REVD MARK'S DAILY DEVOTIONALS #284 22ND – 26TH DECEMBER 2025

MONDAY

REVD MARK TALKS ABOUT THE CHAOS OF OUR LIVES, ESPECIALLY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. OUR CHOIR AND CHILDREN'S NATIVITY YESTERDAY WAS A BIT LIKE THAT, YET, THROUGH IT ALL THE WONDERFUL MESSAGE OF CHRIST BORN TO US SHONE THROUGH IT ALL. THE CHOIR WERE WONDERFUL TOO AND THE WARMTH OF THE EVENT WAS EVEN MORE PALPABLE THAN THE HEAT OF ALL THE CANDLES. WHAT A BLESSING.

22nd December - Morning all... Have you noticed how quickly our plans unravel at this time of year? A cancelled delivery, a changed gathering, someone unwell, something forgotten. December has a way of exposing how tightly we like to hold control, especially when everything is meant to feel perfect. We picture calm, joy, and order… and instead we find ourselves juggling, adjusting, and sighing under our breath. I know for me, it's often in these moments when the diary shifts or the carefully laid plans wobble that frustration creeps in. Yet Christmas gently reminds us that God has never relied on perfect conditions to do His greatest work. The first Christmas was anything but well planned. A census forced travel at the worst possible time. A heavily pregnant woman made a long, uncomfortable journey. No room at the inn. A stable instead of a sanctuary. And yet, right in the middle of inconvenience and disruption, God was perfectly at work. "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born." (Luke 2:6) God didn't wait for ideal conditions. He didn't pause the plan until things were calmer, cleaner, or more comfortable. He entered the mess and redeemed it from the inside. As Elisabeth Elliot once wrote, "God never wastes a hurt." Even the chaos, even the disappointment, even the things that feel unfair or ill-timed are not beyond His redeeming hand. Perhaps today is a reminder that God is not absent from your disruptions. The delays, the detours, the disappointments may not be obstacles to His purposes, they may be the very place He is choosing to meet you. And in that place, just as in a Bethlehem stable, He is still bringing life, hope, and light into the world.

Revd Mark Spiers

TUESDAY

ON SUNDAY I PREACHED ABOUT ADVENT'S INVISIBLE MAN - JOSEPH. REVD MARK REMINDED ME THAT I ALSO MADE SOMEONE'S DAY TODAY. I WAS AT CHURCH WAITING FOR THE ARRIVAL OF THE DAUGHTER OF THE LATE ANN FLETCHER. OUR SLIMMING GROUP HAD JUST FINISHED AND I OVERHEARD A RATHER DISTRESSED LADY SAYING SHE HAD SUFFERED THE QUEUES AT THE SUPERMARKET AND HAD FORGOTTEN THE CRANBERRY SAUCE AND COULDN'T FACE THE QUEUES AGAIN. TO HER DELIGHT I PRODUCED ONE FROM OUR KITCHEN CUPBOARD. SHE WAS SO PLEASED SHE FLUNG HER ARMS AROUND MY NECK AND GAVE ME A BIG HEARTFELT HUG. AFTER WHICH, I ASKED HER IF THERE WAS ANYTHING ELSE SHE HAD FORGOTTEN! ONE HAS TO TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY THESE DAYS.

23rd December – Morning all, most of us won't do anything extraordinary today. We'll tidy, cook, work, travel, queue, wait. We'll deal with emails, traffic, to-do lists, and the quiet pressure of trying to get everything done before Christmas arrives. Ordinary things, on an ordinary December day. And yet, this is exactly the soil God loves to work in. The Christmas story isn't just filled with angels and announcements; it's carried forward by ordinary faithfulness. Joseph doesn't say much in the story. In fact, he says nothing at all. No recorded prayers. No speeches. No songs. But he shows up. He obeys. He protects. He stays when walking away would have been easier. "Joseph did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him." (Matthew 1:24) Joseph reminds us that faithfulness rarely feels dramatic. It doesn't trend. It doesn't draw applause. It often looks like getting up, doing the next right thing, and trusting God with outcomes we cannot see. There's no spotlight on Joseph, but heaven notices every quiet act of obedience. In a world that celebrates visibility and recognition, God quietly builds His purposes on people who keep saying yes when no one is watching. People who choose integrity over convenience, love over ease, obedience over explanation. These are the unseen threads God weaves into His greater story. So, if today feels unremarkable, take heart. Your faithfulness matters more than you know. God often does His most remarkable work through people who simply keep walking, step by step, trusting Him with what lies ahead, even when the road feels ordinary, and the impact feels unseen.

Revd Mark Spiers

WEDNESDAY – CHRISTMAS EVE

HOPEFULLY, YOU ARE ALL READY FOR THE SPECIAL DAY TOMORROW. I, LIKE SO MANY OTHERS, WILL BE VISITING THE SHOPS TODAY FOR THOSE LAST-MINUTE BITS AND BOBS. EVERYTHING IS PREPARED IN CHURCH FOR TONIGHT'S HOLY COMMUNION BY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE - ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE SERVICES OF THE SEASON. IF YOU WANT TO JOIN IN, YOU ARE WELCOME TO DO SO, IN PERSON, OR BY TUNING-IN TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE - IT WILL BE BEAMED LIVE AT 11:30pm.

