



"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawnedFor to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."#

Isaiah 9:2-6

Dear Friends

Advent is a season observed in the Christian church as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. During Advent it is common for Christians to read or reflect on specific Bible verses or passages that relate to the themes of hope, peace, joy, love, and light which are often symbolized by the Advent candles. We have again, this year, our circuit online zoom course **'They sang'**, which explores the four songs of the Christmas story. These give us all a chance to gather, reflect, pray together and read scripture, ending in the final week with the 'Blue Christmas' service led by Rachael at Tylers Green. This is a beautiful service of peaceful reflection and prayer, praying not only for ourselves and for those we love, but also for those places of conflict around the world that desperately need peace, love and hope and light. I encourage you to make time and space to attend if you can.

I am, and have been for the past 3 years, the Girls Brigade Chaplain at Flackwell Heath Methodist Church, something which I really enjoy. At our Harvest service this year we had two speakers come to talk to us from Embrace Middle East, both of whom I found really moving. Their daily 'Advent Reflections' book invites us during advent to pause and reflect on the question, ***'Where can we intentionally position the light of our faith to have maximum impact upon the darkness of the world?'*** This has really struck a chord with me. In this time of Advent and Christmas, when we are increasingly pulled in different directions with great causes demanding our time, and having both family and church responsibilities, we need to ask ourselves daily through Advent that question; ***'Where can we intentionally position the light of our faith to have maximum impact upon the darkness of the world?'***

I believe it is a really brave exercise to do. To be brave enough to say 'no' to some things, so that you can ***'intentionally position the light'***, is a lot to ask but the results, I believe, will be a more peaceful, purposeful celebration of the true meaning of Christmas.

My hope is that you all experience a peaceful and blessed Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year

Rev Kate Strange

Superintendent Minister High Wycombe Circuit