

THE FORERUNNER



December 2018

St. John's Episcopal Church

Advent.



From the
Rector

The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming," which is a translation of the Greek word *parousia*. Early Christians had tied Advent to the coming of Christ. But the "coming" they had in mind was not Christ's first coming in the manger in Bethlehem, but his second coming in the clouds as the judge of the world. It was not until the Middle Ages that the Advent season was explicitly linked to Christ's first coming at Christmas. Today, the season of Advent lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas. At that time, the new Christian year begins with the twelve-day celebration of Christmastide, which lasts from Christmas Eve until Epiphany on January 6.

Advent symbolizes the present situation of the church in these "last days" as God's people wait for the return of Christ in glory to consummate his eternal kingdom. The church is in a similar situation to Israel at the end of the Old Testament: in exile, waiting and hoping in prayerful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Israel looked back to God's past gracious actions on their behalf in leading them out of Egypt in the Exodus, and on this basis, they called for God once again to act for them. In the same way, the church, during Advent, looks back upon Christ's coming in celebration while at the same time looking forward in eager anticipation to the coming of Christ's kingdom when he returns for his people. In this light, the Advent hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" perfectly represents the church's cry during the Advent season:

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appears.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

While Israel would have sung the song in expectation of Christ's first coming, the church now sings the song in commemoration of that first coming and in expectation of the second coming.

To balance the two elements of remembrance and anticipation, the first two Sundays in Advent look forward to Christ's second coming, and the last two

Sundays look backward to remember our Lord's first coming. Over the course of the four weeks, Scripture readings move from passages about his return in judgment to Old Testament passages about the expectation of the coming Messiah to New Testament passages about the announcements of Christ's arrival by John the Baptist and the Angels.

While it is difficult to keep in mind amid holiday celebrations, shopping, lights and decorations, and joyful carols, Advent is intended to be a season of fasting, much like Lent, and there are a variety of ways that this time of mourning works itself out in the season. Reflection on the violence and evil in the world cause us to cry out to God to make things right—to put death's dark shadows to flight. Our exile in the present makes us look forward to our future Exodus. And our own sinfulness and need for grace lead us to pray for the Holy Spirit to renew his work in conforming us into the image of our Lord.

While Advent is certainly a time of celebration and anticipation of Christ's birth, it is more than that. It is only in the shadow of Advent that the miracle of Christmas can be fully understood and appreciated, and it is only in the light of Christmas that the Christian life makes any sense. It is between the fulfilled promise of Christ's first coming and the yet-to-be-fulfilled promise of his second coming that Karl Barth penned these words: "Unfulfilled and fulfilled promise are related to each other, as are dawn and sunrise. Both promise and in fact the same promise. If anywhere at all, then it is precisely in the light of the coming of Christ that faith has become Advent faith, the expectation of future revelation. But faith knows for whom and for what it is waiting. It is fulfilled faith because it lays hold on the fulfilled promise."

Let every heart, prepare him room – and heaven and nature sing!

Slow down. Be quiet. This is the essence of Advent.

In peace, Fr. Chuck+



On December 9, we are hosting the Salem Area Ministerium Community Advent Dinner and Service. Join area churches for a Soup Supper at 5pm and the Advent Service at 6pm.



From The Deacon's Bench

What a wonderful time of year this is! To be sure, it is also probably the busiest time of year for most of us. From somewhere I find all this extra energy to accomplish herculean tasks like stripping, cleaning and decorating my enormous home or shopping endlessly for all the kids and grandkids. If that is not enough, somehow I find the time to take on other substantial activities such as 'The Secret Santa Shop' and new this year, creating an Advent Retreat for the Woodbury District ECW. You would think I'd be exhausted already but actually I feel energized and fully engaged.

Advent for our church is a season of preparation – a season to prepare our hearts to welcome the Baby Jesus. The season is not intended to be as penitential as Lent but none the less, preparatory and somber. At St John's we continue to use the purple, or Lenten color, to denote this season.

This summer as many of you know, I had the wonderful privilege of celebrating my niece's Quinceanara, or celebration of her 15th birthday. This is a common celebration in the Hispanic culture and it was done well by her family in Mexico. But they couldn't find a priest to celebrate the traditional Mass and Blessing. Her gringa auntie would have to do! And my brother-in-law insisted that I perform the ceremony in Spanish – given that my Spanish is very rudimentary, I was terrified. So, over the next few weeks, I practiced and practiced. My booklet was marked up with little hints to proper pronunciation, placing the emphasis on the correct syllable. My focus was on reading my parts as clearly and as correctly as possible. This did not lead to 'comprehension' as much as rote recitation of the passages. I quickly assigned other family members to read the Epistle and the Prayers of the People.

