

SANCTUARY LONDON



Advent is a time of anticipation and preparation. As Sanctuary's Worshipping Community, we celebrate Advent by focusing on the four candles which represent Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. These are all things that our community is longing for.

On the first Sunday of Advent, I was excited to talk about Hope with our community.

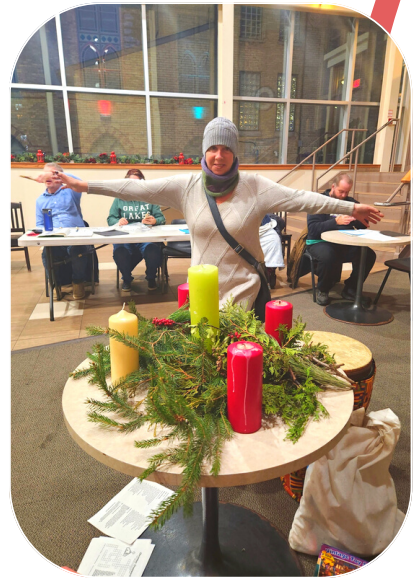
Hope is something we all desperately need. I was prepared, more than I usually am, and felt ready. The weather was cold, wet, and miserable. We opened early in order to let people in, out of the rain and cold. People were hurting. They weren't waiting outside because they were just so excited to celebrate the first week of Advent with us. Folks were waiting to escape the treacherous weather, with very few other options for where to go. My hope for the evening began to wane.

How could I possibly speak about hope when so many people are hurting?

We blundered through the service. We acknowledged that it was hard to have hope in this despairing world. The world is not as it was created to be. We opened it up for community sharing. Do you struggle with hope? What brings you hope? What would it take for you to feel hopeful once again? We talked about lending our hope to one another, when the other just can't see it. And we found some solace in the recognition that the world Jesus was born into was similarly broken and desperate for a Savior.

The next morning I was serving hot soup at our Monday lunch drop-in. A community member, who had been at worship the night before, came in from outside, down the ramp, and made a beeline straight towards me.

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**Please join us for our
annual Christmas Party!
Wed, December 21, 2022
1-9pm. Full Turkey
Dinner with all the
fixings, served at
5:30pm.
513 Talbot St.**



This gentleman has been coming to our worship services from time to time, almost as if to size us up, dip his toes in, to see if he is really safe and fully welcomed there for all that he is.

"Darryl, you know that service last night. It was kinda heavy, eh?"

"Ya..."

"Well, I went away leaving that service feeling pretty crappy, pretty hopeless about the state of the world. Friggin' people sleeping outside all over the place. Practically have to step over them. What could we possibly do about it?"

"Anyways, I was on my way here this morning still thinking about everything, and then I saw another dude huddled in the corner of a building just shaking and freezing his butt off. He didn't have any gloves on! And right then, I remembered what you said about when we are struggling to see or feel hope, maybe that's the moment that God is calling us to be hope; to bring hope into that situation.

"I had my brand new gloves on, really good ones. You know how I like to play guitar downtown, even in the winter? Well I needed really good gloves to warm up my hands between songs. All leather, rated for, like, -50 degrees.

"Well, I decided it was up to me to be hope in that situation. I really didn't want to, 'cause I had just bought them, and it's really not like me to go caring about anyone else. But, for some reason, I didn't really feel like I had a choice. I gave him the gloves. I had to! Can you believe that? A grouchy old guy like me bringing hope to others!"



I stopped serving soup long enough to give him a hug. As I grabbed the next bowl to fill, a man sitting near us said, "Excuse me, did I just hear you say that you needed a pair of gloves?" The two men were strangers. "Here, I just bought these, I actually bought two pairs. It was just cheque day and I needed a pair of gloves, but the price was so good, I decided I was going to buy two and give one pair to the first person who really needed them. You know, kinda like a Christmas present, just to be nice to someone who needed it." And he handed over the gloves.

On that first Christmas, 2000 years ago, the people were looking for hope. They were longing for a Savior. I think they were probably hoping for a mighty leader, perhaps a great warrior, to free them from their oppressive enemies. Instead, they got a baby, born into poverty. A baby who would grow to be a man destined to die prematurely on a cross. This wasn't what they were expecting. And yet, hope began to grow that day as the angels announced the news of this child's birth to the shepherds. Hope continues to dawn in the most unexpected of places. I thought I would bring hope that Sunday night. Instead, I received hope on Monday morning.

**Please consider supporting
Sanctuary in your holiday and
year-end gift giving. We look
forward to growing with you into
2023!**

With thanks, and much love.



*From all of us at
Sanctuary London!*