

Friends

This Sunday marks the 1st Sunday of Advent. Today we will light the first of the Advent candles, the candle associated with Hope. The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is a partnership between The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. Its purpose is to help the Churches to work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, speaking and acting on public policy issues. JPIT has six hopes for society:

- A just economy that enables the flourishing of all life
- A society where the poorest and most marginalised are at the centre
- A world that actively works for peace
- A planet where our environment is renewed
- A society that welcomes the stranger
- A politics characterised by listening, kindness and truthfulness.

As we pray for hope this week, let us pray for a world that is informed by these hopes which speak to Kingdom values. When Christ said, "I am come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10) he is surely speaking to these hopes. When we are told in Psalm 82:3 "Uphold the cause of the poor" the psalmist is surely speaking to these hopes. When Matthew reports Jesus as saying "Blessed are the Peacemakers (Matthew 5:9), he is speaking to these hopes. When Paul writes to the Romans "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made." (Romans 1:20) he is speaking to these hopes. When in the letter to the Hebrews we read "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2), Paul is speaking to these hopes. When we are told in James 1:19 "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry", and in Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you," and in John 8:32 "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" it is to these hopes the writers look.

May this Advent bring you hope, and hope to all those with whom we work, and live and fellowship.

God bless, Vicci