

Rector's Letter - Rev'd Jeremy Trew - December 2024

Dear All

One of the important themes in the Christmas story is that of silence. The Gospel tells of Mary's silence being broken by the angel who appeared to her with world-shattering news, and then the long silence as the Baby grows in her womb. There is the night-time silence of the fields above Bethlehem which was shattered as angels appeared to tell the shepherds of the Child born in the stable, and, above all, the silence of God's action in bringing Jesus into the world, a silence which was broken by the cry of a newborn Baby.



Silence is characteristic of the way God works in our world. People who think they are important and mighty never do anything without making sure there will be a blaze of publicity, but God doesn't work like that in our world. When He came among us, it was not in a royal palace, as the Wise Men discovered, but in a stable; not among courtiers and glittering furniture but in a manger surrounded only by the beasts that were sheltered there. Jesus' coming was announced to a group of shepherds out in the fields, not in the corridors of power. God acts quietly, behind the scenes, and we need to be alert and watchful to recognize the truth of what is happening. I believe that we can detect the activity of God behind all sorts of events in our everyday lives - if we are prepared to stop and look and listen.

God acts in our lives through the love of those close to us, and He speaks to us through the events which go on around us, through the words of friends and colleagues, even in the silence of our own minds. The Christmas story reveals to us a God who is passionately concerned about what goes on in our world and in our own lives, a God who is constantly seeking to take the mess we make of things and to make something good out of it all. Today's world is full of the tragic consequences of evil, ignorance and stupidity, and God is looking for us to work with Him to sort it out. I believe that is one of the things we are talking about when we pray "Thy kingdom come" and if that prayer is to be real it needs to be accompanied by a willingness to get involved in the problems of our community, our nation and our world (as well as the difficulties and problems in our own lives) and try to identify God's solution and work together to attain it. There won't be flashing lights and trumpet blasts to rally us to the cause. God works silently behind the scenes, and challenges us to work with Him to make the world a better place. And Jesus shows us that love is the transforming power through which God seeks to achieve His purpose, love which can make all things new.

This is where the familiar Christmas story holds out hope for the world. If we want 2025 to be better than 2024, it is no use just waiting for a miracle to happen. The miracle has happened already - at Bethlehem, two thousand years ago. What is needed now is for us to take its message seriously, listen again to the promise of “peace to people of goodwill”, and make up our minds to do all we can in the spirit of goodwill to help build that peace of which the angels sang. It may seem a tall order, but we have to start somewhere, and for us that somewhere is here.

May God grant you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas, and many blessings in the coming New Year.

Best wishes

Jeremy

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