



The St. David's Epistle

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Advent at St. David's

This past Sunday we began a new church calendar year. The year begins with the season of Advent. "Advent" means "coming" and it is a season where we await and prepare for the coming of Jesus. The preparation is twofold because we are both preparing for our annual remembrance of Jesus' birth on Christmas Day, but also for Christ's return on the final Day of Judgment.

The church has a number of practices in order focus us on these realities during this four week season. The white and green on the altar changes to purple. We place a wreath of candles near the lectern and each week we light an additional candle. You will also note (perhaps to your frustration) that while the rest of the world is bathed in Christmas carols, we are singing Advent hymns.

If you are familiar with Advent, then none of this will seem out of the ordinary, but if you come from a non-liturgical background, some of this may seem strange.

This Advent, I hope to help rekindle the excitement for these practices in those of us who are used to them as well as invite those to whom they are unfamiliar into the richness of our church tradition.

First, the color purple. Today, we are inundated with millions of colors of every shade and hue. Just try picking a color to paint a room in your house; the choices are overwhelming. This makes it difficult for us to notice the simple changes of color in our liturgy. From red to green to white to purple, it might seem merely like a change in decoration, but there is meaning in it. Purple in the time of Jesus was a very expensive color and was reserved primarily for royalty. In Advent, purple is a reminder of the Kingship of our Lord Jesus and the richness of his grace.

Next, the Advent Wreath. The wreath is green, symbolizing life in the midst of the cold and seeming lifelessness of winter. In the wreath are five candles. Each week we light another candle and in doing so we add to the light of the wreath. As we

get closer to Christmas, the light increases until all the candles are lit on Christmas Day (or Eve in our case) representing the fullness of the light of Christ. Those lights stay lit for the duration of the 12 days of Christmas and on the Day of Epiphany they are extinguished.

When we put the candles out, it does not mean the light is gone. On Epiphany is we celebrate the light of the Gospel coming to the whole world. The candles go out, but the light remains in the hearts of God's people who now cover the earth.

Finally, the carols. We do not sing Christmas carols in Advent, because Jesus has not arrived yet. We wait to sing the carols until the Christmas season (the 12 days of Christmas that begin on Christmas Day), but during Advent we wait and prepare for the coming of Christmas. As every store plays carols leading up to Christmas in order to get us in the mood to buy more for our celebrations, Advent teaches us to wait for the greatest gift that we all received 2000 years ago.

In the busyness of the holiday season, our worship in Advent is a chance

Parish Announcements

Christmas Flowers—We are collecting donations for poinsettias to decorate the church. Remembrances or Thanksgivings will be printed in the Christmas bulletin. Suggested donation is \$10 per name to help offset the cost of the flowers. Forms are available in the Narthex. Please return them by Thursday, December 19th.

Greening of the Church—will take place on Sunday, Dec. 22nd after the service. A light lunch will be served. Come join the fun and take advantage of this opportunity to get to know your fellow parishioners.

Christmas Cookies - We are looking for people to bake cookies to set out after the Christmas Eve services. If you would be willing to do so, please bring them with you to church on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Services—Christmas services will be held on Christmas Eve, December 24th. There will be a Family Service with Pageant at 4:00pm and a Traditional Service with Carol Prelude at 7:30pm.

Office Closed—The parish office will be closed December 24th through January 2nd.

Children's Corner

Watching and waiting. This is the season of Advent. We will observe Advent with the children with weekly devotions during Children's Church. The children will hear about the prophets that spoke of the coming of a savior as we focus on the **hope** his coming brought to the world. In the second week, we will learn about the **faith** required of Mary and Joseph as they hear from angels about the baby to be born to them, and the **peace** of surrendering to God's plans for them. In week three we focus on the **joy** of the simple shepherds as they receive a



message from angels of the special baby born in a manger. And finally, in the fourth week we reflect in the **love** of God born into the world that day. It is my prayer to experience the full wonder of Christmas with the children as we prepare our hearts together to receive and celebrate this miracle.

During the weeks of Advent, children will also be preparing for the Christmas

Eve Pageant. All children will have a part to play! Costumes are available and should be kept simple. The pageant and preparations are truly joyful and help shift the children's focus to the Birth of Christ. We pray for full participation and a joyful testimony to the birth of our Lord.

Called to Serve the Parish of St. David's

You may not have heard that as of January 1, I will become the sole Priest in Charge at St. David's and take on a very limited role at St. Paul's as a pastoral assistant. This will make me full-time at St. David's. I am so very happy to be able to make this move and I am confident it is where God is calling me to be.

When I started helping out at St. David's I had some mixed feelings about coming home to the parish where I grew up. At the same time, I knew that St. Paul's was in the best position to help the continuing parish of St. David's and I welcomed the opportunity to help rebuild. In the year and a half since, we have seen tremendous

growth and vitality return to St. David's and I have found myself falling in love with this place and this community all over again in new and exciting ways.

Last year at this time the congregation was half the size it is now and there was tremendous uncertainty surrounding the future of our life together. Now, a year later, we are stronger and more confident in our identity and mission.

A year ago, almost all of our Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, and Altar Guild members were volunteers from St. Paul's. Today we have a corps of about a dozen parishioners who fill these roles (and we are always looking for more who would like to join in). A year ago, the com-

munity garden was just an idea and today we look back on a harvest totaling almost 600 lbs of fresh, organically raised produce. Add to this the wonderful Acolytes that serve at the altar each week and the ever growing praise band and choir and we have a recipe for a bright future together.

There are such wonderful, loving people who call St. David's home and I look forward to inviting many more members of the community to come and join the great worship and mission we have here. I couldn't ask for a better group of people with which to share in the work.

With Love,
Fr. Kris



Advent

Continued from Pg 1

to slow down and seek peace, to live into the anticipation of our true celebration of Christmas. The gift giving and feasting and celebration is absolutely appropriate and encouraged, but the stress and

anxiety that often comes along with it are not. I hope that St. David's can offer a bit of peace and respite for you and your family this Advent. I look forward to worshipping with you this Advent!

Fr. Kris