

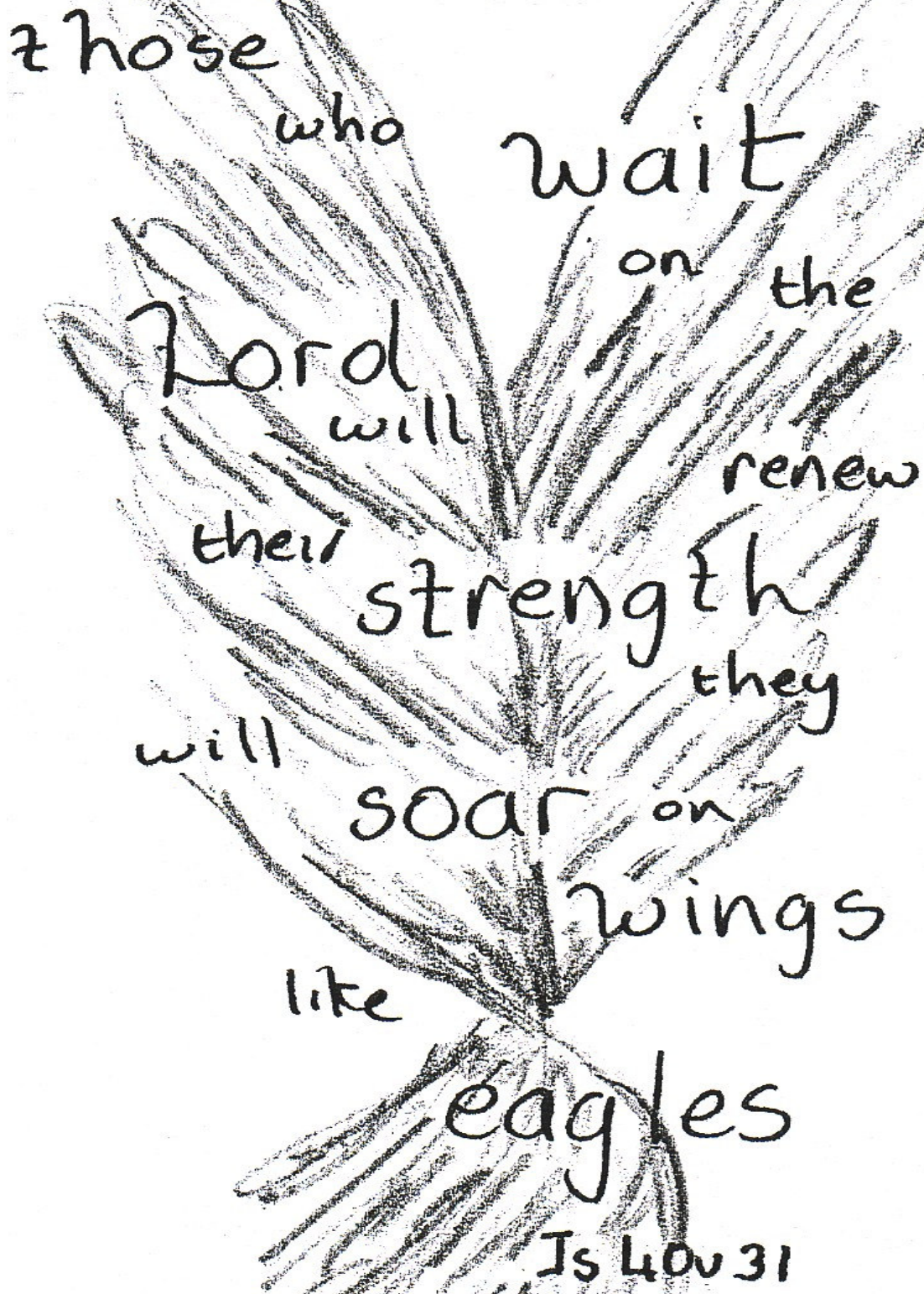
XPRESSIONS CAFÉ

Advent Sunday 2nd December 2008

XPLORE Sessions

PREPARATION

The first session, Preparation, was devised and led by Shirleyanne and Val. Their service sheet follows. It was designed to help people respond during the service and also as something to take away and use as a guide to further meditation:



those who wait
on the
Lord will
renew
their strength
they
will soar on
wings
like
eagles

Is 40v31

Waiting

Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles.

