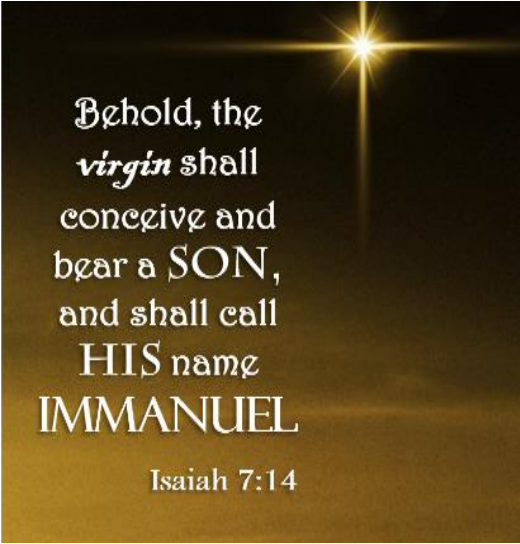


# Guided by a cloud 36 (Exodus 13:21-22)

They say that every day is a school day, and I learnt something new this week. I knew this Sunday was the last one before advent but hadn't realised that it is also known as "Stir up Sunday". It is taken from the words at the beginning of the collect for the day in the Book of Common Prayer. '*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people*'. According to tradition, Victorian families would gather on this Sunday to make and 'stir up' their Christmas puddings, which as all good cooks know should be made in advance of the big day. Traditionally, a Christmas pudding would contain thirteen ingredients to represent Jesus and his disciples, and when being made would be stirred from east to west in honour of the Three Wise Men. Finally, a holly garnish was added to represent the crown of thorns worn on Jesus' head.



Behold, the  
*virgin* shall  
conceive and  
bear a SON,  
and shall call  
HIS name  
IMMANUEL

Isaiah 7:14

## Worship time

[The UK Blessing](#)

[He walked where I walked](#)

[King of king's majesty](#)

The full collect is "*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*"

This links to the passage in **Matthew 25:31-41** where Jesus is discussing his coming in glory, sitting on his throne separating the sheep to the right and goats to the left. This is what he says, <sup>34</sup> *'Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

Of course Jesus is not saying here that we can earn our inheritance but rather emphasising the way we should conduct ourselves. As we move into this advent season perhaps we can think of ways we can again be Jesus to the people around us, our family, friends, work colleagues and people we meet. Like all the fruit ingredients that are put into the Christmas pudding Paul reminds us in Galatians 5 that we have the fruit of the spirit within us. <sup>22</sup> *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

I'm not sure whether any of you will be making your own Christmas pudding this year but we can all think about the ingredients in our lives that help us show the love of Jesus to those around us. We can think about how we can stir love, joy, feeding the hungry, welcoming a stranger, kindness etc. into the places and situations we find ourselves in over the next few weeks. We can ask Jesus to stir up our will so that we might be even more fruitful in his service.