

Holiday Newsletter 2025

FINDING HOME. TOGETHER.

SANCTUARY LONDON



The group of us spent some time together grieving a community member who had passed away earlier that week.

Dana told me how she had forgiven this person for any unkindness, and how she had also apologized last week for where she had been wrong, and Dana lit the candle in their memory.

Lois & Tom cleaned up the dishes and washed tables. "I will remember their smile and miss them so much" Lois said.

We gave each other time and space to share what was on our hearts, our hurts and our hopes.

Jim shared a whole pack of cigarettes with Ray who had no where to go after we closed.

Stacy genuinely thanked me for the bowl of chilli and held my hand for a moment longer than she needed to.

Peter, who had recently acquired housing, came in late after spending his whole afternoon helping out his camping community dig out from the snow.

Devon took time to talk with the children and listen to them.

The first cold and dreary night of Advent, we gathered, cared for each other, lit a candle for the loss of a loved one, and lit the candle of Hope.

"Something small happened, so small, you might miss it"

"Hope starts small. Hold on, a new day is coming"

ADVENT HOPE:

At our Sunday evening worship service, Quinn couldn't read the first two sentences of the liturgy, even though he had asked Darryl a few days earlier if he could do it. He had carried the copy around in his pocket ever since, and was really looking forward to it.

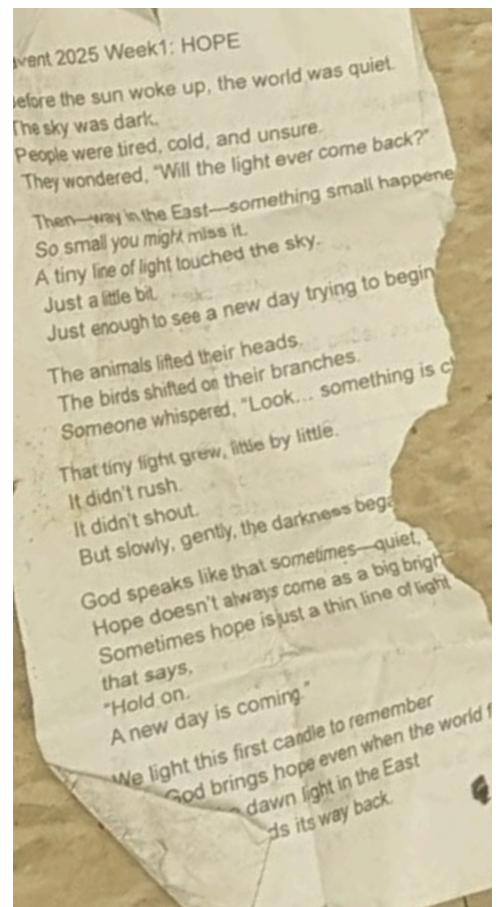
He came into the service miserable. Kicked out of the library, soaked from the rain and slush.

Someone had stolen his stuff again. He was feeling desolate and defeated.

Somehow he still had the printed liturgy in his pocket. A little wet and tattered, but still legible.

Brian had brought in some extra clothing, and was able to share with Quinn a full change of dry clothes. He took some time to refresh and recover, then stood up to read... and immediately burst into tears.

"People wondered, will the light ever come back?" read the paper in his hands as, someone else gently continued for him.





ADVENT HOPE CONTINUED...

We closed that first Advent service with everyone selecting a small stone pebble, and asking them each to write one word on it that reminds them of hope. And if they couldn't think of a word, to just draw a single line, or even a dot. They could keep this stone in their pocket to remind themselves that hope is small, but strong.

Three days later at our Wednesday drop-in, a few of us were sharing stories about the community member who had passed away. When it felt like there were no more words to be said, we pulled out the Uno cards and began playing.

A few moments later Quinn walked in, once again cold and wet. We invited him to join us.

He immediately sat down, reached into his pocket, pulled out his stone, and placed it on the table, declaring, "Yup, it's nasty out there, but I still have my hope!"

Someone said, "Quinn, that's really beautiful. I can't believe you're still holding on to that".

He replied: "I have to hold onto this... Someone really special gave it to me. And besides," he said thoughtfully... "It's all I've got...."



Thank you so much for contributing to bringing this kind of hope to our community, especially at this particularly challenging time of year. More often than not, the most important thing we can do is to just be people... with other people... doing normal life together. Sitting. Listening. Playing cards. Making music. Drinking coffee. Together.

We pray you all experience a renewed sense of hope, peace, and joy this holiday season.

*With much love and warmth,
from all of us at Sanctuary London.*



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