The Gospel Passage was the parable of the wise and foolish virgins – Matthew 25: 1-13. You remember this passage – 10 virgins are awaiting the return of the bridegroom and he is delayed. Five of them have been smart enough to buy extra oil to keep their lamps burning so that when the bridegroom arrives, they can get up, fix their hair and their clothing and enter into the marriage feast with him. The other five, as per our English translation, are foolish and don't buy extra oil and are not able to keep their lamps burning at the late hour such that when the bridegroom comes, they must go off to buy more oil and are shut out of the wedding feast. Remember that passage? We read this Gospel during Advent in Year A of our RCL rotation.

On the day of the Quinceanara, as I was rehearsing yet again. I was struck by the Spanish word used for the 'foolish' virgins. That word is *despreocupadas*. From my background in foreign languages and linguistics I

interpreted this word as 'otherwise preoccupied'. Wow! What a revelation that the Spanish version of this story might not be 'foolish' but 'preoccupied with other things'.

Suddenly, the Gospel reading took on a whole new meaning for me! When I read it aloud to the group gathered to celebrate Sophie's Quinceanara, I understood that what I was conveying to them was this – don't be so preoccupied with all the small details of getting ready for the big event that you are not ready for the big event in your heart!

So, amid the hustle and bustle of preparing for your family's celebration of Christmas, take time out each day to prepare your heart for the coming of Christ! Of course you will shop, decorate, bake, and carry on your family's traditions –that's just how we are, but here, in the quiet peacefulness of our sanctuary and at home in some quiet space, find time each day to store up that extra oil of prayer and devotion to Jesus so that when the time comes, your heart is ready for the Birth of our Savior.

Deacon Sally Maurer



ECW Quiet Day/Retreat

St. John's ECW will host an Advent Quiet Day/Retreat on Sunday, Dec. 2 beginning at 1 pm. Deacon Sally has developed a series of activities to deepen our Advent practice, focusing on the Virgin Mary. Following the activities, a light supper will be served. Please contact the Church Office to register.



December is here. The Yuletide Tour is December 1. We are ready to have our guests visit with us to listen to Christmas Music on the organ. The kitchen crew will be on hand to serve soup and drinks. I will be in the church to talk about the history of our church and answer questions.

I would like to thank Warren Bye for repairing the outside lamps. This makes our campus look nice and well-lit.

Our grounds crew are cleaning up leaves and getting the grounds ready for winter.

Have a Happy Christmas!

*David Miller
Chair*



On December 1, St. John's ECW will be offering soup and drinks for sale during the Yuletide Tour. The kitchen will be open from Noon-5 pm. Come in, warm up with a bowl of soup and support the ECW.

"And our eyes, at last, shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above,
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone."



-From the Carol; "Once In Royal David's City" Number 102 in The Hymnal, 1982.

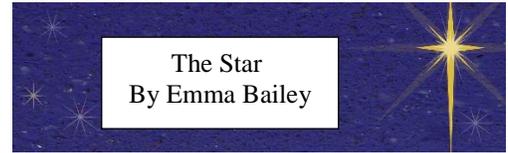
This Adventide, as we prepare our hearts and our homes to receive the Christ Child anew we wind our pilgrim path toward Bethlehem. There, the controversy over Jewish settlements is contributing to the strife this holy season, & there new discoveries are shedding more light on the Sacred Scriptures.

According to The Jerusalem Post, an artifact has been found in Bethlehem which confirms the city's ancient age and status as a place dating to the Old Testament. A 1.5 cm fragment of an engraved clay seal was brought to light in with the Ancient Hebrew inscription translated, "shipment from Bethlehem to the King in Jerusalem". Dated to the Seventh Century Before Christ, the artifact represents, according to Dr. Eli Shukron, director of the excavation, "the first time the name Bethlehem appears outside the Bible, in an inscription from the first temple period, which proves that Bethlehem was indeed a city in the kingdom of Judah"

In recent months the long standing territorial disputes between the Israelis & Palestinians has been exacerbated by successive escalations on both sides. Now the threat of another major conflict, at least as large as the Israeli-Hezbollah war of 2006 is becoming more likely. Like in the events which precipitated that war, rocket attacks are becoming more frequent & more destructive.

Our hope in Christ is for peaceful resolution and we pray for strength to continue working toward these goals even in the midst of grave danger. Even as DAESH/IS terror campaigns continue worldwide, whilst Turkish amalgamation of parts of Syria & Iraq portend re-establishment of the Ottoman lines of communication dissolved a century ago, & as atrocities & the Khashoggi affair call Saudi relations into question, to the peril of the European oil market & the U.S. Petrodollar, we must continue our life saving work toward every victory however seemingly small. And so, we look forward to 2019 in hope for peace and good will among men, beginning with us. My prayer for your new year is that God will richly Bless you & your family with what our Puritan founders here in Salem called "peace at the center". With all my best wishes for a blessed Adventide, Merry Christmas, a Happy & Holy AD 2019, to you & your family.

