

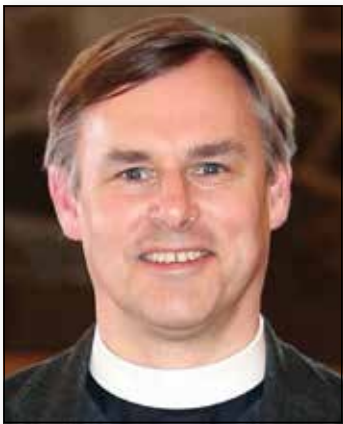


THE ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

CALL

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The Season of Advent



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

“THIS TIME, LIKE ALL TIMES, IS a very good one, if we but know what to do with it,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson. No truer words can be said of Advent. The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has spoken about Advent being the time of waiting for Jesus to come into the world. He suggests we might find this idea a bit odd, because surely Jesus has already come into the world—after all, isn't this what we celebrate at Christmas? But Williams says the focus of Advent is about waiting to see what will happen to us as individuals if we allow Jesus to enter more fully into our lives. If perhaps each of us can find a little more space for Christ in our own lives, what difference might this make to the world?

During Advent, we are asked to make time in our daily lives for prayer; for reflection and self-examination; for asking serious questions about the direction of our lives, how

we can be more open to the Holy Spirit, and those areas where we need to change. However, I know that for many of us, Advent has become a time when our lives become even more frantically overloaded with busy-ness. All of the things that take up our time in Advent are good and worthy things in themselves—preparing for Christmas festivities, buying presents, going to parties, attending carol concerts, etc. But the sheer weight of them can squeeze out the time we may have wanted to spend addressing the profound spiritual business of Advent.

This Advent, make a spiritual commitment to give yourself space so that you can encounter Christ, who is knocking at the door of your soul. This doesn't have to be a big commitment of time. Contemporary spiritual masters, such as the Trappist monk Basil Pennington, tell us that even taking a “pause” can be an opportunity for the opening of our souls to Christ. Pennington himself was renowned for being able to take moments for prayer, even in the most hectic of settings. He was once seen to undertake silent meditation in the midst of a crowded airport lounge at Heathrow.

Above all, find some time of quietness in the busy weeks of Advent. You may want to slip into a church for some time of quiet reflection during the day—perhaps here at St. Andrew's or at a church near your workplace. This Advent at St. Andrew's, Margaret Schwarzer will

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be offering contemplative Taizé-Style worship and a Blue Christmas service, which you can read more about in Margaret's article.

The great 20th-century spiritual guide and monk Thomas Merton

wrote, "The core of our being is drawn like a stone to the quiet depths of each moment where God waits for us with eternal longing." The ironic challenge of contemporary Advent is to pre-

vent the noise of the season from drowning those quiet depths.

Yours in Christ,



Warden's Letter

Advent: A Time of Reflection, Expectation, and Hope



Michael Vanin

And the angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people." —Luke 2:10

THIS PASSAGE IS FAMILIAR to most of us and is as poignant today as it was over 2000 years ago regarding anticipation, hope and expectation. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year. Starting on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, Advent is a time of reflection, expectation, and hope as we prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas.

This time of year is a busy one for families, clergy, and the St. Andrew's congregation as a whole. We ready ourselves for the joys and responsibilities that come

with the season—buying, wrapping and mailing gifts, decorating the house and the tree in seasonal splendor, hosting and attending gatherings with friends and family. There are plenty of expectations and hopes that precede the Christmas season, but where do we fit in reflection? Are we so absorbed in the "end game" that we just can't find the time or motivation to be introspective?

As I write this article, I find myself drawing a mental timeline of those events that have shaped my personal and spiritual life over the past 12 months. It hasn't always been the case, but this year, I realize that my family and I have been blessed with so much—much to share, much for which to be grateful. My expectation is that all of this good will be translated into hope: hope for a more forgiving world, hope for a long and healthy life, hope that our careers are personally fulfilling and will leave good in our wake, hope that we have raised our children to be good citizens, hope that we are good stewards of St. Andrew's.

Beyond my personal blessings, I reflect on how humbling it is to serve as a warden at St. Andrew's.