Isaiah 40:31

For God alone, my soul waits in silence.

Psalms 62:1

I waited patiently for the Lord,
He turned to me and heard my cry –
He set my feet on a rock
And gave me a firm place to stand.

Psalms 40:1-2

Advent

Advent is a time of exquisite balance between the sadness of the mess we lived in, and the bliss of the world we would like to live in. Advent is when we acknowledge that bliss is not the blotting out of pain with port or plum pudding, but a process, a pilgrimage, a pregnancy, and – amidst the chaos of the world's governing – a cry for the coming of the reign of God.

Margaret Hepplethwaite

Traditionally Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas. Being ready for Christmas does not just mean presents, sending Christmas cards and buying special food but also it means getting ourselves ready to meet baby Jesus. Advent gives us a chance get rid of things that stand in the way, things that we have done that we shouldn't have done and also those things that we should have done and haven't.

Between now and Christmas Day, try and find some time for quiet thought, reflecting perhaps on the things that you know you could have done differently; or perhaps on those things that you know are right and work on your relationship with Jesus.

Before any big event in our lives, a wedding, dinner with special friends or meeting new people, we usually think about what it will be like and how we should act. We have a chance to think about meeting baby Jesus on Christmas Day and starting a new relationship with him and our heavenly father.

Shirleyanne Seel



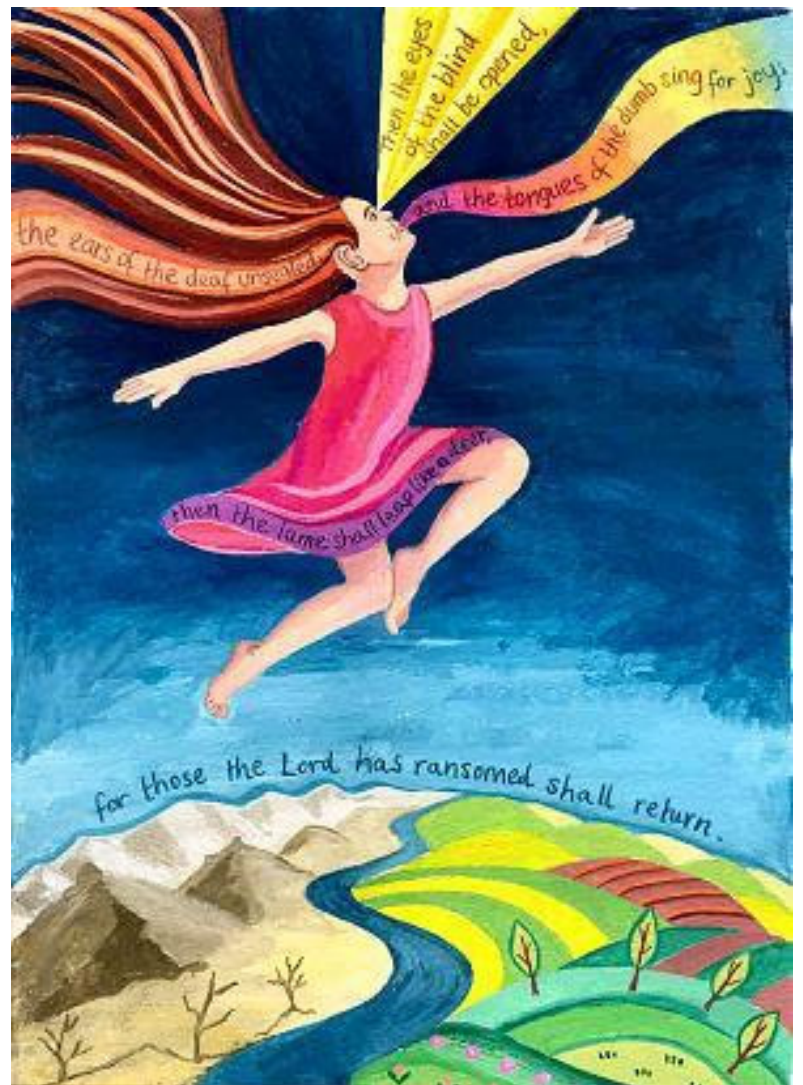
Kneeling

Moments of great calm, kneeling before an altar
of wood in a stone church
in summer,
waiting for God to speak;
the air a staircase for silence;
the sun's light ringing me,
as though I acted a great role.
And the audiences still;
