

For Christians, Advent Sunday is the start of a new year. The word Advent means “coming”, and it is the season when we think about Christ’s coming, and pray that we may recognize and welcome him. While Advent is a time of preparation for celebrating the coming of Christ at Christmas, it also reminds us that Christ comes in many ways—in the sacraments and the scriptures, surely, but also in the events of ordinary life, and in other people. Advent also looks forward to the fulfilment of God’s purposes at the end of time. The great themes of this solemn and yet joyful season are anticipation and watchfulness.

Here at St Leonard’s we have many ideas as to how this can be a time of renewal and spiritual growth.

First – this is a time when we can renew our regular life of worship, which must be the foundation of our lives. On the four Sundays of Advent there is a special theme or event, and we have many weekday services. Full details are in this leaflet.

Secondly – this is a time when we can grow in prayer. To this end, we have produced some prayer cards, entitled “Not I, but Christ.” These contain a simple seasonal prayer and a prayer for our parish. We hope that all members of St Leonard’s will find these helpful. However, to maintain the cycle we would like a different person to volunteer to commit to offer these prayers each day of Advent. Please sign the rota at the back of the church. The prayers prepare us for Christmas, and for the New Year, when we will need to engage with the fullness of the meaning of stewardship.

Thirdly – this is a time when we can grow in our knowledge of the Bible. We are providing for all members of the congregation a copy of “Your journey to Christmas.” While this is a Roman Catholic publication, it includes excellent reflections for each day of Advent. These are based on the Common Lectionary, which is shared by most Christian traditions, as well as other interesting articles.

Finally – this is a time when we can deepen our knowledge of our faith. In addition to devotional articles, our bookstall contains a good selection of books which will help us use Advent as a time of real preparation for Christmas. Please see if there is something there that will be of value to you.

Let us allow this Advent to be a true new beginning in our life, as individual Christians, and as a Christian community.