It is a true miracle that this wide-eyed kid from Buffalo, NY, has been entrusted with the

collective confidence of this important leadership role. Just after I accepted the call last January, many parishioners asked, "So, is the job as hard as you thought it would be?" That is a question I've pondered and will continue to reflect upon, but right now the same answer keeps presenting itself: How can anything be hard if you believe in the mission, enjoy the people you work with, and see only positives for the future?

Being at the precipice of the next wave of growth and vitality of our church and having my fingerprints



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on our future is a true gift. For example:

- Adrian has been at the helm as our rector for over two years.
- We have added two very capable new members of the clergy in Margaret and Catherine, who represent all the promise of our new direction.
- The church school is bursting at the seams.
- Adult formation classes are well attended.
- Stewardship contributions are up.
- Sundays see new families attending services on a regular basis.

Everywhere I look, I see dedicated people making St. Andrew's

what we all believe it is and can be. So no, my friends, this job is not harder than I thought it would be. It is as rewarding as almost anything I've ever done in my professional life.

In this season of reflection, expectation, and hope, it is natural and exciting to anticipate Christmas and the celebration of the birth of the Son of God. But let's be mindful of the less fortunate, not the least of whom are those among us who feel some sorrow around the holiday. Reaching out to those who are going through grief or difficulty and sharing in St. Andrew's Blue Christmas service might be ways you can reflect on your gifts and give to others.

In conclusion, I take a cue from the most visible disciple of Christ who recently took the United States by storm—Pope Francis. When he addressed Congress, his words were not original, nor were they fancy. They were simple, and they were delivered to some of the most powerful leaders in the world. Just eleven words—the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

That is a reflection, expectation, and hope for all of us.



Advent: Making Room for the Spirit



The Rev. Margaret Schwarzer

ADVENT IS A SACRED AND particular time for Episcopalians; it begins the Sunday following St. Andrew's Day and lasts until Christmas Eve, when we begin the 12-day season of Christmastide. Many Protestant churches don't celebrate the season of Advent, and the secular world is very busy anticipating Santa Claus in what is often a period of frantic gift-buying. We Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Lutherans do something else: We wait. We make room for the grace and the joy of Christmas by spending four

weeks in anticipation. Every year, we get to ask ourselves, "How will we wait?" Will it be joyful, boisterous, hopeful, gentle, solemn? As we find ourselves on the cusp of Advent, our year's experiences and the experiences of our friends, our family, and our world help us answer that question.

This Advent, St. Andrew's Church is offering two new kinds of meditative services to broaden our own experience of the Spirit's presence among us.

Please mark your calendars for two Taizé-Style (pronounced TAY-zay) meditative services, which will be held from 5:45 to 6:30pm in our stable-sized Children's Chapel on Sundays, November 29 and December 6. Please also consider joining us there on Wednesday, December 16 at 6:30pm for our Blue Christmas service.

Meditative Services with Taizé Chanting

If you are longing for mystery and silence to be a part of your Advent waiting, please join us for two meditative services with

Taizé chanting. These services will offer four or five simple chants, based on scripture, which will regulate our breathing and help us settle into a quiet and soulful waiting. Phrases like "Bless the Lord, my soul" will be sung over and over, until our hearts and minds still and make room for quiet contemplation. Many candles will flicker, and we will share in five minutes of silent prayer after an Advent scripture is read. The service leaders will support the song, so even if you aren't a singer, your spirit can be fed by these quiet, prayerful services.

These services are shaped by the monastic community in Taizé, France, a place of prayer and reconciliation for over 70 years. Please go to www.taize.fr to learn more about this ecumenical place of worship and spiritual renewal, which has been visited by archbishops and popes, and to hear examples of the chanting. I have been on pilgrimage to Taizé twice, once by myself, and once as a leader of Princeton students. It is a place of profound spiritual refreshment.

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Advent: Making Room for the Spirit *continued*

If you have had an experience with Taizé already, and you would like to be part of the planning team for these services, please contact me.

A Blue Christmas Service

Sometimes, Advent and Christmas are full of joy, peace, and soulful satisfaction; in other years, we may find ourselves in the midst of loss, disappointment, worry, or illness. If your year has held hardships, and you are longing for a chance to make room for the Spirit of God

at a time of struggle or loss, please consider joining us on December 16 for a Blue Christmas Service. We will gather with solemn, gentle silence, a spoken service, and an opportunity for each of us to silently light candles and kindle a prayer or a hope for the year that is past, and the year that is ahead. Most importantly, we will rest in the promise of Christmas, remembering that even in times of sorrow, God's love and God's grace can find us and support us.