Ryan Bailey, Sr



High up in the sky one night
There appeared a star, strong and bright.

It wasn't one that had grown old
But a brand new heavenly body, bold.

It shimmered brightly to proclaim the good news.
"Jesus Christ's birth" was written on it's hues.

When wise men of the East beheld the light,
They knew the Savior was coming that night.

The King would be born in a stable with hay,
The star would lead to where He lay.

The wise men would come and some shepherds too,
To worship the Lord who is Holy and True.



**We pray for those who
serve in our military,
especially:**

Major Ryan Bailey, US Army
PFC Justin Francisco, US Army
Lt. Col. Peter Larrabee, USAF
Senior Master Sgt. David John Milne, USAF
Captain Tyler Patrick VanSant, USAF
Captain Joseph Flescher III, USAF
2nd Lt. Marlene Flescher, USAF Academy
2nd Lt. Michael McCormick, US Army
LCpl Jessica Armstrong, US Marine Corps



*12/05 Chardana Sweeney
12/09 Jennifer K. Frieze
12/11 Wyatt A. Irvine
12/18 Aryanna Kernan
12/21 Trudy O'Hare
12/24 Dennis O'Hare
12/30 Aud Hamilton*



ST. JOHN'S CHOIR

The Choir will lead the annual Service of Nine Lessons & Carols on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 23, at 10:30 AM. This service is always impressive and inspiring.

Invite your friends to come with you that morning to celebrate with us and experience the "best Church Choir in two counties" (Fr. Carroll, 2012).

The Choir will also lead the music for the Christmas Eve Festival Eucharist on December 24 at 10:30 PM. There will be an extended Pre-Service Musical Offering by the Choir and Organ prior to the 10:30 Christmas Eve Festival Eucharist. The music will begin at 10:00 PM. Come early to get a good seat..

Choir Singers (and significant others) should begin to contemplate an appropriate date and time for our annual "Post-Holy Day" party. We'll talk among ourselves....

EVENSONG THANK YOU

A well-deserved "thank you" and "Bravo" to the Choir for a spectacular Evensong on November 4. It was heart-warming to note that there were so many people in attendance! There was but one service leaflet left in the Narthex by the end of the Evensong. It was a joy and a treat to have the composer of two anthems sung at Evensong in attendance. Michael John Trotta has a long friendship with many of our parishioners from the days when he was an undergraduate student at Rowan University. The choir will sing several more anthems by Michael during this choir season, including his "Ave Maria" at Lessons and Carols.

SPECIAL MUSIC FUNDS

We have two special funds to support our music programs outside the regular budget. There is a **Special Organ Fund** for which envelops are provided in the pledge envelop box. This fund accumulates in order to relieve emergency repairs and major additions or alterations to our magnificent pipe organ which is by far the finest in Salem County. There is also a **Special Music Fund** intended for instrumentalists and guest singers for special musical services. This latter fund has been depleted significantly this year, and we will celebrate Easter (with brass) on April 21, sing an additional Evensong on May 19, and offer the *Mass in G* by Franz Schubert (with strings) at Eucharist on June 2, the Sunday after Ascension. Please consider this Special Music Fund when giving gifts over and above your regular pledge. Write "Music Fund" in the memo line of your check or on your envelope.

INTERESTED NEW PARTICIPANTS?

If you did not participate last season, but are interested in joining the St. John's Choir or are willing

to help revive St. John's Handbells, please contact Bill Clisham at your earliest convenience. There is always room for more singers in the St. John's Choir. Auditions are not required, but a "get-acquainted meeting" is necessary for placement and planning purposes. See the back of the service bulletin for contact information, or come to the organ console and introduce yourself following the Organ Postlude.



The Greening of the Church ~December 2018

Once again, it's time for planning the church Christmas decorations, which will include the traditional poinsettias and greens. We will order the plants and greens as your donations allow. If you would like to make a donation to the Christmas Decoration Fund, please complete the form below. Then drop this form and your donation into the offering plate on Sunday or mail your form and donation to:

St. John's Episcopal Church
76 Market Street
Salem, NJ 08079

****PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST BY DECEMBER 18, 2018.**

NOTE: Please make checks payable to St. John's Episcopal Church. Please write "Christmas Decoration Fund" on the memo line of check.

Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Amount donated & attached: _____

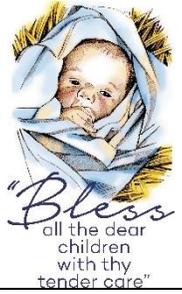
In memory of whom: _____

In thanksgiving for: _____

Questions? Please call the Parish Office: 856-935-1798.



