

THE CALL

ST. ANDREW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

NO. 374
WINTER 2017

The “In-Between” Moments of Advent



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

IT IS IN THE “LITTLE SPACE” that we meet God in Jesus Christ, Rowan Williams, the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, said in his first-ever Christmas message to the Anglican Communion. Williams is widely regarded as the foremost contemporary theologian and spiritual teacher in the Anglican Communion and is certainly a “spiritual hero” of mine. While I was at seminary, he was still a professor at Oxford, and I was among many who crowded in to hear his lectures, with many people sitting on the floor or on windowsills in his lecture room at Christ Church College.

During Advent, we await the divine mystery of the eternal Son of God, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, sustains the whole universe, to be born in the form of a frail human baby in the small space of a stable. As Williams says, “God’s way with us is not to overwhelm us with majesty, but to live his life in ‘little space’ and to speak there the quiet words that summon us to faith.”

To be able to hear those quiet words that call us to faith and invite us to enter the little space of that stable, we must stand back from the rush of our lives and silence the clamorings of the wants and desires that crowd God out. This, of course, is an ancient theme of Advent—that it might be a season of quietness, prayer, and self-denial. Yet, how ironic it is that the weeks leading up to Christmas have become some of the most frantic and busy of the year. They are also some of the most festive, because it has become the modern custom to begin our celebration of Christmas in the weeks leading up to Christmas Day, rather than during the traditional Twelve Days of Christmas, which commence on Christmas Day.

It thus seems almost Scrooge-like to call for a season of self-denial during one of the most festive times of the year. It is certainly counter-cultural. But I believe Rowan Williams’ insight that we meet Jesus most profoundly in the “little space” has something very important to tell us about how we encounter God, not only during the busy season of Advent, but also during the everydayness of our lives.

I have to confess to a slight sense of self-contradiction as I explore this topic. On one hand, I am always encouraging people to take on a spiritual discipline of intentionally carving out time for quiet in their busy lives by setting aside time for prayer, meditation, or reading the scriptures, so that they can hear the still, small voice of God. But on the other hand, I am aware that in my own experience, it is often in the small, unplanned,

“in-between” moments that I hear and encounter God. For example, in what I think of as frustratingly wasted time, such as having to sit in a waiting room for an appointment, I am sometimes blessed to hear the quiet voice of God speaking to me. Over the recent months, my daughter Elizabeth has started as a coxswain at the Community Rowing Institute on the Charles River, and I have been faced with some periods of enforced idleness as I wait around while she trains. At first, I was quite frustrated by this “wasted time,” but I have now come to value it as a time for spiritual openness and reflection.

So this Advent, rather than putting emphasis on telling you to carve yet more time out of your busy schedule for intentional spiritual reflection, I would like to encourage you to be more spiritually alert and present during the “in-between moments” in your busy Advent schedule. It is in these moments, when we are forced to take a break from our own agendas and plans, that our souls can become more open to hearing the voice of Jesus. As Rowan Williams says, “The biggest thing that gets in the way of us hearing the small voice of God is the overinflated size of our own agendas and plans.”

Yours in Christ,

In This Issue

Rector's Letter: The "In-Between" Moments of Advent

Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole 1

Warden's Message: Celebrating the Joyful and Wondrous Birth of Christ

Lynda Sperry 2

Advent Adventures: Running, Chanting, Burning

Rev. Margaret K. Schwarzer 3

Windows, Mirrors, and Human Dignity: Seeking Diversity in Children's Literature

Rev. Catherine Healy 4

Multicultural Children's Book Ideas

Rev. Catherine Healy 5

Book Review: *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*

Charlene Smith 6

Advent Reflections

Dan Dent, Sarah Dent, Peter Lull, Ansley Martin, Jenny Sawyer 7

Calendar see insert

Warden's Message

Celebrating the Joyful and Wondrous Birth of Christ



Lynda Sperry, Warden


ST. ANDREW'S started our program year with much enthusiasm and vitality, supported by our clergy team, staff and many volunteers. It is wonderful to see the many new, as well as familiar, faces in our pews. I've heard more than once from our long-time members that there are so many new parishioners they do not know. Thus we eagerly await the new photo directory that Nancy Hancock, our communications vestryperson, is spearheading. Whether used to invite a new member to a church event or call on a pew mate who you haven't seen in a few weeks, the photo directory is one of our most important tools in helping us build our community.

With one year behind them, both Margaret and Cat have hit their stride, and their adult and youth ministries have strong participation. To help both ministries get adequate support, the vestry is recommending that we split the current Christian Learning vestry position into two: one focusing on adult formation and the other on church school and youth formation. This increases the number of vestry positions from ten to eleven. As a result, we will elect vestrypersons to both positions at our next annual meeting. Margaret and Cat will continue to work together on our newly energized college ministry.

