



Rev Dave Brown
Rector of St Nicholas Stevenage & St Mary Graveley
2a North Road, Stevenage, Herts. SG1 4AT
Tel: 01438 213587
[Email: revdmbrown@gmail.com](mailto:revdmbrown@gmail.com)



Briefing 91: Wednesday 24th November, 2021.

Dear friends,

For most of the country the season of Advent is little more than an excuse to eat chocolate every day as we countdown to Christmas. But in the church, and despite the people represented by the candles of the Advent wreath, the true focus of Advent is not Jesus' arrival as a baby in Bethlehem, but on his return; his second coming. The two advents of Jesus are vastly different

Jesus' first arrival was done quietly; when he returns, trumpets will sound and every eye will see him.

Jesus' first arrival was for a short time only; when he returns, he will never leave.

Jesus' first arrival was humble; just a babe laid in a manger. When he returns, he will be clothed with glory.

At Jesus' first arrival, some ignored him, some opposed him; when he returns every knee will bow to him.

Jesus' first arrival marked the opening of an invitation to repent and believe the good news, and so receive God's free gift of eternal life. When Jesus returns it will be as judge, and those who have rejected him will find that it is too late to change their minds.

We don't often think in those terms, but we should. It's a truth we declare together every time we say the Apostles' Creed, it is the endpoint to which history itself is moving, and as Christians, this truth should inspire us to live out and speak out our faith with urgency and boldness. That's why over the 4 Sundays of Advent this year we are thinking about the character of the King we are waiting for. We'll consider the holiness of King Jesus, and the almighty power of King Jesus; but we will also consider that he is a king whose character is marked by unending love and gentleness. My hope is that these 4 Sundays will get us ready to celebrate Jesus' first coming, and to equip us to live more in the light of his second coming.

Grace and peace,

Dave

IMPORTANT STUFF – DON'T JUST GLANCE- TAKE IT ALL IN!

COVID PROTOCOLS: A reminder - If you sit in a **masked** area of the church, please keep your face coverings on for the whole service. If you'd rather sit without a mask, please sit in the 'mask free' areas provided.

PARKING at St NICHOLAS: If you are able to walk easily, please consider **NOT** parking your car directly outside the church, but a little way up the road, to save the spaces for those who really need them. Thank you.

NOTES FROM ST NICHOLAS PCC: St Nicholas PCC met on Tuesday night. After beginning with a time of worship and reflecting on one of the 39 articles, the PCC received an update on our Mission Action Plan and spent time working on a new mission statement to better sum up our purpose and vision. This will be finalised at an away day in January.

We also approved Covid protocols for our Christmas services – details of which were agreed, and we spent some time discussing and renewing our commitment to safeguarding and reapproving our policy. If you have never read our safeguarding policy, you can find it here: [Safeguarding – St Nicholas Church \(saintnicholaschurch.org.uk\)](http://saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)

We also received reports from the Rector, the church wardens, CTiS, and from our Deanery reps. Jason Cox, our treasurer, gave us a financial update and together we agreed our draft budget for 2022. More details to follow!

Prayer is the engine room of the church. It's how we show we are dependent on God, and the means through which God works in his church and world. WON'T YOU COME AND JOIN US?

Tuesday mornings 7am-8am: 30/11, 7/12 **Wednesday evenings 7:45pm-9pm:** 1/12, 15/12

PRAYER GATHERING: Wednesday 1st December 7:45pm in St Nicholas church. We'll begin with sung worship, hear from God's word and spend time praying together for the Christmas Journey and for our personal renewal, the mission and outreach of the church, the world, our government and those in need. Come in person or ask for a Zoom link to join online. If you can't make the meeting, a prayer guide for the Christmas Journey is attached.

Private Prayer in St Nicholas church THIS WEEK and NEXT WEEK.

Tuesday 23rd from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 24th from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 25th from 10am - 12noon.

Tuesday 30th from 2pm-4pm, Wednesday 1st from 12noon-2pm, + Thursday 2nd from 10am - 12noon

READINGS FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS: The readings for the next 3 weeks are as follows:

28th November: Revelation 1:4-18 5th December: 1 John 4:7-12 12th December: Colossians 1: 15-20

BIBLE BY THE BEACH: Would you enjoy a few days of great Bible teaching in a beautiful part of the country? Come to Bible by the Beach next May. Details are here! [Bible by the Beach 2022 - Bible by the Beach](#) or on the leaflets in church. If you would like to go, do let Mike or Evelyn know. Just 1 more person required to get a group discount!

RACHAEL AND BERNIE MULUUTA: Send a Christmas card to our mission partners in Uganda by using the form here: [Christmas cards | Crosslinks](#)



CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARDS: To help us all save money (and paper!) would someone in both churches like to volunteer to create a large (A3 or larger size) Christmas card which we could all sign to send our Christmas greetings to each other. The money saved could then be sent to our mission partners as an extra Christmas gift. Could you do this? Talk to Dave asap.

GENERAL SYNOD: The newly elected General Synod met last week. Some interesting reflections on some of the discussions can be found here: [Three vital statistics from General Synod | Psephizo](#)

SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE COMING DAYS



GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH - 18-30s Social: Saturday 27th November from 6:30 – 9pm at Grace Community Church, Hydean Way – come along for a fun evening with a version of 'The Cube' – drinks and desserts provided! Please let Matthew & Jo Dear know on dearszg@fastmail.net if you'd like to attend so they have an idea of numbers.

GOING DEEPER: SHOULD ONLY MEN LEAD CHURCHES AND PREACH? Following the recent sermon on 1 Timothy 2 and 3 a few weeks ago, both PCCs have suggested a follow up session to examine the Biblical material in more detail and to allow time for questions and discussion. This will held be on **SUNDAY NIGHT from 7pm**. Come along.

ST NICHOLAS DOOR-TO-DOOR TEAM: The team has paused its door-to-door visits, but they will now be running a hot chocolate stand at church on Thursday afternoons between 3 and 4 PM. Please pray for their conversations with dog walkers, and schoolchildren on their way home.

ST NICHOLAS DAY: From 1:15 to 2:15 (ish) on Saturday 4th December, we will once again be leading some carol singing at the St Nicholas shops as part of the St Nicholas Day celebrations. The event runs from 1:30 to 4:30pm, but the opening ceremony will only be about 40 minutes long. Please let Dave know if you will come and sing with us. Local schools will sing and there will be refreshments and activities afterwards in the community centre.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY BRASS BAND- Christmas Concert in aid of Bridgebuilders Christian Trust. Saturday 4th December, in St Nicholas Church. Tickets £7:50- pay on the door. Come along and bring your friends!

ST NICHOLAS WALKING GROUP: The next walk will be from the White Lion at Walkern on Thursday 2nd December commencing at 10.00am from the pub. The walk will be approximately 5 miles and will take in the Beane Valley. If you'd like to enjoy a meal at the pub afterwards, do speak to Karen Cattell asap.