



Greeting for Advent and Christmas!

29 November 2024

I wonder how this Advent and Christmas be for you. It might be a time of great joy and excitement, but it's often a time of stress and weariness for all sorts of reasons. We know from scripture that the time leading up to Jesus' birth would have been very stressful for the Jewish people, not least Mary and Joseph. There was great uncertainty, danger even, as they lived under occupation.

The world feels like it's in a similar state of uncertainty and danger as we approach this advent. Our local story might be one of reasonable stability, but we don't have to go far to notice the challenges people face every day, just trying to make sense of the world, to provide for their families, keep a roof over their heads and keep them safe. All this was the case for Mary and Joseph as they navigated their way into parenthood and life beyond.

As we navigate our way towards Christmas, what will be our difficulty? What do we long for as God's people as we wait for the Christ-child? What's ours to do and be as we wait?

The Methodist Church advent campaign is called "Hush the noise: join the love song this Christmas". <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources/>.¹

The Evangelism and Growth team have used a line from the carol "It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old" (StF 205): "O hush the noise, ye people of strife, and hear the angels sing". Sometimes it feels like the whole world are people of strife. My prayer is that this advent and Christmas as you prepare to welcome Christ again, you'd be mindful of the noises and ask God to help shut them out. Notice the still, small voice of God calling you to hear the angels sing. Let's not just say the words, let's try and make that a reality for ourselves, our churches and our communities. It starts with us so if we're mindful of making small changes, bigger changes can happen beyond us.

When the noise is hushed and we hear the angels sing, we're able to hear God's calling on our lives for such a time as this. We look forward to a new calendar year and all that holds for us as. We look forward to God's grace and favour upon us as we seek to build his kingdom in this place.

I hope you're able to make time this advent and Christmas to hush the noise so that you can hear the angels sing. I pray that, whatever your usual traditions at this time of the year, you'll be blessed beyond measure, knowing the still small voice of God in all its glory.

With love and blessings from our household to yours.

Rev Sam & Robin.

¹ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources/> Accessed 29.11.24.