

Dear Friends,  
Advent. The time of preparing, but for what? To get the best deals on Black Friday, or if you missed that, in many places spilling over into Grey Saturday, Mauve Sunday, and Blue Monday. Enormous discounts on offer which always make me wonder, if really goods can be sold that cheap, why can't we buy them at the same price every day of every year? Would make life a whole lot easier...

Thought for  
the weak



with the Rev Preben  
Andersen

Advent. Preparing, and for Christians a time when we remember the first Christmas, the birth of Jesus, and at the same time look forward to His coming again as promised in the Bible. For Margaret and me, this time of preparation has taken many forms already, from being able to attend the Festival of Remembrance at Royal Albert Hall (courtesy of the British Legion), to witnessing the switching on the lights in our town, to preparing for the Christmas market on Saturday (as I am writing), to getting down to thinking about the numerous services about to happen in our churches. And this seriously begins tonight, as you read this piece, with our annual Light Up A Life service by St David's Hospice Care, which is always a moving and heart-warming experience.

Losing a loved one is always hard, but losing one in the lead-up to Christmas can be almost impossible to cope with. This is where Light Up A Life, where like-minded people come together to find but the smallest flicker of hope and warmth and love, and where those who mourn can know that they are not on their own, and hopefully, prayerfully find just that small flicker of perseverance and ability to come to terms and move on that this service provides.

Advent. Preparing. This is not, or should not be, a commercial thing. It should be an opportunity for us all to put the Christ child back into Christmas. I do not like the abbreviation Xmas. It takes away Christ, although, in view of what I have just written, it may also remind some of the Cross (the X), on which He died, and the pain of which many will feel very deeply this Christmas time. My prayers are with you all, and thank you for bearing with me month by month. May the peace of Christmas and the promise of a good and prosperous New Year be real to each and everyone, in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Rev Preben Andersen**