Our faith tradition teaches us that Christmas depends upon God, not upon us; no matter what kind of year we have had, God's love and God's grace can sustain us. The gift has already been given (two thousand years ago).

How will you wait for Christmas this year? Please join us at St. Andrew's on Sunday mornings, during Lessons and Carols, or during these new worship experiences. We want to journey towards the mystery of Christmas with you.

Advent Reflections

As we prepare for Christmas, THE CALL invited parishioners to share their thoughts of the season. In the following reflections, **Ingrid Houghton** shares her Advent memories, past and present, and **Sarah Dent** remembers an Advent sermon from long ago.

Jesus is Coming



Ingrid Houghton

WHEN I WAS GROWING up in Washington, D.C., my family celebrated Advent in many ways. One I remember particularly was that every year, my family went to the White House lawn to see the national Christmas trees. It was always exciting to get bundled up in our coats after dark and make the trek downtown. After getting some hot chocolate, we would wander around the displays together. We would discuss what decorations were put on each tree, and which

ones were the prettiest. We would run around and find all fifty state trees, and we would talk about the theme of each tree. The decorations were beautifully made and cleverly hung. Each year the trees were different, revealing the artistry of their creators. I liked the smell of the pine mixed with the crisp, dry air and the sweetness of the hot chocolate. The trees were statues, reflecting our varied national personalities, all standing together, united, in front of the White House. I loved being together with my family those nights, and when my days of visiting the trees ended, my childhood ended, too.

So when I started thinking about what traditions I have for my children, I realized that the biggest tradition we have is setting up our many crèche sets. I have some that I purchased overseas to reflect different countrys' cultures, some that I purchased because of their beauty or craftiness, and some that were handed down to me from my mother. I love each one of them, and we spend a long time as a family setting them up.

We play Christmas music in the background while we carefully unpack the sets, pulling out each member of the story. Each family member has his or her favorite; mine is one I purchased while living in Spain. Some sets go in the same place every year, and some change locations. When they are all out, we walk around and look at each individual display. In one, the sheep are all in a row, while another has them scattered. In one, the wise men face out, and in another they reverently face the baby Jesus. They are all slightly different each year, each reflecting the choices of the person who put it up.

Each of these traditions has the same foundation: families spending time together thinking about Jesus. Advent is a season of reflection. We reflect on the past and what the year brought us. We reflect on the future and what is yet to come. I hope that my children will one day reflect on our tradition, and know that whether you gaze upon beautifully decorated trees or artfully arranged crèche sets, the message is the same: Jesus is coming.

Listen for that Small Voice Within



Sarah Dent

For you see . . . it is by our actions that we present Christ again and again. Jesus comes in us—we are the apocalypse—we are the eschaton, we are earthquakes and the roaring of the sea. And where does this coming happen near at hand so it can be seen?

What are the events we wait for? When will He come? In moments of kindness; and mercy; of forgiveness; of faithfulness and courage; in acts of strength and advocacy for the poor; in Death and Resurrection.

THESE WORDS, DELIVERED in Advent, 1994, resonate again and again with me as the time for Advent reflection approaches. In the larger context, the Very Reverend Stephen Foote suggests that Advent requires us to look both near and far—far back to the time of Jesus’s birth and the preparation thereof, and near to see the prophesized second coming of God’s kingdom. He encourages us not to wait for the cataclysmic event, but to notice the “Kingdom moments” as this

busy season threatens to distract us and draw us away from God’s presence. I take great personal comfort in knowing that God’s kingdom is already here in this life, but also in our hearts as we relinquish control and release our tight grip in order to listen for that small voice within, urging us toward his will for us as individuals, a community, and humanity.

. . . Get yourselves ready, for the kingdom is at hand. Not as a one-time event at the end, but as a repeatable act, happening over and over again. Not as a minor event, but as a miracle of tremendous proportions. For every single time any one of us in God’s creation manages to bend our ironclad wills to the same as the will of God—thy Kingdom comes . . .

