Sermon: **Marana tha – our Lord, come!** (1 Corinthians 16.22)

This time last year went to UK to see my dying sister. So keen was her son that having arrived I went to see her immediately. Though her head was not in the right place, she was so glad to see me; I too was glad, but also shocked at her decline.
Mixed emotions. Reminds me that Advent (= Coming) too is a season of mixed emotions.

In our study group discussions we look at the coming of Christ at the end of history, in our daily lives and in the Incarnation. These are very different experiences, with mixed emotions.

The coming of Christ at the end of history - the province of weirdos, religious crackpots and scaremongers?

It is there in Jesus’ words. The old prophetic message appeared worn out to the early church facing persecution and injustice - an apocalypse was required and looked for.

Today we might want help in some of the world’s biggest problems: suffering, injustice, climate change, rise of intolerant religiosity. Some are partly our fault, so we can expect God’s criticism. Still TEXT.

Christ also comes in daily life. This happened to Mary grieving by the tomb of Christ, to Paul unable to throw off his thorn in the flesh, to Peter as an angel released him from prison.

Life can sometimes be tough. Hands up those who have received help?

The help we receive might be another human, a change in circumstances, sudden inspiration, or a sense of God’s presence. But those with faith can perceive Christ in the coming. TEXT.

Monty Python sketch: “Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition”. The same is true for the Incarnation.
The characters are the most unlikely, the domestic situation for birth not good, visitors and gifts unusual.

Considering the Messiah was hoped for, the actual coming of Christ was still surprising.

True for us too. Sometimes Christ comes in surprising times, places, people, situations. TEXT.

We need Christ to come because sometimes we are in despair (we need comfort), sometimes we are over-confident in ourselves (we need correction), sometimes we are complacent (we need surprise). Which is why we have mixed emotions.

Whatever the coming, whatever our emotions, Christ comes to seek the best for us. So… TEXT.