Reaching out to our local college friends was a goal we established at our first vestry retreat with Adrian back in the spring of 2014. We can all agree how marvelous it is to see college students among us in the pews, at the lectern, and in the choir.

As warden, it is gratifying to see the influx of new energy and leadership, and I am always humbled by the willingness of our parishioners to give of their "time, talent, and treasure." It may be an over-used phrase, but from my standpoint, it cannot be emphasized enough how many people are involved in so many ways in making St. Andrew's our vibrant spiritual home. Not only do parishioners "step up" during our stewardship campaigns to provide financial support, I witness every day the care we give to St. Andrew's and each other: the vestry and their committees who advance their many ministries each year with new ideas; the office volunteers who quietly aid the staff and clergy in their many, complex tasks; the myriad of church school and Rite-13 teachers who cheerfully teach and wisely guide our students each Sunday; the lay pastoral team who write and visit our parishioners in need. Then there are those who do so much to help others outside of St. Andrew's: Family Promise hosts who provide help, food, and companionship; those who attend the services at *common cathedral*; the St. Stephen's volunteers who provide families with Thanksgiving dinners and seniors with Christmas presents, complete with hand-knit items from our knitting ministry. The rich life at St. Andrew's is truly the result of the remarkable efforts of the community.

There is no season that better highlights the work we do together than Advent. The altar guild and choir are at full speed. The children



A publication of
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

PARISH OFFICE: 79 Denton Road,
Wellesley, MA 02482-6404
781.235.7310 | FAX: 781.235.0067
standrewswellesley.org

PUBLISHER: Dan Dent
EDITOR: Katharine Clark,
Parish Administrator
kate@standrewswellesley.org

are busy learning their lines for the pageant. The flower guild is decorating every square inch of the sanctuary; the ushers and acolytes are covering each service. The staff anticipates the regular and not so regular parishioners and their families. And of course, the clergy leads the way in helping us prepare for and celebrate the joyful and wondrous birth of Christ. There is much focus and joy in our work during this season.

As autumn draws to a close, I look forward to the shorter days where nature seems to ask us to slow down. The evenings remind me of my favorite verse from *O Gracious Light*:

*Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

The longer, quieter evenings allow us more space to contem-

plate what we are preparing for: the birth of our Lord Jesus and the love and hope He represents. The magnitude of this occasion is hard to grasp, but the joy and excitement we feel is real and tangible. There is no better place for me to be than at St. Andrew's to celebrate Advent and Christmas. This warm and caring community that I care so deeply about represents God's love and hope to me.

Thank you

AT OUR 2017 ANNUAL MEETING, we will cover many important items, including electing new members to the St. Andrew's vestry. We will also express our appreciation to those who so faithfully served out their terms. Since this is the last *The CALL* newsletter that will reach you before the January 29th meeting, I would like to say a premature but sincere thank you to the following outgoing vestry



members: **Herb Manning**, Stewardship; **Matt King**, Property; and **Will Nystrom**, Christian Learning.

But in addition to these wonderful stewards of their missions, there is one person who has touched our lives in more ways than we can count — **Lynda Sperry**, our retiring warden. While I could list the multiple things that have improved in her wake as warden of St. Andrew's over these past three years (and there are many), I wanted to say publicly how profoundly she has touched my life,

made me believe that everything was possible, no detail was too small, and no measure was too high to achieve for St. Andrew's.

All good things must come to an end. . . and this ride has been great for all who have worked with Lynda. On behalf of the entire St. Andrew's congregation, let me express our collective gratitude for your wisdom, energy, and lasting fingerprint on so many of our lives. Thank you!

—Michael Vanin, Warden

Advent Adventures

Running, Chanting, Burning



The Rev. Margaret Schwarzer

ADVENT IS A SACRED and particular time for Episcopalians; we have four weeks to plan, prepare, and anticipate Christmas Day, and the short season of Christmastide that follows it. How do you want to get ready for Christmas? If we don't plan in advance, we often find ourselves running frantically through malls searching for gifts, worrying about how many Christmas cards to send, and fretting over the cooking of Christmas dinner. This year, I invite all of us to set worry and anxiety

about the season aside. Instead, join St. Andrew's in running, chanting, and burning our way into a holy and soulful Christmas.

Running

This year, St. Andrew's is running in the Wellesley Turkey Trot for the first time. In all, 50 of us will launch ourselves into the first Sunday of Advent by running the annual 5K race. We are raising money for cancer research and a food pantry. We are also reminding ourselves to run the spiritual race

continued

Advent Adventures, *continued*

of Advent with perseverance, joy, and discipline. If you are running, may it be an inspiring and energizing experience for you. If you are caught up in preparing the feast, or coming to our 10am worship service instead, please offer a prayer for our runners at 8am. We 50 will represent St. Andrew's, so we are running for all of us.

Chanting: Taizé

If you are seeking a soulful experience with room for prayerful reflection, please join us for our Taizé-style (pronounced TAY-zay) service on Sunday, December 4, from 5:45 to 6:30pm. This service will offer four to five simple chants, based on scripture, which will help regulate our breathing and help us settle into a quiet and soulful waiting. Many candles will flicker, and we will share in five minutes of silent

prayer after an Advent scripture is read. The service will support the song, so even if you aren't a singer, your spirit can be fed by this quiet, prayerful service. Please go to www.taize.fr to learn more about Taizé, France, an ecumenical place of worship and spiritual renewal visited by archbishops, popes, and eastern patriarchs.

Burning: Blue Christmas

Sometimes, Advent and Christmas are full of peace, satisfaction and easy joy; in other years, we may find ourselves reflecting on the sorrows and losses of the year. Disappointment, worry, and illness can make it hard to make room for God. Other people's joy can make our own grief harder to bear. If you or someone you love has had a year of challenge or grief, please join us for our Blue Christmas Ser-

vice. On Wednesday, December 14, 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 both the year that is past and that year that lies ahead. Most importantly, we will rest in the promise that even in times of sorrow, God's love and God's grace can find us and support us. We will worship together in the Children's Chapel from 6:30 to 7:15pm. Afterward, if you choose, you may remain in the chapel praying silently till 8pm.

These Advent (advent)ures invite us to stir up our hearts in a new way, and to make room for love's arrival. Please join us for the one that calls out to you. We want to journey toward the mystery of Christmas with you.

Windows, Mirrors, and Human Dignity

Seeking Diversity in Children's Literature



The Rev. Catherine "Cat" Healy

IN SEPTEMBER 2016, Carla D. Hayden, 64, was sworn in as the 14th United States Librarian of Congress. Hayden, who is both the first woman and the first African-American appointed to this role, has a dazzling résumé: She holds a doctorate from the University of Chicago and served as president of the American Library

Association and chief librarian of the City of Baltimore. But she began her career as an urban children's librarian, and continues to speak passionately about the importance of making sure that all children see themselves represented in literature. Hayden told TIME magazine that the first library book she ever had fines on was the picture book *Bright April*—she identified so much with the book's main character that she was reluctant to return it. She explained: "It was about an African-American girl, she was a Brownie, she had pigtails, and I thought I looked like her. Kids' books. . . can be windows to introduce them to the world, but [kids] also need to see a reflection. They should be a window and a mirror."

Bright April was groundbreaking when it was published in 1946, but 70 years later, it does not have

enough company: In 2015, fewer than one percent of children's books published in the U.S. were written by people of color, and only twelve percent were about people of color. Children from marginalized races and cultures, especially those served by schools and libraries with limited resources, often have a hard time finding themselves represented on bookshelves.

Why does this matter for us as Christians? Because representation, or the lack thereof, matters to us as the people of God. Education scholar Rudine Sims Bishop warns, "When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part." If we believe that every human person has intrinsic value because we

are all created in the image of God, we owe children books that teach them that their stories matter—books that show people like them, and, better yet, show them as heroes instead of victims, and leaders instead of sidekicks. Our baptismal covenant asks us to “respect the dignity of every human being.” Working to make sure that kids can see themselves in literature is one way of doing that.

This is the spirit that motivates our church school’s Advent book drive for St. Stephen’s Church, our sister parish in Boston. St. Stephen’s hosts year-round academic enrichment programs, which predominantly serve low-income children of color. By purchasing a multicultural book from our Amazon wish list, you can help a child at St. Stephen’s enjoy the spark of recognition we’ve all felt upon

opening a book and feeling like the author has written our life story. In fact, why not buy two copies of the same book—one for the St. Stephen’s book drive, and one for a child in your life? As Sims Bishop promises, “[Literature can] help us to understand each other better by helping to change our attitudes towards difference.”

Multicultural Children’s Book Ideas

THERE ARE HUNDREDS of wonderful kids’ books that feature children of different races, cultures, and abilities—it can just take a little bit of effort to find them! Consider putting one or more of these on your Christmas shopping list.

TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL

Niño Wrestles the World

by Yuyi Morales

The vivid illustrations in this picture book show tiny Niño putting on his red lucha libre mask and wrestling with characters from Mexican folklore. At the end, he has to face the most challenging opponents of all—

Las Hermanitas (his little sisters!).