Preparing for St. Andrew’s Next Ordination



The Rev. Canon Edie Dolnikowski

SINCE LEAVING ST. ANDREW’S to become a member of the diocesan staff in 2013, I have experienced many changes in my life—new duties, a new office, and new home—along with *lots* of change in the life of the Diocese of Massachusetts. In addition to other staff transitions, we have elected Alan Gates as our new bishop and mourned the death of Bishop Tom Shaw.

For the most part, however, my

work in the Office of Ordained Vocations has changed very little. We still support the Commission on Ministry as it helps inquirers discern their calls to ordained leadership in the Church, and shepherds those invited into formation through their preparation for ministry. As of July 1, there were forty-five people in the ordination process as postulants (those in the first eighteen months of formation), candidates (those in their second eighteen months of formation), and transitional deacons preparing for their ordinations to the priesthood. Of these, thirty-five hope to become priests and ten hope to serve as deacons. They come from thirty-five sponsoring congregations throughout the diocese.

The “Ministry” section of the Catechism in the *Book of Common Prayer* states that the ministers of the Church serve in four orders: lay persons (the most important and powerful order in the Church!), deacons, priests, and bishops. Those who are called to the di-

aconate have a particular responsibility to serve those in need, and to “interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.” (BCP, p. 543) According to a very ancient tradition, priests are ordained first as deacons—to signal their prophetic calling to serve the whole world—and later priests, who have a special calling to serve as pastors in congregations. A “transitional deacon” is a person serving a congregation during the time between the first and second ordinations. In my years at St. Andrew’s we had three transitional deacons who eventually were ordained to the priesthood: Julie Carson, Chris Wendell, and Brian Rebholtz. St. Andrew’s is now blessed to have in its midst a fourth transitional deacon, Cat Healy.

One very exciting way that my work *has* changed in the past few months results from Bishop Gates’ decision to ordain priests individually in the parishes that have called them, rather than as a group. Individual ordinations were common

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Preparing for St. Andrew's Next Ordination *continued*

in the Diocese of Massachusetts during the time of Bishop Shaw's predecessors, and are customary in most dioceses. As Bishop Gates has said, this change will allow priests and congregations to celebrate

their new ministry in the place where they will share it together, in the same way that the installation of a rector celebrates a new relationship in the ongoing ministries of priest and congregation.

For my part, I am thrilled that St. Andrew's will host Cat's ordination to the priesthood in February and I look forward to sharing that glorious occasion with all of you!

Sacred Order of Priests: Ordination on Saturday, February 27, 2016



The Rev. Catherine "Cat" Healy

DEACONS CARRY A SPECIAL charge to build bridges between the church and the outside world, and they have certain liturgical responsibilities that signify this role: In every congregation where a deacon is present, you will find the deacon proclaiming the Gospel and delivering the dismissal at the end of the service. As a part of their commitment to servanthood, deacons are also frequently responsible for laying the altar for the Holy Eucharist and have a special calling to participate in outreach—two roles I have been delighted to fill as a transitional deacon at St. Andrew's.

Just as the Episcopal Church calls deacons to particular ministries, it reserves other responsibilities for priests. These include a special calling to bless people, the ability to absolve sins, and the consecration of the Eucharist. I am overjoyed to announce that Bishop Alan Gates will ordain me to the Sacred Order of Priests here at St. Andrew's on Saturday, February 27, 2016, at 10:30am. I'm thrilled that I will be able to celebrate with the congregation I have already come to love, and hope to see you there!

Books About Faith to Put Under the Christmas Tree

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A WAY to make faith a bigger part of your Christmas celebrations, why not give the gift of one or more of these books? They might deepen your prayer life, spark your curiosity, or start a good conversation the next time you're stuck in a traffic jam.

—The Rev. Catherine "Cat" Healy

Books for Younger Children

A Child's Book of Graces, by Lois Rock. Good Books, 2006. Grades K and up.

This beautifully illustrated, stocking-stuffer-sized book offers many short prayers to say before meals. If you're looking for a way to integrate prayer into your family's daily life, give this book as a gift and invite your children to take turns choosing the grace for each meal.

Desmond and the Very Mean Word, by Desmond Tutu. Candlewick Press, 2013. Grades K and up.

In this story based on a real incident from Archbishop Tutu's childhood, Desmond is called a "very mean word" by a group of white boys in his South African town. He thinks the only solution is revenge, until a kindly priest teaches him an important lesson about forgiveness.

Books for Older Children

But God Remembered: Stories of Women from Creation to the Promised Land, by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso. Jewish Lights Publishing, 1995. Grades 3 and up.

In this lushly illustrated collection, the author imagines the lives of four women who are mentioned in the Bible but whose stories have otherwise gone untold: Lilith, Serach, Bityah, and the Daughters of Z.

One World, Many Religions: The Ways We Worship, by Mary Pope Osborne. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1996. Grades 4 and up.

Illustrated with spectacular color photos from around the world, this book provides a tour of seven of the major world religions, with text that highlights the complexity and internal diversity of each.

Books for Teens

Call on Me: A Prayer Book for Young People, by Jenifer Gamber. Morehouse Publishing, 2012. Grades 7 and up.

This Episcopal prayer book is modeled on the Book of Common Prayer, but designed especially for teens who want to learn more about how to pray and why. It includes an explanation of different kinds of prayer and a simplified form of the Daily Office.

The Miracle Stealer, by Neil Connelly. Scholastic, 2010. Grades 9 and up.

After Andi's little brother Daniel survives a freak accident, he becomes known as a "Miracle Boy." People from all over the world come to seek healing from his touch, and members of his church begin to exploit him. Through her efforts to protect her brother, Andi finds her way from faith to cynicism and back again.

Books for Older Teens and Adults

My Pew: Things I Have Seen From It, by Dave Walker. Canterbury Press, 2008.

The Church of England's most beloved cartoonist will make readers laugh out loud with deadpan comics like "Pews: The Five Worst Places to Sit" and "Deciding Whether to Go to Church or the Football Match."

Praying in Color: Drawing a New Path to God, by Sybil MacBeth. Paraclete Press, 2007.

In this brief, visually dazzling book, MacBeth invites readers to embrace doodling as a spiritual practice. If you give this book as a gift, consider including a blank journal, some colored pencils, and a good pen!

What are your favorite books about faith? Send me a note—I'd be thrilled to add them to my Christmas reading list!

Gathering of the Greens & Wreath Making

In Europe, wreaths made from evergreen cuttings have long been a symbol of life and hope in the midst of the winter season. As early as the 16th century, these wreaths were given a theological meaning by Christians and used to mark the liturgical season of Advent—a period in which the Church engages in self-examination, meditation and a sense of joyful anticipation as we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation and proclaim Christ's promise to come again.

- **Gathering of the Greens** This year, St. Andrew's parishioners will continue our tradition of coming together to cut and gather evergreens at Luisa Hunnewell's home on November 28th at 9:30am. After we've

finished, we'll take the greens to the Parish Hall and enjoy hot chocolate and pastries. Please note that we will gather green in rain or shine, so come prepared and dress warmly. Bags will be provided, but bring your own gloves and clippers. Lastly, there is no need to RSVP! Just show up!

- **Wreath Making** On Sunday, November 29th, following the 10:00am worship service, join us in the Parish Hall and help us transform our freshly gathered greens into a beautiful advent wreath that you can take home. Forms, candles and meditation guides will be available for purchase. Please feel free to bring your own form, if you already have one.



Nominating Committee Update

THE NOMINATING committee has been meeting regularly since the spring, and communicating frequently by phone and email to help identify parishioners to join the vestry or to assume other important leadership positions for the 2016 church year. Vestry positions that will

open in January when the incumbent's term expires include Clerk, Communications, Fellowship, Membership, and Treasurer. In addition, the nominating committee seeks candidates for delegates and other positions that represent St. Andrew's in diocesan and deanery activities. If you would like to

suggest a candidate, please contact one of the committee's members: Elizabeth Clarke, Eliot Heher, Ansley Martin, Anne Prensner, and Ruth Keyes, or you may contact Warden Lynda Sperry, who has provided the committee with invaluable guidance and assistance.

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AN ADVENT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday Evening, December 13, at 5 o'clock

The Parish Choir singing under the direction of Helen Ward Mannix; Thomas Handel, Guest Organist.
Music by Eric Whitacre, Orlando Gibbons, Elizabeth Poston, and Jonathan Dove.

"Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion and turneth the shadow of death into the morning. Alleluia, yea, the darkness shineth as the day, the night is light about me. Amen." —Amos 5:8; Psalm 139

ALL ARE INVITED TO A CANDLELIGHT RECEPTION FOLLOWING IN THE PARISH HALL.

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