
He'll live inside you all day long  
So do not fear this Christmas Child  
Whose birth has given us peace  
Just thank him that your life is new  
Your darkness now to cease



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18th December

## EVENING STAR

Evening star shining bright, warming glow to light the night  
Evening star with an angels face looks upon this human race  
Heaven's Child, peaceful, true, made by God for me and you

Evening stars protecting glow, shining on us all below  
God created, Heaven made, thank you for your nightly shade

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19th December

"For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him  
homage."

(Matthew 2:2) NRSV



20th December



### PRAISE AND CELEBRATION

Praise and celebration we give to Christ the King  
Deep Joy, eternal freedom of that we must all sing  
For Christ our Lord is worthy of all our hearty praise  
Heaven's eternal kingdom, a faith of which to raise  
God's power and might and wisdom are there for all to share  
Accept Christ and God's Kingdom  
And he will show you where

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21st December

### ADVENT CANDLES

Flames lit with anticipation  
Jesus is coming!  
Light flickering  
Tiny but alive  
God's word made flesh  
Jesus is coming!  
Coming in hope  
Arriving in joy  
Bringing peace and love for mankind

Amidst the hope for peace  
An anxious mother  
Unformed as the mourning mother she will be  
Anticipating, hurting, travelling into the unknown  
As we all are  
But carrying a special burden  
Light for the world  
Shown in a tender smile  
In a draughty stable  
A father fraught with the responsibility  
Of another's child  
Gods son  
A life to nurture  
All lives to save

Jesus is coming  
Gods word made flesh  
Coming in hope  
Arriving in joy  
Longing for peace and love for mankind

© Val Smith



22nd December

## THE STAR OF HEAVEN

Heavens star, brightest in the midnight sky,  
How you shine with your reverence and love.  
Heavens star, gently guide us through the tempest of life,  
Strengthen us that we may learn to shine for others.

Heavens star, lovingly created by the Heavenly Host,  
Whose flawless power the greatest of all.  
Heavens star, destine for all to see,  
Lighting the universe like a beacon of peace.



Heavens star, be in awe of its' power,  
For through it, all things are possible.  
Heavens star, reveal yourself to mankind,  
For in you I see myself, as I myself am seen by my creator.

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23rd December



'Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.'

(Luke 2:9) NRSV

24th December

## THE BIRTH

God has now spoken his angels did say  
That his Son would be born on this day  
Immaculate conception, beautiful light  
Yes Jesus God's Son was born on this night  
Born in a stable in a manger he lay  
Wise men, Shepherds they all came to pray  
Pray for this baby so full of light  
Whom God had instilled all his power and his might  
All of his wisdom, all of his grace  
That this God Child, might save us  
This poor human race

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**'For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

(Isaiah 9:6-7) NRSV



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