all that close throng of spirits waiting,
as I, for the message.
Prompt me, God, but not yet.
When I speak, though it be you who speak through me,
something is lost.
The meaning is in the waiting.



Kid Stuff

The wise guys
tell me
that Christmas
is Kid Stuff...
Maybe they've got
something there—
Two thousand years ago
three wise guys
chased a star
across a continent
to bring
frankincense and myrrh
to a Kid
born in a manger
with an idea in his head...
And as the bombs
crash
all over the world today
the real wise guys know
that we've all got to go
chasing stars again
in the hope
that we can get back
some of that
Kid Stuff
born two thousand years ago.
Frank Horne



Prayer after lighting the Advent Candle

Lord Jesus, Light of the world,
born in David's city of Bethlehem,
born like him to be a king:
be born in our hearts this Christmastide,
be king of our lives today. **Amen**

Prayer for those who wait to know their Saviour

O Lord our God, we pray for those struggling
with the additional pressures of life at Christmas.
We pray that they will experience your love and find hope in their time of need.
Speak into their hearts and bring them your peace.
Surround them with people to help and support them. **Amen**

Prayer for those who accept and wait

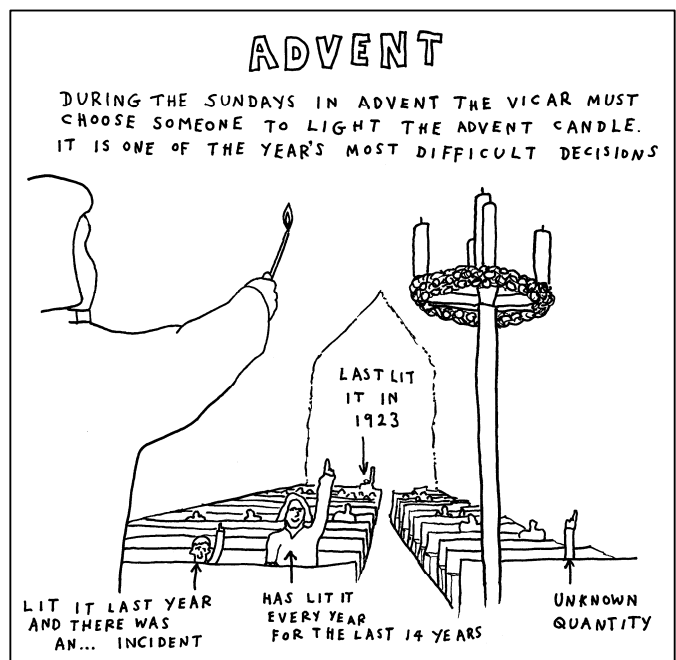
O Lord our God,
we pray for those who have nothing but their faith;
for those living in countries where they have to hide their faith;
for those who have hardly enough food to feed their children and themselves
but who trust in the Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer for children who wait

O Lord our God,
we pray for children whose childhood has been stolen
because their parents are infected with HIV or Aids;
for children who are orphans and reliant on others;
for children who won't
get a present this year;
for children whose parents
are in prison. **Amen.**

