

**Third Sunday in Advent Dec 15th
2019**

Family Communion

**Isaiah 35 vs 1 to 4a
Matt 11 vs 2-10**

**In the name of the Father, Son and
Holy Spirit. Amen**

**We love the symbolism of Candel
at this time of year don't we: Light
in the Darkness, Triumph of Good
over Evil, Truth over Lies - All very
pretty - All very nice.**

**Now here's a question - that is not
perhaps quite as simple as it first
appears. When you light a candle -
does the darkness disappear?**

All of it? -Some of it? - None of it?

**OK - with candle-light you can see
your way through the darkness. But
the reality is the darkness doesn't
go away completely. (Not unless you
have a huge light).**

**For quite a few of us - perhaps more
than you might think - Christmas is
not a place of pretty candles but
actually one of darkness. That's the
reality. That's the honest truth.
(And if one can't be truthful in
church - where else is there?)**

**There are many reasons why we
might find this Advent and
Christmas season - a season of
darkness rather than one of light. I
wonder if I might have a honest
answer or two from you. Why do**

you think Christmas is dark for some people?

Loneliness

Grieving / Loss

Dysfunctional Families

Homelessness

Low mood - due to no sunlight

Poverty

In Prison

Looking forward to Christmas and the coming of Christ isn't always a comfortable thought. John the Baptist in our Gospel reading was certainly in a very dark place - Prison - and frankly - it didn't get any better for him did it. He began to doubt the very thing he had been prophesying - that he had been specially chosen to announce - That

Jesus - his cousin was in fact the Messiah. He wasn't sure any more. (Might be just how you're feeling right now) Jesus reassured him that he was and cited the signs and wonders as proof positive. Great things were happening to others, Christ had come - but John was - as they say - in a very dark place despite it all.

In St John's Gospel we read - 'The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out' - but sometimes it's all we can do, isn't it, to keep our eyes on that rather fragile light, that flickering candle and put one foot in front of the other and just about keep going.

This whole subject of the dark side of our lives we can't deal with in a 5

min Talk during a Family Communion. But let me ask you this and you can chew this one over at your leisure. Do you think God is in the darkness as well as the light?

And here's another little challenge for you. This Christmas don't run away from your dark side but acknowledge it, own it and - keep your eye on that light. And Secondly - be prepared to be that light for someone else this Christmas. Be aware that this season can be especially difficult - for all the reasons we mentioned earlier - and some - and be a light to someone else- in their darkness.

So the Advent Candle shines in the Darkness and the Darkness doesn't

overcome it - but neither does that Darkness go away completely - for the time being. In Advent we also look forward also to the second coming of Christ and there's much speculation about what that will be like. Here's another thought for you to ponder. I think it will be like this - Light without any darkness at all. No more sadness, no more tears, or if there are tears they will be tears of joy. I really look forward to that time.

I want to finish with an Advent Credo, which you can join me in please. It's on your service sheet.

It's an affirmation of Truth contrasted with Untruths. Goodness knows we need to affirm Truth at the moment don't we. It's a bit

about light and darkness - if you like.

Will you please read the bold print with me. I will read the ordinary unbolded lines.

Let's pause a minute and be still before God.

It is not true that creation and the human family are doomed to destruction and loss—

This is true: For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life;

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction—

This is true: I have come that they may have life, and that abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred should have the last word, and that war and destruction rule forever—

This is true: Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, the Everlasting, the Prince of peace.

So let us enter Advent in hope. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith and with courage: Jesus Christ—the Light of the World.