24th December – Morning all... Every year it happens the same way. We plan for weeks, we prepare with care, and then Christmas Eve arrives, faster than expected and heavier than imagined. And just like the inn in Bethlehem, we can find ourselves with no room left, not because we don't care, but because we're already so full. Tucked inside all the busyness is a quiet question we don't always stop to ask: Is there room for Jesus? "There was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7) The tragedy of this verse isn't really about space, it's about priority. God arrived quietly, humbly, without demand or drama. Not because He wasn't present, but because hearts and homes were already full. Full of expectation. Full of noise. Full of other things that felt urgent at the time. I'm struck by how close Bethlehem was to missing the miracle entirely, not through hostility, but through distraction. And I recognise that in myself. Even with the best intentions, it's possible to carry Christ in our calendars, our carols, and our traditions… yet struggle to carry Him in our stillness. The Grinch, of all characters, stumbled onto something profoundly true when he realised, "Maybe Christmas… perhaps… means a little bit more." Christmas has always meant more than the wrapping, the rushing, and the rehearsed routines. It means God choosing closeness. God choosing to dwell with us. Christmas Eve invites us to pause and make space, not physically, but spiritually. Space to listen. Space to breathe. Space to welcome Christ again, not as a seasonal symbol, but as Lord of our hearts and lives. So tonight, before the lights and laughter, before the final preparations and the familiar traditions, why not whisper this simple, honest prayer: "Lord, make Yourself at home in me." That prayer more than anything else, makes room for the miracle.

Revd Mark Spiers

THURSDAY – CHRISTMAS DAY

Today, as we kneel in wonder before the mystery of the Word made flesh, may our hearts be renewed by the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. I pray that the light of his birth will dwell richly among you, bringing comfort, hope, and peace, and that the blessing of the Incarnate Lord will remain with you throughout Christmas and the year to come.

Christmas Day – Merry Christmas to you all.

This morning, children will tear into wrapping paper, adults will smile at gifts they didn't expect, and homes will echo with noise, laughter, and perhaps a little chaos. These moments are beautiful, but they are not the miracle. They are only the setting. Right in the middle of it all, Christmas speaks a quiet but earth-shaking truth: God has come near. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:14) Not distant. Not detached. Not shouting instructions from heaven. God stepped into human skin. Into vulnerability. Into hunger, exhaustion, misunderstanding, and tears. He entered our world exactly as it is - broken, beautiful, complicated, and aching for hope. The miracle of Christmas is not just that Jesus was born, but where and why. Born into poverty. Born into uncertainty. Born to parents with questions, fears, and very little control over their circumstances. He was born this way so no one could ever say, "God doesn't understand my life." Whatever this year has held for you, grief or joy, weariness or hope, disappointment or gratitude, Christmas declares that none of it is faced alone. God did not wait for us to get it together. He came while we were still confused, still hurting, still searching. That baby in the manger did not stay a baby. He grew into a man who would walk dusty roads, touch the untouchable, forgive the guilty, carry our sorrows, and willingly stretch out His arms on a cross. The cradle already points toward the cross, and the cross points toward an empty tomb. This is a God who doesn't just visit pain; He redeems it. So today, pause, let the noise fade for just a moment. The greatest gift has already been given, not wrapped in paper, but wrapped in flesh. "You shall call his name Immanuel - which means, God with us." (Matthew 1:23) God with us - in the mess, in the joy, in the ordinary, and in the pain. God with us when faith feels strong, and when it barely feels present at all. And if your heart is open today, Christmas is quietly asking a question in return: Will you receive Him? That's good news worth celebrating, not just today, but with your whole life.

Revd Mark Spiers

FRIDAY – BOXING DAY

REVD MARK TALKS ABOUT TAKING DOWN THE DECORATIONS - MINE WILL STAY A LITTLE LONGER BECAUSE I ONLY PUT THEM UP A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO!

26th December - Morning all, Boxing Day has a very different feel, doesn't it? The wrapping paper is in bags, the leftovers are stacked in the fridge, and the house is quieter, or at least tired. The anticipation has passed, the big moment is over, and life begins to edge back towards normal. It's often in moments like this that faith is quietly tested. Not in the celebration, but in what comes after. The shepherds, after seeing the baby Jesus, didn't stay in the stable. They returned to the fields. Same jobs. Same routines. Same responsibilities, but something within them had changed. "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen." (Luke 2:20) They carried Christmas back into ordinary life. Worship didn't stay in the moment; it walked with them into the everyday. Boxing Day reminds us that faith isn't just for holy days and special services. It's for washing up, quiet conversations, slow walks, and tired hearts. The real work of Christmas is not just celebrating that Christ has come but living differently because He has. As we step back into routine, may we do so with hearts that still echo with praise, carrying the presence of Christ into whatever today holds. Christmas doesn't end when the decorations come down. It continues in how we live, one ordinary day at a time.

Revd Mark Spiers