

View from the pew

Richard Toyn

Advent is the first season of the liturgical year. Advent from the Latin word *adventus* means "arrival" or "coming").

Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Traditionally observed as a "fast", it focuses on preparation for the coming of Christ not only the coming of the Christ-child at Christmas, but also, in the first weeks, making Advent "a period for devout and joyful expectation".

At All Saints', the beginning of Advent marked by the Advent Carol Service on 3rd December, is the beginning of an intense period of activities within the church. During most days, there are rehearsals, concerts or services, with further concerts in the evening.

It is good to see the church being used by so many people, groups and organisations throughout the community – primary, junior and senior schools, the Fire and Police, as well as other organisations for concerts.

Grateful thanks go to all members of the church who help to open the church and act as vergers for these events. Full details of these services and concerts are on pages 5-7 and in the December diary on page 9.

The traditional Twelve Days of Christmas begin with Christmas Eve and continue until the Feast of Epiphany. The actual Christmas season continues until the Feast of the Baptism of Christ which is celebrated on the Sunday after January 6, or the following Monday if that Sunday is Epiphany.

The end of Christmas season is February 2nd, or the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas. This feast marks the 40 days of rest Mary took before being purified and presenting her first-born son to the Temple in Jerusalem.

In medieval times, Candlemas Eve (Feb. 1st) was the day when all Christmas

decorations, including the Christmas Tree and the Nativity scene were taken down.

However, the tradition of ending Christmas season on Candlemas has slowly waned, except in some pockets of the Hispanic world where Candlemas (or La Fiesta de la Candelaria) is still an important feast and the official end of the Christmas season.

All the events throughout the seasons of Advent and Christmas are seen by many as a period of joy and celebration.

Please be mindful that this period for some people is seen as period of sadness and loneliness, for those who are separated from loved ones, especially for the first time at Christmas.

Wishing you a time of joy, peace and contemplation.

Richard.



Somebody sat in Minnie Hyssop's pew