




## Sunday 1st December 2024 — Advent Sunday

### WORSHIP TODAY

9:00am St Peter, Bromyard Holy Communion  
 10:30am St Peter, Bromyard   
 4:00pm St Peter & St Paul, Stoke Lacy PM Praise

### COLLECT FOR ADVENT

Almighty God,  
 give us grace to cast away the works of darkness  
 and to put on the armour of light,  
 now in the time of this mortal life,  
 in which Your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;  
 that on the last day,  
 when He shall come again in His glorious majesty  
 to judge the living and the dead,  
 we may rise to the life immortal;  
 through Him who is alive and reigns with You,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

### TODAY'S READINGS – Advent Sunday

*Morning:* Jeremiah 33.14-16; Psalm 25.1-9  
 1 Thessalonians 3.9-13; Luke 21.25-36  
*Evening:* Psalm 9\*; Joel 3.9-21; Revelation 14.13 - 15.4  
 John 3.1-17

### REFLECTION FOR ADVENT SUNDAY

*While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. Luke 2:6-7 (NIV, 2011)*

Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem. The baby's about to arrive - but there's no room at the inn! So, Mary gives birth in a stable, surrounded by animals. Children act this out, it's depicted in artwork, and it features prominently on Christmas decorations and cards. Jesus is sidelined at birth.

The problem is – that's not the story: no stable is ever mentioned.

Does this matter? Unsurprisingly, yes. It shows we read the Bible through our lens of assumptions, culture, and tradition, rather than carefully reading the text. And so we don't see Jesus as He is.

Older editions of the Bible translate 'guest room' in Luke 2:7 as 'inn'. It describes a place of hospitality. That could be inns, but it could also be an upper room in someone's home.

What's more, we read 'manger' and immediately imagine a stable! After all, where do you keep animals? In the West, many of our animals live outside of the family home. So, we assume, that's where the manger was.

Our common understanding of the story has taken on a life of its own – the stable, that the 'three kings' visited Jesus in the stable – heck, even snow! It's all lowly cattle sheds, bleak midwinters, and babies that don't cry.

But what makes more sense?

Joseph is returning to his home town. He would have been received by family members, even if they weren't close relatives. If he didn't have friends or family, Joseph was from the family of King David. Surely, he would have been welcome in Bethlehem, the city of David?

And where was the manger? Most Palestinian families lived in a single-room house. There was a lower compartment for animals to use, and the family area had hollows in the ground filled with hay, where the animals fed. Visitors stayed in a separate back or upper room.

How does this fit? Well, because of the census, many travelled to Bethlehem. As a result, the guest room was already full. So, Mary and Joseph stayed in the main room of the house. And where's the most sensible place to put the newborn baby? In that hay-filled depression from which the animals fed.

What difference does this make? It means Jesus is born right in the thick of things, demanding our attention. Whereas the stable distances Jesus from us, this understanding of the story shows Jesus becoming one of us – which is what the incarnation is about. He came to be what we are. It makes sense that His birth took place in a normal, crowded, welcoming Palestinian home.

So, this Advent, I invite you to read this story with fresh eyes, ready to meet Jesus as He is.

*Rev David*

(Inspired by Rev Dr Ian Paul)

**Wednesday 4th December 2024**

10:00am St Peter, Bromyard Holy Communion

**Sunday 8th December 2024 - Advent 2**

10:30am St Peter, Bromyard Holy Communion

10:30am St Peter &amp; St Paul, Stoke Lacy Holy Communion

**READINGS – Advent 2***Morning:* Malachi 3.1-4; Philippians 1.3-11;  
Luke 1.68-79; Luke 3.1-6*Evening:* Psalms 75 [76]; Isaiah 40.1-11; Luke 1.1-25**PARENTS & TODDLERS**

We have an opportunity to start a Parents & Toddlers group from January. If you would be interested in helping with this, please chat to Rev Phil or Rev David.

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK**

We are looking to provide regular activities for children joining us at St Peter's. If you would be interested in helping with this, please talk to Rev Phil or Rev David. Volunteer's will need to do safeguarding training and have a DBS check.

**CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

In the run up to Christmas we have a number of services planned.

Saturday 14th December	4:00pm	St Peter, Bromyard	Bromyard Choral Society Concert
Sunday 15th December	6:30pm	St Peter & St Paul, Stoke Lacy	Carol Service
Tuesday 17th December	11:00am	Highwell House Care Home	Carol Service *
	2:00pm	Whitegates Care Home	Carol Service *
Wednesday 18th December	9:30am	St Peter, Bromyard	QE Yrs 7&8 Christmas Service
	7:00pm	Woodland Drive, Stoke Lacy	Carol Singing
Thursday 19th December	2:00pm	St Peter, Bromyard	St Peter's School Christmas Service
Friday 20th December	11:00am	Froome Bank Care Home	Carol Service *
Sunday 22nd December	3:00pm	Brockhampton Chapel	Carol Service
	3:00pm	Moreton Jeffries	Carol Service
	5:00pm	St Peter, Bromyard	Carol Service

\* *It would be lovely to have a group of church members joining us at our Care Homes*

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

Our Christmas services for this year will be:

Tuesday 24th December	11:30pm	St Peter, Bromyard	Midnight Communion
Wednesday 25th December	9:00am	Brockhampton Chapel	Christmas Communion
	10:00am	St Peter & St Paul, Stoke Lacy	Christmas Communion
	10:30am	St Peter, Bromyard	Christmas Communion

**QUIET WEEK / Annual Leave**

Rev Phil will be taking annual leave for a Quiet Week 9th-13th December.

**BROMYARD FOODBANK**

*Items urgently needed this week:*

**Food for diabetics, savoury biscuits, tinned meats, dried dog & cat food, tinned fruit, jam & spreads, pasta, tinned tomatoes, UHT milk, cereal, coffee, tinned big soup**

Foodbank are always willing to welcome potential new volunteers Please contact Emma Stapley or Rev Phil for more information.

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:**

Margaret Hamilton-Herbert, Iain Elliott, Colin & Adele Spain, Peder Nielson, Alan Seabrook, Helen Combe, Natalie Miller

*Recently bereaved:* the families of John Allan, Michael Farrell, Hilda Evans, Gillian Haines, Mary Caiger, Sylvia Darby, Philip Hodgeson, Phillip 'Rupert' Morris, Carolyn Cooper, Derek Hiles, Jeremy Holden, Alex Hoyle, Brenda 'Topsy' Bradford, Netti Evans, Claire Hollis

**CONTACTS**

**Revd Philip Miller** - Vicar (rest day—Monday)  
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**Revd David Hall** - Curate (rest day-Friday)  
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The Parish Office is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9:30am-12noon 01885 483749 [admin@stpetersbromyard.org.uk](mailto:admin@stpetersbromyard.org.uk)

Parish website: <https://stpetersbromyard.org.uk/>

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