December 2018



						1  12-5 pm ECW Soup Lunch 1-6 pm Church open for tours
2 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Birthday Sunday 1-5 pm ECW Advent Retreat	3	4 9:00 am-3 pm IAC 9 am Quilters 12-2 pm Food Pantry 8 pm NA	5 9 am-3 pm YSC/CIACC 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	6 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study	7	8  10 am-2 pm
9 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Sandwich Sunday Vestry Meeting 5 pm Advent Supper & Service	10	11 9 am Quilters 12-2 pm Food Pantry 8 pm NA	12 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	13 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study	14	15
16 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Fellowship Hour	17	18 9 am Quilters 12-2 pm Food Pantry 8 pm NA	19 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	20 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study	21	22
23 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 am Lessons and Carols Church Pie Sunday	24 5:00 pm Family Christmas Eve Service 10:00 pm Special Music 10:30 Festival Holy Eucharist	25  Christmas DAY 10 am Holy Eucharist Chapel	26 10:30 am Bible Study 12 Noon Holy Eucharist in Chapel 8 pm AA	27 6:30 pm Potluck Supper followed by Bible Study	28	29
30 8 am Rite I Chapel 9 am Choir Rehearsal 10:30 Rite II Church Fellowship Hour	31 		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <u>Office Hours</u> Monday: Closed Tuesday-Friday: 9 am-4 pm (Fr Chuck) 12 pm-3 pm (Office) </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> CIACC-Children's Inter-Agency Council YSC-Youth Services Council IAC-Inter-Agency Council NA-Narcotics Anonymous AA-Alcoholics Anonymous </div>		

From The Editor: Do you want to change how you receive the Forerunner? Simply leave a message with the church office and it will be rerouted with the next issue

You can also check out St. John's website: www.stjohnssalemnj.org. The most recent Sunday Bulletin is on the website, as well as current and past issues of the Forerunner and special announcements. St. John's is also on Facebook (St. John's Salem)

Please have any information you would like printed in the next Forerunner to me by **DECEMBER 30**. Family news, articles, information, articles, recipes, book or movie reviews, or anything you think would be of interest to our church family. Items can be emailed to ecmiller114@gmail.com.

Special request: We are always looking for family news, articles, stories, poems, recipes, and other items of interest. Email them to me or leave them in the office.



St. John's Episcopal Church

76 Market Street, Salem, NJ 08079

Established 1722

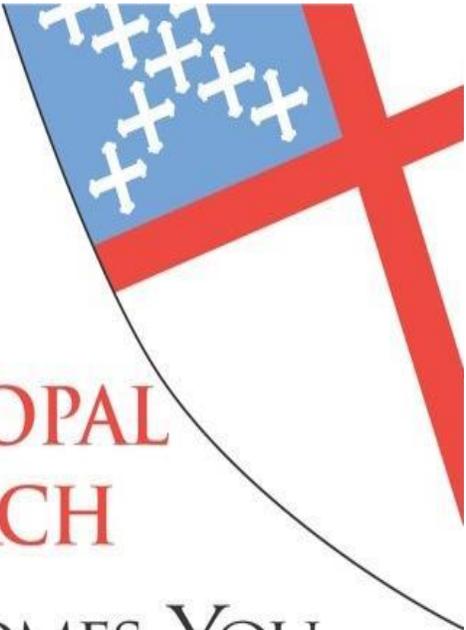
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Vestry Class of 2021	Ryan Bailey	Ron Magill	Bill Mecum	Recording Secretary: MaryAnne
Class of 2020	Sue Harker	Gwen Norton	Ann Neff (Clerk)	Clisham
Class of 2019	David Miller	Jean Miller	Ron Wohlrab	



**THE
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH**
WELCOMES YOU

Schedule of Services

Every Sunday

8 AM—Holy Eucharist Rite 1 in the Chapel
9:15 AM-Christian Formation-NOOMA in the Parish Hall
10:30 AM---Holy Eucharist Rite II in the Church followed by Fellowship Hour

Every Wednesday

10:30 AM Kerygma Bible Study in the Parish Hall
Noon---Holy Eucharist in the Chapel

Every Thursday

6:30 PM Kerygma Bible Study in the Parish Hall with Potluck Dinner

Special Events

Sunday, Dec 2 1-5 PM ECW Advent Prayer Retreat
Sunday, Dec. 9 Salem Ministerium Advent Soup Supper & Service
Sunday, Dec. 23 10:30 am Service of Lessons & Carols
Monday, Dec. 24 5 PM Family Christmas Eve Service
10:00 PM Pre-Service Special Music
10:30 PM Festival Holy Eucharist



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED