

## **A Christmas message from Rev Ruth**

The season of Christmas is upon us once more. Advent is a time of waiting, of preparation, of eagerly looking forward to celebrating the birth of Christ. Christmas is of course about the incarnation when we remember that God, the Creator of the universe took on human flesh and was born as a tiny baby to live amongst us as one of us. It's so special, so astonishing if you take a moment to really think about it.

Let's remember though that Christ was born into poverty and not placed to sleep in a warm, cosy cot but in a dirty, smelly animal's feeding trough. Throughout his life Jesus understood what it meant to have little in the way of material wealth.

New research from the Institute for Fiscal studies predicts an increase of more than a million in the number of children living in poverty in Britain in the next five years as a result of universal credit and less generous tax credits. The steepest increases are likely to be in the most deprived parts of the country.

So, what do I really want for Christmas this year?

What do you really want for Christmas this year?

Personally speaking I'm looking forward to spending Christmas with my family again in the beautiful surroundings of leafy Hampshire. I do hope, however, that I will also take time to remember that Christ was born not just for the privileged few like me but for all people and perhaps most especially for those for whom life is particularly tough at the moment.

Into the forgotten places, as into the stable may Christ's birth this year bring hope into the lives of those who are struggling to make ends meet, caution into the lives of those who hold the most power, rest into the lives of the weary but most of all peace and joy to the whole world.

Wishing you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas and a very happy new year.

Love and prayers,

**Rev Ruth Fry**