

# Sunday 13th December—Advent 3

## Rev'd Phyl Fanning

### Readings

Isaiah 61:1-11

John 1:6-8, 19-28

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

“Like a flicker in the darkness, Comes a Mother’s desperate cry  
Then a baby’s voice in answer, Brings the coming of the light.”

Gaudete Sunday (Rose Candle)

Greetings. Most of you will not know me yet. My name is Phyl and I have been living in Moreton since the middle of September. It is very strange for me this year preparing for this season, not only because of the Covid 19 but also because I have retired and unexpectedly returned to settle down in a town I left 50 years ago.

Over the last forty years on this particular Sunday I would have been lighting a rose coloured candle on an Advent Wreath in whichever churches I was serving as minister at that time. This year I am not. I am no longer a presbyter in pastoral charge.

In medieval times, Advent was a time of fasting to help people focus on the second coming of Christ and was a time of penitence, of remembering why Christ was sent by God to the world. Isaiah the prophet says that his purpose was:

*“ to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called the oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory”.*(Isaiah 61:3)

This is the message that he is called to give to a people who are struggling and questioning.

I walked along Mockbeggar wharf and took two photographs, one of the lighthouse at Leasowe and one a short distance towards Meols of a boat wrecked and almost buried in mud.

I looked at the boat and felt that it was describing the situation that we feel we are in today ... the wreckage of so many dreams .. things having gone wrong ... looking back at what might have been ... the sense of giving up and being abandoned.

I then thought about the lighthouse. It stopped operating almost a hundred years ago as the Rock channel for which it was a marker slowly disappeared. But today although no longer operating in the way for which it was built, it has been restored and has a new purpose and is standing firm and true. Hope led to a new beginning.

Gaudete Sunday is a day to think of the joy of restoration, that there is something new and good coming and we look forward to this in the coming of Christ.

Our third candle, the rose candle is the candle of joy.



## Sunday 13th

Light a candle in the darkness  
Light a candle in the night  
Let the love of Jesus light us  
Light a candle in the night.

Like a flicker in the darkness  
Comes a Mother's desperate cry  
Then a baby's voice in answer  
Brings the coming of the light.

Light a candle ...

He did not come in wealth and grandeur  
He did not stand with those of power  
He had no status to commend him  
He was homeless - he was poor

Light a candle ...

But he came to heal the wounded  
And he came to heal the scars  
Of a world that's bruised and broken  
Where the image has been marred.

Light a candle ...

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### Prayer

Prepare our hearts  
and remove the sadness  
that hinders us from feeling  
the joy and hope  
which his presence  
will bestow.  
Come, Lord Jesus  
We await your coming  
Come, O Lord  
Amen

Light a candle in the darkness  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0agQyxTVwY>

We pray for those who are fearful of silence because of memories that flood their being.

We remember those whose lives scream out for silence - silence and stillness from the everyday life.



YouTube

Wirral Methodist Churches  
New Song Wirral



Wirral Methodist Churches  
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