

And the angel said unto them,

December 2021



Advent Greetings!

I hope you and your family are faring well during what we hope will be the winding down of our Covid crisis. These last twenty months have been difficult in so many ways for many of us as the disease has progressed, not only with Covid, but also with all the highs and lows of our lives. Although I enjoy our e-mail communications and phone calls, I really have been missing you in person.

For me, time is flying. Advent seems to have arrived suddenly this year. Honestly, I have only just yesterday finished putting the yard to bed for the winter. Last weekend, I raked the

leathery oak leaves under the hedge and by Monday morning, the oak had dropped all the rest of its leaves. The maples are still a beautiful light golden shade and laughing at me from their branches at the end of the yard. I can hardly believe it! And yet, into this autumn comes Advent. I tell you all this only to say that I hope I am not alone in being taken by surprise at how quickly our daily calendar pushes us ahead.

Instead of rushing us, our liturgical calendar urges us to be alert, to wait, and above all, to hope. Our prophetic readings during Advent proclaim hope, and Luke's story of Jesus exhorts His disciples to "be alert". We begin our waiting in our world as it is today: great despair, illness, war, sorrow, and hate, because it is there that the God of grace will arrive. Once we have entered the shadows, we can proclaim the Good News, the hope in the midst of catastrophe. We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. We wait, we sing, and we pray for God to overwhelm all the bleakness and sin in our world. We stay alert for opportunities to recognize Jesus in the World's most vulnerable people. We wait with hope, ready to respond with loving action.

Very soon, we will celebrate the birth of Jesus, revealing how God is lifting up the lowly and bringing the mighty down from their thrones. This will be an experience of love and justice, a revolution of "good news of great joy for all people" ([Luke 2:10](#)). Because of the pandemic, many of us will be celebrating Christmas differently from usual, probably in more reserved fashion. Because of God's gifts, and human ingenuity, we may well find new ways to celebrate.

In all our celebrations, though, we remember that Jesus was born in a time of great danger and little comfort. For some of us, Christmas can be a wonderfully happy time, while for others of us, this can be a season of sadness and loss - loss of what used to be. So, while our worship is filled with awe and wonder, it is tempered by the knowledge that we are a loving community of people experiencing a variety of emotions, and we pray that each of us will be blessed with the deep peace of the knowledge that God is with us in ways we cannot fully understand, but we can trust to be true.

The Twelve Days of Christmas can be exciting. How will we be changed by the birth of Jesus? How will we be changed by our deepening faith?

We celebrate the birth of Jesus with joy and great hope. Very quickly, we leap into the celebration of Epiphany beginning with the celebration of the visit of the Magi to Jesus and His family. The weeks following are marked with many celebrations through the remembrance of milestones in Jesus's life. All those various events are revelations of Christ to all of humanity. With each event, we learn more about the nature of Jesus, His love for all people, and his mission to teach us about God. We may learn more about our faith, and ways to act on that faith. Our prayer throughout Epiphany is that we may be guided to recognize the glory of God through the presence and ministry of Jesus.

*“O God, by the leading of a star,
You led wise ones to the worship of your Son.
Lead us, who know you now by faith, to Your presence.
Guide the nations of the earth,
that the whole world may know your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.
God bless you.*

With my love and good wishes.
Joan.

Christmas Services: Sunday, December 19, 2021 10:30 a.m. (Carols and Lessons)
Friday, December 24, 2021 7:00 p.m. (Christmas Eve)
Sunday, December 26, 2021 10:30 a.m. (Christmas I)

All services will be available both in-person and on-line.

For everybody's safety, we ask all attending in person, to be masked, and all age 12 and over be double vaccinated. Children under 12 are also welcome whether vaccinated or not. Please call David Picklyk at 613-282-5522 or e-mail him at dpicklyk@hotmail.com to reserve your spot at any of our Christmas services.

I have been asked about the possibility of undertaking parish Bible Studies or Book studies, or a Book Club. Please phone me or drop me a note if any or all of those options might interest you. Our Wardens and I will try to work something out by Lent. We would still have to do it on-line, and probably in the evening so that more people can attend.