



**Rev Helen Jacobi**

**Waking up**

Year A Advent 1

Isaiah 2:1-5

Matthew 24:36-44

27 November 2022

Wake up deeper.

We all know about sleeping deeply, how good it feels to have slept deeply - but what about waking up deeply.

Waking up deeper.

I heard the phrase “waking up deeper” in a podcast I listened to once and it has stayed with me as an Advent theme.

Advent is our church season, which calls us to focus our hearts and minds on the coming of the Christ child.

Many of the Advent readings and hymns have the theme of staying awake and alert.

What are we keeping awake for?

And why do we need to be more deeply awake?

The earliest Christians thought they needed to keep awake literally in case Jesus returned.

We would interpret those passages today to mean we need to be watchful, alert, awake to the signs of Christ’s presence amongst us.

We simply need eyes to see.

Isaiah the prophet (writing 740-700 BC) is working at a time when Jerusalem is coming under siege from all sides (northern kingdom, Assyria, Damascus) and we are told “this is the word that Isaiah *saw* concerning Judah (southern kingdom) and Jerusalem. (2:1).

Isaiah didn't write, or say, some words; he saw them – he cast a vision.

He saw nations gathering in peace on the holy mountain of Jerusalem.

And there swords will be made into ploughs which plough the fields; spears will prune the vines.

Weapons of war will become tools of peace time.

Isaiah saw that it could be possible.

Isaiah was deeply awake.

The people were less awake.

They could not see the possibilities for peace.

And eventually Jerusalem would fall and Isaiah's vision would become a far away, longed for future – way out of reach.

Jesus in our reading from Matthew is answering the disciples' question: "what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (24:3)

When will everything finally be put to right?

When will the visions of the prophets come to pass?

When will we see what Isaiah saw?

Jesus says "about that day and hour no one knows" - don't try and predict it in the future.

Instead be ready now, be ready always.

Wake up deeper.

The Advent themes of hope, peace, joy and love call us to be awake and notice.

What signs of hope do we see, right in front of us today?

Well, we have a new priest and a new deacon.

That is a sign of hope that two people are willing to commit themselves to God's service.

In the ordination service the bishop prays that the candidate will be empowered by the God of grace.

Grace, which is “gentle as a dove” and “living, burning as fire”<sup>1</sup> all at the same time.

Grace that will allow Amanda and Jax to wake up deeper every day. It is worthy of note that neither Amanda or Jax are following the traditional path of the priests of my generation and before.

Amanda has a full time “secular” job and Jax will be working half time for her parish in Wellington and half time in the “real” world.

So when Amanda presides at the eucharist today and on other Sundays going forward she is bringing with her, her work, the challenges and joys of working in our health sector – more challenge than joy at the moment.

She brings all of that world with her to the altar.

Like when Linda presides she brings the City Mission with her.

Cate and I bring the parish and the city, the people we have met in a week, prayers sought and offered.

We each carry the grace and gifts of the week but Amanda today brings something that is closer to your experience as lay people.

She is a bridge bringing God’s world into God’s church.

We are celebrating another bridge today; another connection with our world.

Today our digital platform is live.

[stmatthewsdigital.nz](http://stmatthewsdigital.nz)

This has been a two year project as we explored how to build on our digital work which began in the first covid lockdown of 2020.

We have been livestreaming since then, but wanted to try and build up a library of our digital work so we could revisit and re use it; and to make better connections with our digital followers.

For my generation and older the digital world can be seen as an add on – something we use and put away.

But of course for anyone born after 1990 the digital world is the world.

And so we as church must be present in that world, and use its tools to reach out.

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<sup>1</sup> ANZPB p 897 (ordination service)

For those watching on the livestream your feed will still be found on our website and on facebook.

But if you would like to look for material on certain themes or topics then head over to the platform and use the search bar.

And then make a comment, start a conversation.

The basics of the platform are done, the framework is there, but the next phase is up to you.

We have a content plan that will be guided by you – what would you like us to discuss, ponder, pray?

How can we support each other in the exploration and development of our faith?

What can we wake up to?

What vision can we cast?

As we begin again the season of Advent, as we begin again the cycle of worship for the next year, be awake, watch for signs of hope, be acts of hope.

If we do this we do not have to wait vainly for a future time when Christ will return.

We find the Christ is here, ready to meet us, face to face and screen to screen.