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**Weekly Letter – 7 December 2025**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF**



**Matthew 1:18-25**

**'Don't be afraid'**

Last week we started our journey to Christmas, catching up with those who have had their tree up since Halloween. We are journeying in our imagination with those on their way to Bethlehem: Mary and Joseph; the Shepherds; and the wise men. They were guided by a Roman decree; the angels; and a star and words from the prophet Micah – God uses many ways to get us to the right place at the right time.

We should perhaps add the journeys the angels make as God's messengers, coming from God to people. The angel comes to Zechariah to say he will have a son and should call him John, but first the angel says, 'Don't be afraid!'. The angel visits Mary to tell her she will have a son and should call him Jesus, but as Mary was deeply troubled, the angel says, 'Don't be afraid!'. An angel appeared to the shepherds, and they were terribly afraid, so the angel says, 'Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people.' Maybe the angels were scary. Maybe the message they brought was scary. Either way, the angels don't get far with their message before saying, 'Don't be afraid.'

Those are examples from Luke's gospel, but it's there in Matthew's gospel in this week's passage. An angel appears to Joseph in a dream and says, 'Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife.' There were plenty of things to be afraid of: what the rest of the town would think, and what they might do; losing his reputation for doing the right thing; facing the birth of a baby before they were ready; and how the baby would save people from their sins. The angels say, 'Don't be afraid,' because fear is natural in the circumstances.

There may be many things that cause fear in us. When we are in the midst of it, we may not be able to hear the message, 'Don't be afraid,' but it is part of God's message to us. As Paul writes in Romans 8:38, nothing can separate us from the love of God which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. Sit a moment with what message you are receiving now, ask God to help you know that he is near.

*Simon*

**Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Simon Walkling. We will celebrate Communion. Bible Readings: Matthew 1: 18-25; Exodus 6: 2-8.**

**Cycle of Prayer in the Region – we will pray for Christ Well**

**Saturday 6th December at 11.00 to 12.00. 'Coffee & Mince Pies'**

You are invited to attend this meeting if you would like to, to share ideas for next year's Church and Community Fun Day? Unlike this year, next year's event will be a Christ Well Church event.

**Tuesday – 9<sup>th</sup> December - Tea and Chat - 12 noon – Christmas Lunch in Manselton Hotel**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December - Advent discussions – 3pm in the Lounge**

Please join us on Wednesday for a time of reflection and conversation about advent themes.

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December** - There will be conversation at 7pm on Zoom (the link will be in that week's news sheet).

**Invites for the Carol Service**

We will be continuing our journey to Christmas with **Carols by Candlelight at 6pm on 21<sup>st</sup> December.**

Invites are now available. Please think about who you might invite to join us and take an invite for them.

Pease pray for those who have been invited between now and the service.

**ADVENT PRAYER FOR HOPE AND PEACE**

**Dear Heavenly Father**

Heavenly Father, in this sacred season of Advent, we come before You with hearts both hopeful and heavy. We seek to prepare ourselves for the coming of Your Son, Jesus Christ who brings light into our darkness and hope into our uncertainties.

Lord we lift up those who are struggling during this time, especially those burdened by financial worries. We ask that You grant them peace amidst their anxiety and comfort in their struggles. Help them to remember that the true spirit of Christmas lies not in material gifts but in love, connection, and the joy of giving from the heart.

May Your grace surround them, providing support through family, friends, and community. Inspire us all to reach out with kindness and generosity, sharing what we have to lift one another up.

As we light the Advent candles, may each flame remind us of the light of Christ, illuminating our paths and guiding us toward hope and joy. Help us to embrace the true meaning of this season celebrating the gift of Your love and the promise of new beginnings. In Your holy name we pray. **Amen.**

