

Video transcript of Bangor University Chaplaincy thought for the month
John Thompson 23rd November 2022

The Christmas lights are on! You may be reacting in a number of different ways.

My name is John. I'm the Baptist Minister at Penrallt Church in Bangor and I'm part of the Chaplaincy team at the University.

So how do you respond to the turning on of the Christmas lights? It's a signal that Christmas is coming and for Christians, we are in a season of waiting for Christmas called Advent. Perhaps you are waiting for Christmas too. Perhaps you're looking forward to gathering with friends at Christmas? Or perhaps you're looking forward to getting away for a bit of time with the family? Or it might signal the start of a difficult time for you – if it does, we're here as a Chaplaincy team to help and to listen – so please get in touch with one of the team. Our details are on the university website. Or perhaps the Christmas lights put you into a bit of a panic about an essay deadline or how close an exam is? You perhaps wish that we could be waiting a little bit longer for Christmas! Or perhaps you just can't wait for Christmas. The Christmas lights just put a bit of a grin on your face.

As a Christian, one of the lovely things about waiting for Christmas is that during Advent we prepare spiritually for the coming of Jesus. In the four Sundays in the run up to Christmas we think about the Christmas story and how it brings hope, peace, love and joy. Christmas is all about how these things come through God's gift to us – the baby Jesus. The coming of Jesus brings great hope. Christians believe that this baby born on Christmas day was the son of God. He came to earth to live among us and to open a new way to God for us. This gives us great hope. Jesus gives us the opportunity to have a completely new start in our relationship with God. And he brings peace, love and joy. Jesus is God's gift to the world - making it possible for us to have a deep peace with God, to know God's divine love and for our hearts to experience his incomparable joy. And during Advent we remember that we are waiting for Jesus to come again – believing that he will bring these in perfection and completion in the future. And praying that he will bring more of this hope, peace, love and joy to our world today.

So as well as putting up your Christmas lights and entering into your Christmas festivities, I hope that we all find hope, peace, love and joy throughout this Advent season. And what a difference we could make if we could share **these** gifts with others too.