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| **Thought for the Week**Monday, 22nd November 2021 |

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| **Stir Up Sunday**Many will know and many will not know that yesterday (Sunday 21st November) was Stir-up Sunday. In many households the tradition is to spend a good portion of the afternoon cooking, baking and stirring that years Christmas pudding.This is an age old tradition, dating back to when Christmas Puddings came into fashion during the Victorian Era. The term Stir-up comes from the opening words of the collect for the day in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer; *Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord*. And it is always read the last Sunday before Advent.But what do we hope to stir-up? Do we hope to stir up thoughts of Christmas? Do we hope to stir-up feelings of festivity? Or are we stirring-up the energy to get through advent? As a Christian, it is hoped that through the act of preparation, Christians are preparing for Advent, preparing their heart to once again accept Jesus as the Son of God. But also wishing to stir-up hope. Hope that we will not lose sight of Jesus during Advent, hope that we will be able to not get so busy that we forget what we are looking forward to celebrating. And hope, that this year Christmas will be different, that all those who celebrate Christmas will know the peace and comfort that comes from the season of Advent and Christmas. |

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| As a bit of fun, here are some traditions that surround Stir Up Sunday and the preparation of the Christmas Pudding;1. A Christmas pudding would traditionally contain 13 ingredients – one to represent each of Jesus’ disciples and Jesus himself.
2. Traditionally, these ingredients include: raisins, currants, suet, brown sugar, breadcrumbs, citron, lemon peel, orange peel, flour, mixed spices, eggs, milk and brandy.
3. The pudding is traditionally stirred by each member of the family from East to West, to remember the Wise Men who travelled to visit Jesus in the Nativity Story.
4. The customary garnish of holly represented the crown of thorn worn by Jesus at His crucifixion.
5. Adding coins to the pudding to bring luck to whoever found them on their plate on Christmas Day.
6. Older traditions use different charms as well as coins.
7. The traditional lucky charms were a silver coin for wealth, a wishbone for luck, a thimble for thrift, a ring for marriage, and an anchor for safe harbour.
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| **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.The collect for the day in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer** |

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| ***As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “Behold, I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.’”*Mark 1:1-3** |

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