Prayer for ourselves

O Lord our God,
make us watchful and keep us faithful
as we await the coming
of your Son our Lord;
that, when he shall appear,
he may not find us sleeping in sin
but active in his service
and joyful in his praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



WORD

The Word session was led by Richard B. and Chris. One of the bible readings was supplied as a powerpoint, which is also available as a link. They used the readings set in the lectionary for Advent Sunday.

| | Event | Person | Comment |
|-----------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Introductory comment and prayer | Richard | |
| 2 | Reading – Isaiah 2: 1-5 | Richard | |
| 3 | Brief comment on reading | Chris | Provide historical context |
| 4 | Reading – Matthew 24: 36-44 | Chris | |
| 5 | Brief comment on reading | Richard | Link to previous reading and provide historical context |
| 6 | Reading – Romans 13: 11-end | Chris | |
| 7 | Brief comment on reading | Richard | Link to previous readings and provide historical context |
| 8 | General discussion | Everybody present | Chris starts things going, then he and Richard facilitate and guide discussion, drawing it to a close at appropriate time. Explore contemporary local and personal relevance of the three readings. |
| 9 | Closing prayer | Chris | |
| 10 | Quiet time | Everybody present | Possible PowerPoint slide show, taking images related to readings |
| | | | |

PRAYER

Prayer was led by Margaret and Daphne. This was their outline:

Preparation:

- Candle lighted on the altar
- CD player ready
- T Lights for those who come through to prayer to light
- Sheets with the Prayer and Lord's prayer on
- Chairs in chancel area

Daphne: *Welcome to our prayer time on the theme of advent, celebrating Christ's light coming. We will explain what will happen as we go through. Please sit and we'll start in a prayer*

Make clear to us, O Lord our God,
the meaning of Christ's coming to Bethlehem long ago,
in our lives now, and at the last great day;
that we may receive his forgiveness, know the power of his living presence,
and rejoice in the hope of his kingdom;
for his name's sake **Amen**

Margaret: "But those who do what is true come to the light ..." (John 3:21)

Explain: I will say a short prayer & on the sheet is the response; then please come up and light your T light with the lit candle and place it on the altar

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

*Response: Christ be our light!
 Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
 Christ be our light!
 Shine in your church gathered today.*

Daphne and Margaret start the lighting of the candles; Margaret then starts the CD playing track 5, Celtic Reflections

When everyone finished, Daphne: *please sit or kneel as we continue in prayer, Please say the response again at the end of each prayer section:*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice

Response: Christ be our light !...

Margaret: Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed.

Response....

Daphne: Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone.

Response ...

Margaret: Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.

Response: ...

Please sit;

we will now sing a version of the Lord's prayer; if you don't know it, do listen, and as it goes through, do join in and sing; the words are on your sheet.

The verse is repeated twice and the response 4 times

Please kneel, sit or stand, whichever you prefer as the song progresses,

Margaret: Play CD 1 Track 3 Our Father in Heaven

Our Father in heaven, holy is your name
Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven
Our Father in heaven, reveal who You are
Your will be done on earth as in heaven
Feed us today what we need to live
Forgive all our sins as we forgive and keep us safe (*sing twice*)

The Kingdom is Yours, The power is Yours, And the glory forever (*sing 4 times*)

Daphne: *please sit or kneel for our final prayer*

Loving Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son,
Whose birth at Bethlehem we now prepare to celebrate.
May our hearts and our homes always be open to him,
That he may dwell with us forever,
And we may serve him gladly all our days,
To the honour and glory of your name,

Amen

Prayer Response:

Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Our Feather in Heaven

Our Father in heaven, holy is your name
Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven
Our Father in heaven, reveal who You are
Your will be done on earth as in heaven
Feed us today what we need to live
Forgive all our sins as we forgive and keep us safe (*sing twice*)

The Kingdom is Yours, The power is Yours, and the glory forever (*sing 4 times*)

Prayer Response:

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PRAISE

Praise was led by Richard M and Barry. This was their outline. All the songs were from CD:

Nothing Will Ever Be The Same Again

(Richard Intro)

Our 1st song is about watching & waiting. As we begin the start of the advent season there is a sense of expectancy of the light of Christ coming into the world.

