



*All Saints' Episcopal Church*  
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### *Priestly Perusings*

*People, look East, the time is near  
Of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
Trim the hearth and set the table,  
People look East and sing today,  
Love, the Guest, is on the way.* *-Carol of the Advent*

**November 29 is the first Sunday of Advent** (a word which means “coming”), the first Sunday of a brand-new year (Year C) in the Church calendar. In spite of the “message of the mall,” the beginning of the new Church Year is a time to slow down. This is not what the marketplace would have us believe. The message of our culture is to hurry up and shop, shop, shop for lots and lots of expensive Christmas presents; wrap, bake, clean, party, decorate the tree, etc. In the process, most of us become more and more exhausted, frazzled, and finally depressed that we cannot do it all! The Church takes Advent seriously. This is a season of patience; of holy waiting in anticipation of the coming of Christ in history, as a child once born in a stable and now into our hearts, and also of waiting for his Second Coming in glorious majesty, to judge the living and the dead. Advent was once a very penitential season – a “little Lent,” but over the past 40 years or so, it has been transformed into a period of restrained joy and preparation for the celebration of the Holy Nativity. Like other liturgical seasons, Advent has its own sights and sounds: the color changes to purple (the color for both royalty and penitence); the Advent Wreath helps us count down the four Sundays; altar flowers are replaced by simple greens, the singing of the “Gloria in Excelsis” is replaced by the Trisagion; the Alleluia and Verse before the Gospel are replaced by verses of an Advent hymn; and on at least one of the Sundays, the recitation of a psalm is replaced by a Canticle (canticles are biblical songs which are not in the Book of Psalms). We use Eucharistic Prayer B throughout the entire Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season because of its emphasis on the Word-made-flesh. True to our Anglican tradition, we sing Advent hymns throughout the season and save the Christmas carols for the twelve days of Christmas. Here are some suggestions for keeping a holy Advent and preparing for the coming of Christ: Plan now to set aside some time for prayer and reflection each day, to converse with God and get your spiritual house in order. Be counter-cultural - attend our Advent Quiet Day on December 5 for some peaceful, directed silent prayer. Make a sacramental confession to a priest, if you feel the need of it (I hear confessions by appointment). Pray daily for justice and peace, and for an end to poverty, oppression and violence. Keep your Advent wreath in a prominent place – the family dining table is a great spot; open one window a day on your Advent calendar. Decorate your house, little by little, in preparation for the coming of the Christ Child. Set up the crèche (nativity scene), but keep the baby out of the manger until Christmas Eve and let the Wise Men (Magi) travel from the East across the room until they finally arrive on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Slow down, even though the rest of the world hurries up, and practice holy patience, as we wait in hope for the coming of the Prince of Peace, our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Faithfully,  
Susan+

**AN ADVENT QUIET DAY**, sponsored by the Women's Group and led by Mother Davidson, will be offered on **Saturday, Dec. 5, Noon – 4 PM**, beginning with lunch at Noon, and continuing with periods of directed silent prayer and meditation, concluding at 4 PM. This is an opportunity for peace and quiet in the midst of a hectic season. There is no charge and all men and women are welcome. The Women's Group needs to know for how many to prepare lunch, so ***please register by Dec. 2 by calling the church office (203-879-2800) and leaving a message on the machine.***

**BOOK AND BIBLE STUDY: I Pray in Poems: Meditations on Poetry and Faith**, by Dave Worster, a study of poems based in Scripture. The book includes works by a number of well-known poets and covers the seasons from Advent through Easter Week. We will read on our own and meet occasionally on a Sunday after church to discuss. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you are interested in participating. **The first meeting is December 13, after the Eucharist.**

**THANK YOU!!** to all who have so far turned in pledges of time, talent and treasure to the ministry of Christ at All Saints' for the Year 2016. So far, we have received 18 pledges for a total of \$32,978. If you have not yet had time to do so, it is never too late to do so – God will not love you any the more because of it, but the work of God in Christ will be furthered by your generosity, so that others may learn of the Holy One's love for them. In such ways, the Light of Christ, and the circle of awareness grows.

