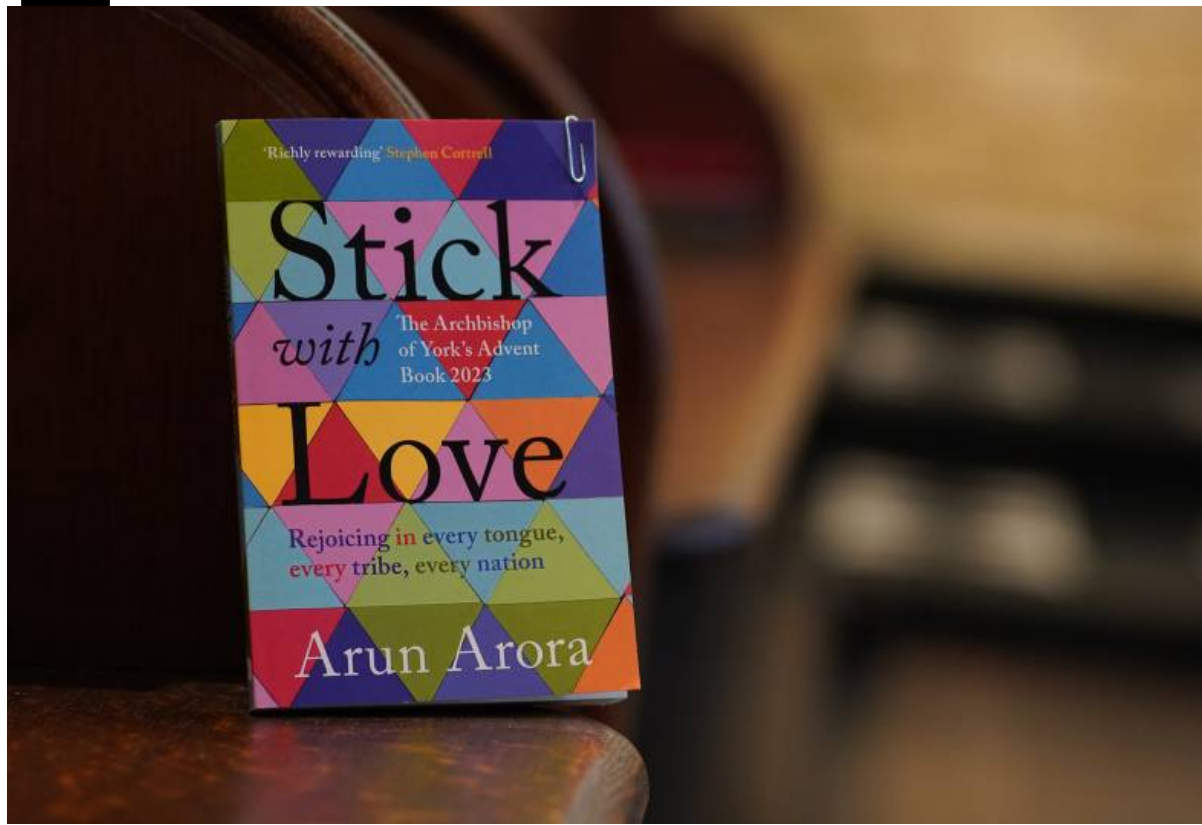




THE ARCHBISHOP



The Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2023: Foreword by Stephen Cottrell

St Paul famously wrote that these three things remain faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

In *Stick With Love*, Rt Revd Arun Arora, Bishop of Kirkstall and an Episcopal Area Bishop in the Diocese of Leeds, guides us through the Advent season with beautiful and accessible daily readings, rich in reminders of the love of Christ that unites every tongue, tribe and nation in our stunningly diverse global church.

Filled with reflections on the lives of Christians from St John of the Cross to Stormzy; George Floyd to St Lucy of Syracuse, *Stick With Love* spans the centuries and countries of the world telling the stories of the everyday saints, martyrs and mystics who light our advent way.

At a time which increasingly feels dark and challenging these stories offer light and hope reflecting on the lived experience of faith, its inspiring nature and the love of neighbour and of God which underpins each of these stories. From the founder of Save the Children through to the saint who became Santa, the daily reflections are ideal for individuals, churches and groups who are seeking comfort and hope in times of challenge and worry.

Combining memoir and accessible theology the book concludes with a Christmas Eve reflection on Martin Luther King who once famously declared: "I must stick with love... hate is too great a burden to bear". This call to 'stick with love' is what gives the Archbishop of York's Advent Book 2023 its name.

As Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, writes in his foreword to the book, Advent is not only a time for anticipating the moment Jesus Christ came into the world but also reflecting on the 'last things' foretold in the Book of Revelation where people of every tribe, tongue and nation rejoice before the throne of God.

With this vast, beautifully diverse family of believers in mind, Arun Arora steers us through many of the anxieties and pressures of the season, with reflections that keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, and offer hope, comfort and joy.

"The theme of waiting for light is one Lent shares with Advent, as each week, candles are lit to anticipate the coming of Christ into the world", writes Arun.

"The invitation to each of us is not to ignore the reality of the darkness, but to acknowledge it, to confront it with the light that shines in. At Advent, the dark night gives way to the cry of the child in the manger; it is burned away by the light of Christ coming into the world".

Advent is a call for the global church across every nation, tribe and tongue to anticipate the arrival of Jesus together. But *Stick With Love* also acknowledges and moments where this common shared identity in Christ is denied.

Arun emphasises his own experiences of alienation in the church as a UK-born bishop from an Indian family (his mother was Hindu and his father Sikh). His reflection on responding to the oft asked question "Where are you really from?" raises issues of belonging and identity for all of those who together form the body of Christ.

Stories of exclusion and coupled with stories of divine connection and hope including those of Jemima Prasad, one of the first women to be ordained priest in the Church of England whose ministry in inner city Birmingham led to her inclusion at the National Portrait Gallery and the impact of the ministry of Billy Graham whose preaching has been foundational to the faith journey of minority ethnic bishops in the Church of England.

In the final week of reflections Arun returns to the murder of George Floyd as he considers the Advent theme of judgement, not least in complicated lives that can tell more than one story. Reflecting on George Floyd's journey of faith, Arora notes how Floyd sought to spread the gospel over the town he lived in and tackle gun violence, and in his death he brought about a revolution he could never have foreseen in life. Yet, as Arun writes: "Even in death, it seems George Floyd is not free from judgement by those who will never be able to see the image of Christ in him".

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, says:

"In the stories of saints found in the pages of this book, we encounter men and women whose lives echo the love of God and the beautiful vision, found in Revelation, of the gathering of all tribes, peoples and nations before Him.

"As you read *Stick with Love*, may you discover stories of inspiration and challenge. Stories that both cause you to give thanks and challenge you to go deeper in your journey of discipleship this Advent. May you discover a renewed appetite for the transforming love of God and the full meaning of what it is to be a disciple committed to responding to that love".

Stick with Love is published by SPCK on Thursday 21 September. It is available to preorder now from [SPCK](#) and other retailers

4 min read

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