*For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this*

 *.—ISAIAH 9:6-7*

*From the Pastor's Desk*

*Greetings friends,*

I love Advent. I love its themes of hope and expectation, its call to stay awake and prepare. I love the vastness of the vision it holds out for our pondering- creation renewed and reconciled; justice, peace and mercy met together; and all flesh seeing God’s salvation. In this season I imagine our biblical ancestors gathered together in the dark and cold around a glowing fire: singing and telling stories, dreaming and watching in the night. Advent stirs our heart’s’ longings, from the deeply personal to our yearnings for the whole human family and our planet itself.

But I ask..….What are you yearning for this Advent?

The news is full of violence and war, weather extremes, political conflict, rising costs and human despair. The demands of the holiday season often stir our personal griefs, our losses and our family estrangements too but..…we pray, we work, and we hope for the coming anew of Emmanuel, God with us. We hope for the joy and wonder of Christmas, and the birth of Love in our lives and our world.

What a gift it is to come together at London Road West in this beautiful but sometimes difficult season, especially after 2 years of battling Covid. We come together to watch and prepare, to sing and pray, and to share Advent in community once again. And what a gift to welcome Christ among us. For Christ comes, whether we are ready or not, whether our shopping is done and our tree decorated, whether or not we are feeling the merriment of the season.

Christ was born in a time of anxiety, oppression and danger, to a poor family far from home. Christ is born among us, tender and vulnerable, in a world in need of a Saviour.

We do not know how the mystery happens, but by God’s grace, it does. The incarnate Word, God with us, is born anew, and dwells among us, loving us immeasurably and inviting us to love with all our hearts. Christmas comes once more.

Advent and Christmas can be deeply meaningful times for each of us as we worship, wait and celebrate together. We have included a *Calendar of Upcoming Events* for the season here at LRW. I hope you will receive them as a gift for your soul and join us as you are able.

Blessings of this *Holy Season* to all,

*Pastor Roxanne*