

**Weekly Devotions  
South Holburn Church  
30th November 2021**

**READINGS**

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
will accomplish this.

*Isaiah 9: 6-7 (New International Version)*

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*John 1: 9-42 (New International Version)*

## REFLECTION

As we begin Advent, our thoughts turn to preparations for Christmas and my least favourite part of the whole Christmas season – buying presents. I really struggle with buying Christmas presents! Every now and then I have a flash of inspiration, and I think of a great gift for someone. But the problem is when the next year comes around, you have to have **another** flash of inspiration!

Actually, for me it's the same when someone asks me "What do you want for Christmas?". "I don't know." is my usual reply. I'm not being coy, or polite, the truth is I don't have a clue what I want!

I wonder, what's the best Christmas gift you have ever given? And what's the greatest gift you have received?

Back in 1891, Robert Louis Stevenson, author of such classics as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Kidnapped*, gave a rather odd gift to the daughter of a friend of his. This friend, Henry Ide, once joked that Christmas was not the happiest day of the year in his household. His fourteen-year-old daughter, Annie, had been born on Christmas, and she always complained that she got cheated out of a separate birthday party. So Robert Louis Stevenson came up with the idea of giving her his birthday. He drew up a legal document transferring all the "rights and privileges" of his birthday, which fell on November 13th, to Miss Annie H. Ide. And it became legal, from that day forward, Annie celebrated her birthday on 13th November.

What a wonderful gift! But it's not an original idea! Long before Robert Louis Stevenson, Jesus came to earth to live as one of us. When he was born in that stable, when he died on that cross,

He transferred all his rights and privileges to his followers! He gave us the "rights and privileges" of the same relationship with God that he had. He gave us the rights and privilege of being not just God's creations, but also God's children. Jesus transferred his family rights to us, so that we too can be sons and daughters of God.

Christmas is a special time: It's special for families, it's special for gifts and an attitude of giving, it's special for the sense of hope that is in the air. But above all else, it is special because the Christ child we celebrate, offers to us hope and a promise beyond our wildest dreams - a gift we could never imagine - He offers to us friendship with God.

## PRAYER

God,  
Light of all the world,  
As we enter the season of Advent  
We look to you for loving care.

Amidst all the preparations  
And all the present buying,  
May we remember the greatest present of all  
The birth of Jesus

The Light which shines in the darkness.

And may we discover for ourselves again,  
The love you show to each person,  
The hope that you give in life,  
The promise that we are always loved,  
And always welcome in your company.

In Jesus name we offer our prayers,  
Amen.

