



**THE ARCHBISHOP
OF YORK**

The Archbishop of York's chosen Advent book for 2022, 'Sleepers Wake' has been published and is available to buy now. Author Nicholas Holtam argues that climate change and the environment is a spiritual crisis to which we have not yet fully woken up.

'We are tasked with caring for God's creation in its entirety... and this task is now more urgent and more challenging than it has ever been... Nick is someone who has helped to develop an overdue Christian response to the climate emergency that our world faces. I am delighted that he has written this book... Advent is a time of preparation, a time of expectation, and a time of waiting. And yet, with regard to the climate crisis, we can wait no more... we need to be prepared dramatically to alter the way we live... Sleepers Wake confronts us with the harsh realities of the climate crisis, offering bite-sized chunks that we can process through Advent. The message, however, is not one of doom, for this book is shot through with hope... you are invited to participate through prayer and action in the change that will mean a flourishing life for the whole cosmos. There is surely no more beautiful message for Advent than this!'

The Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

In Sleepers Wake, Nicholas Holtam argues that climate change and the environment is a spiritual crisis to which we have not yet fully woken up. In this book – which he describes as 'a book about Christian spirituality for Advent in the context of the climate and environmental crises' – he draws on the latest research and statistics as well as over 40 years of ordained ministry, his role as the Church of England's lead bishop on the environment and his geographer background. He encourages us to find the connections between the facts and our beliefs and values so that we can act personally and politically, locally and internationally – and urgently.

Sleepers Wake is divided into 4 weeks of daily reflections, which draw on science, politics, theology, poetry, art and Bible passages to explore climate change and the need for urgent action. Topics discussed include global warming, fossil fuels, biodiversity, net zero, the renewal of our politics, the role of the UN, climate justice, food waste, air quality and pollution, and tree planting, as well as general themes such as forgiveness, thanksgiving, fear, love, worship and priorities. The book includes a number of full colour reproductions of various paintings and icons mentioned in the text. At the end of each week, there are focused questions for reflection and action. A list of other books and websites for further reading on this subject is included at the end of the book. Holtam's hope is that Sleepers Wake will inform, challenge and equip each of us to do what we can to combat the climate crisis, changing our behaviour and campaigning for others to do so in order to protect God's world.

'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth is integral to being a Christian today... Advent calls us to wake up, pay attention, stay sober and be alert to God and to what is happening in the world around us. The behaviour of human beings is the major current cause of climate change, and has the potential to become the 6th major event to result in the mass extinction of life on planet earth. We know this, yet we are still in danger of sleepwalking towards catastrophe... we are being called to live as citizens of God's kingdom in the here and now... we are sensing an opportunity to do things differently, and an Advent-like urgency is needed in making our response... we can run headlong into disaster or we can sleepwalk into it, but we can no longer say that we do not know the impact of the way we are living. It is only in facing the reality that we can find the way forward.'

Nicholas Holtam

Available in bookshops or from online retailers such as [SPCK](#) or [Eden](#)

If you are looking for resources and advice to run a church home group online or in person visit [SPCK's Home Groups](#) for a course for Advent using Sleepers Wake: This four-part series is about Christian spirituality for Advent in the context of the climate and environmental crises. It is based around the first verse of the hymn 'Sleepers Wake' using the four lines to give a framework for each week of Advent.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Nicholas Holtam was Bishop of Salisbury from 2011 to 2021 and the Church of England's lead bishop for the environment, chairing the Environmental Working Group from 2014 to 2021. A Durham geographer before training for ordination, he lives in Brighton and is married to Helen with 4 adult children. Nicholas is the author of *The Art of Worship: Paintings, Prayers, and Readings for Meditation* and *A Room with a View: Ministry with the World at Your Door*. *Sleepers Wake!* is his first Advent book.

PRAISE FOR SLEEPERS WAKE:

'Like Bach's great "Wachet auf" chorale, this walk through the weeks of Advent is both a carefully constructed meditation and an unsettling call to action. In the face of climate catastrophe, Nicholas Holtam invites us to pause in front of paintings that challenge us with the scale of our responsibilities, and reveal the grace we are promised if we tackle them. Poetry and music, painting and personal recollections combine in a new version of the Advent call to change our lives – while we still can. In Bach's words: Wake up!'

Neil MacGregor, broadcaster and former museum director

'We need a strong spirituality to help us address the issues of climate change. This Advent, Bishop Holtam invites the reader to an internal journey of self-discovery, where we recognize both our miraculous uniqueness and our inextricable unity with the rest of creation.'

Christiana Figueres, Head of the UN Climate Change Convention, 2010–2016

'The ideal Advent companion! Rooted in both the Bible and the current environmental crisis, Bishop Holtam's meditations help us to face the challenge of the Saviour who will finally come in judgement of what we have done to God's world, while we are preparing to offer all we have to the Babe of Bethlehem. Read it yourself daily, study it in weekly groups – but, most importantly, wake from sleep and act now before it is too late.'

The Revd Canon Professor Richard A. Burridge, biblical scholar and Canon Theologian



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