1st December 2021

Dear Friends,

I'm not quite sure where this year has gone. Advent Sunday was on the 28th November and here we are in December already. Last year our Christmas preparations were very different as it was only at the last minute we were able to meet with one other family on Christmas Day and we had to think creatively as to how we delivered our Christingle, nativity, carol service etc so I'm delighted we can join together for our Advent preparations and Christmas celebrations this year.  
  
Advent is a Latin word (Adventus) meaning coming, when we prepare for the coming of the Christ child at Christmas and also for the Second Coming of Christ, it's also the start of the church's new year. It's a season where we ought to try and take some time out to prepare meaningfully. I'm a person who likes to be very organised and prepared, so Advent is a season that speaks to my heart.  
  
So, how can you prepare in Advent? Here's a  few suggestions:  
Pray more often, maybe join us for Evening Prayer on a Monday or Midday Prayer on a Wednesday  
Use the Diocesan Advent reflections book or a bible reading app on your phone like daily Bread  
Worship with others in church more often, receive communion weekly if you normally come monthly  
Have an Advent wreath, Advent calendar (Christian one as well as a chocolate one!) or Advent candle to remind you of the season and to focus more on God.  
Signup for the Posada and pray the short service that comes with it as you host Mary, Joseph and the donkey in your home.  
Join us for our Advent Quiet hour  
Pop into church for ten minutes or some quiet private prayer when you're passing. (Open Mon - Fri 8-5ish during school term time and Sundays 8.30-4.30ish)  
Set up a nativity scene in your home and pray as you do so.  
Listen to some Christmas carols and reflect on the message that they give  
Pray for the recipients of your Christmas cards or presents as you write them and wrap them  
Show God's love to others in practical ways: donate a toy to the Salvation Army Toy Appeal, buy Christmas food for the foodbank etc  
  
Whatever you do, please try and prepare spiritually and let's use this new liturgical season of Advent to review our actions and priorities and work to sustain and strengthen our relationship with God and one another.

With my love and prayers

Tracy