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ALL SAINTS' PARISH will take place on Sunday, January 24, 2016, with a "snow date" of January 31.** The purpose of the meeting is to elect new officers and members of the Vestry, and to receive reports of the various ministries of the parish, as well as the annual budget (which is approved by the Vestry at its January meeting). If you are invited to allow your name to stand in nomination for service on the Vestry, please consider it seriously and pray about whether God may be calling you to serve in this way. Election is for a three-year term. Officers of the Vestry (Sr. and Jr. Wardens, Clerk, and Treasurer, are elected for one-year terms.) The Vestry meets once a month (currently on the second Tuesday evening), except for a summer recess, and engages in a Vestry Retreat once a year. We have a really good time together! We pray together, enact the day-to-day business of the parish, and we laugh a lot! Every Episcopalian should at some point serve in the ministry of leadership which is the Vestry; it's a wonderful way to get to know how the church works in all its facets.

**BECOMING A MEMBER OF ALL SAINTS'** is really very simple. If you have been Baptized with water in the name of the Trinity in any Christian tradition, all you have to do is register your Baptism with us – this makes you a member of All Saints' Parish, but Baptism makes one a Christian; it does *not* make you an Episcopalian! If you are already an Episcopalian, please just ask Mother Davidson to request your Letter of Transfer from your former parish. In order to become an Episcopalian, you must be Confirmed (for those who have been raised in most Protestant traditions, as well as other Episcopal churches) or Received by a bishop in the Episcopal Church (for those who have been raised in the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Churches). Preparation for Confirmation/Reception of adults will be offered through Inquirers' Classes as needed in the course of the coming year.

**THE GREENING OF THE CHURCH** will take place after the Eucharist on Sunday, December 22 (Advent IV). All are invited to stay for a bit and help decorate the church for Christmas.

**ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE FROM MINISTRY LEADERS BY JANUARY 3.** Please e-mail your report to Mary Pepides ([mpepides@comcast.net](mailto:mpepides@comcast.net)) who is very gracious in preparing the complete Annual Report to the parish.

## CHRISTMAS AT ALL SAINTS:

Christmas Eve            Thursday, December 24:  
                                 5 PM - Family Eucharist with carols  
                                 11 PM – candlelight Midnight Mass with Choir

Christmas Day            Friday, December 25:  
                                 10 AM – Holy Eucharist

Christmas I                Sunday, December 27  
                                 9:30 AM    Holy Eucharist

Christmas II               Sunday, January 3  
                                 9:30 AM    Holy Eucharist and Carols

Sunday, January 10      The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord  
                                 9:30 AM - Holy Eucharist

followed by the first King Cake of the season

*(This is an especially appropriate day for Baptism, if you or yours is interested in receiving that Sacrament.)*

### Women's Group

Our fundraiser to sell candles that are made by Thistle Farms is underway. This organization was started by Rev. Becca Stevens (under the name of Magdalene) in 1997 in Nashville, TN. It supports a community of women who have survived prostitution, trafficking and addiction. They have a nice website that explains the community and how it has helped and continues to help many women. The candles are made by them. They are 8 oz in size are white with a balsam fir scent. Each candle has the word 'Hope' in gold on the glass container. We have purchased one unit of 24 and are selling them for \$20.00 each. We still have several candles left for purchase.

During the season of Advent we are collecting items to support the Prudence Crandell organization for women and children that have been the victims of domestic violence. This organization is located in New Britain, CT. At this time there is a great need for cold weather items- hats, scarves, gloves, mittens, pajamas, sweatshirts/pants. They also need diapers of any size, bed sheet sets, and towels. At this time the Center does not need much in the way of toiletries.

We are sponsoring a retreat on 12/5 that will be lead by Rev. Davidson. Lunch will be served at noon. Please let either Nancy or Rev. Davidson know if you plan to attend so the proper amount of food can be purchased for lunch.

## A PRAYER FOR LITTLE PLACES

Loving and living God,  
You chose to be born in a small town.  
You never failed to visit little communities.  
You made it your joy to serve the least.

We pray now for our small churches in remote places.  
May they offer worship that gives life and hope where resources are scarce;  
May they provide nurture that gives sustenance and comfort where people  
are hungry and broken hearted;  
May they live out God's mission in a fashion that provides light and joy  
to the communities in which they are planted.

Help us to know that in your creation, there is no body  
so tiny as to be counted unworthy of your love.  
Help us to know that by your measure, the small are  
great and the humble are powerful.  
Help us to know that in your economy, the last are  
counted first, and the holy is found in common things.  
Help us to know that in your Kingdom, there is no  
outpost so remote as to be removed from your grace and real presence.

We pray now for the little places, our God.

May they know your joy. May you bring them life.  
Amen.

(The Rt. Rev. J. Scott Barker  
Bishop of the Diocese of Nebraska)