As you will see the candle is not lit, but will be at an appropriate point during the song to remind us that the light of Christ has come into the world.

So many Centuries of watching and waiting
But when the moment came well nobody saw
Traders and travellers hurried by
And life went on just like before
Just like before
In all the clamour just a new baby crying
One more poor family shut out in the cold
Nothing unusual sad to say
Hasn't it always been this way?

*But nothing will ever be the same again
This night has changed everything
Nothing will ever be the same again
Since the night he came*

So rare we recognise our History in the making
Meet angels unawares and pass on our way
Blind to the moment of destiny
While precious years just slip away, slip away

(Barry moves to light the candle)

And now a door is standing open before you
Casting its light into the darkness around
Stop for a moment, step inside
Tonight could be your Bethlehem.

*And nothing will ever be the same again
This night could change everything
Nothing will ever be the same again
Since the night he came (stop)*

Thorns in the straw

(Richard Intro)

Now with the birth of Gods Son, the light of Christ has come into the world, God is with us and everything has changed.

Since the day the angel came
It seemed that everything had changed
The only certain thing
Was the child that moved within
On the road that would not end
Winding down to Bethlehem
So far away from home

Just a blanket on the floor
Of a vacant cattle-stall

But there the child was born
She held him in her arms
And as she laid him down to sleep
She wondered – will it always be
So bitter and so sweet

*And did she see there
In the straw by his head a thorn
And did she smell myrrh
In the air on that starry night*

Then the words of ancient seers
Tumbled down the centuries
.....A virgin shall conceive.....
God with us... Prince of Peace
Man of sorrows – strangest name
Oh Joseph there it comes again
So bitter yet so sweet

*And did she see there
In the straw by his head a thorn
And did she smell myrrh
In the air on that starry night
And did she hear angels sing
Not so far away
Till at last the sun rose blood-red
In the morning sky (stop)*

For God so loved the World

(Richard Intro)

Our next song reminds us of Gods love for the world and us.

This song then leads us straight into the next, Peace to you which is sung 4 times.

We will then have a pause to give us some time for reflection.

Barry will then introduce & lead us in the next song.

For God so loved the world
That He gave His only Son;
And all who believe on Him
Shall not die, but have eternal life;
No, they shall not die, but have eternal life.

And God showed His love for you,
When He gave His only son;
And you, if you trust in Him,
Shall not die, but have eternal life
No you shall not die but have eternal life

Peace to you. (x4)

Peace to you
We bless you now in the name of the Lord.
Peace to you
We bless you now in the name of the Prince of Peace.
Peace to you. *(Pause)*

Heaven invites you to a party

(Barry to introduce and lead us in the next song)

Heaven invites you to a party

*To celebrate the birth of a Son,
Angels rejoicing in the starlight,
Singing, 'Christ your saviour has come'*

And it's for you and it's for me,
For all your friends and family.
Now heaven's door is open wide,
So come on in, come step inside.

Chorus

Angels from the realms of glory
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
You who sang creations story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

And it's for you and it's for me,
For all your friends and family.
Let trumpets blast, let music play,
Let people shout, let banners wave.

Come all you people,
Join hands together
Bring all your neighbours;
Everybody!
Send invitations,
To every Nation,
Come and adore Him,
Everybody! Everybody!

Chorus

Glory To God (Reprise) ` (x3)

Glory to God in the highest,
And on the earth
Be peace from heav'n!

Thanks be to God (Reprise)

*And now thanks be to God
For His gift beyond words,
The Son whom He loved,
No, He did not withhold Him,
But with Him gave everything.
Now He's everything to me
Now He's everything to me.
Glory to God in the highest!*