Wild Berries

by Julie Flett

Clarence is finally old enough to carry his own bucket when he goes berry picking with his grandmother. As he explores the woods, the reader can join him in spotting forest animals and learning new words in Cree (a Native American language).

LOWER ELEMENTARY (Grades K through Three)

Children of God: Storybook Bible

by Desmond Tutu

Archbishop Tutu invited artists from around the world to illustrate this children’s Bible, with each story drawn as though it took place in the illustrator’s homeland. Tutu’s retelling of well-known Bible stories emphasizes the love of God and the human side of Jesus.

Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx

by Jonah Winter

This bilingual picture book is a child-friendly biography of Sonia Sotomayor, the first-ever Latina justice to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. The pictures are delightful, and the details of Sotomayor’s childhood will interest young readers.

UPPER ELEMENTARY (Grades Four to Six)

One Crazy Summer

by Rita Williams-Garcia

This Newbery Medal-winning novel follows the adventures of three young sisters who spend the summer of 1968 visiting their mother, who has joined the Black Panthers. There are two sequels: ***P.S. Be Eleven*** and ***Gone Crazy in Alabama***.

Rad American Women A-Z

by Kate Schatz

This collection of one-page biographies introduces young readers to 26 amazing women, including Maya Lin (designer of the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial), Wilma Mankiller (first female chief of the Cherokee Nation), and many more. There is also a sequel, ***Rad Women Worldwide***.

Looking for more ideas? Check out the website of the Cooperative Children’s Book Center at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam



Charlene Smith

No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam

Reza Aslan, Random House, 2011.

"IT TOOK MANY YEARS TO CLEANSE Arabia of its 'false idols.' It will take many more to cleanse Islam of its new false idols—bigotry and fanaticism—worshiped by those who have replaced Muhammad's original vision of tolerance and unity with their own ideals of hatred and discord. But the cleansing is inevitable, and the tide of reform cannot be stopped. The Islamic Reformation is already here.

"We are all living in it," are the final words in Reza Aslan's book. Aslan, an Iranian American who teaches writing at the University of California, reminds us that we are all part of the history that is now being written, the outcome will be as narrow as our fears or as wide as

compassionate intelligence.

Aslan notes that "it is solely through the slow and steady building of personal relationships that one discovers the fundamental truth that all people everywhere have the same dreams and aspirations, that all people struggle with the same fears and anxieties." Within that is a presumption of our personal arrogance in wanting assurance that 'others' are 'just like us,' and therefore worthy. What might Christ, a dark-skinned Arabized Aramaic Jew, have to say about that?

At a time when discrimination against Muslims is high, this book is important. Media commentators blithely talk of Islam as though it is all one. It's similar to lumping all of Christianity together and suggesting that Christian Scientists, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, evangelicals, and Scientologists speak with one voice.

Sunni Muslims are the biggest branch of Islam and include countries like Saudi Arabia and supporters of the Islamic State (ISIS). Iran, however, is Shi'a, a group being slaughtered by ISIS. Islam is the fastest growing faith group in the world and by 2050 will have bypassed Judaism as the largest non-Christian religion here.

Because Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are intertwined, expect to read aspects that resonate. As an

example, "While she was pregnant, Amina heard a voice tell her, 'You are pregnant with the Lord of this people, and when he is born . . . call him Muhammad.'"

Muhammad's focus was on "economic redistribution and social egalitarianism"—part of Islam's appeal to the disaffected. And much of what you think you know, may be false. The Prophet ensured the Quran says "that men and women were created simultaneously from a single cell." Muhammad amended "Arabia's traditional . . . laws to remove the obstacles that prohibited women from inheriting and maintaining their own wealth," and granted women the right to divorce their husbands. Aslan points out that, "the Islamic world has produced more female presidents and prime ministers than both Europe and North America combined."

Aslan writes that the "stereotype of Islam as a warrior religion has its origins in the papal propaganda of the Crusades, when Muslims were depicted as the soldiers of the Antichrist." Perhaps history is never far from us, even if ignorance has a louder voice. What is clear, is that religions are now being tested by those who manipulate faith. Good outcomes depend on the good, in every community, persisting.

Photo: Peter Lull



Advent Reflections



Photo: Katharine Clark



ADVENT is the season of preparation, and sometimes it is difficult to separate that from the bustle of Christmas. But I find the joy of the season in the rituals and traditions we have both at home and at church. —Peter Lull



THE WEEKS leading up to Christmas can be hectic, but I can always find a moment of calm at church. That's a little of what Advent means to me. —Jenny Sawyer



AT OUR HOUSE, we light the Advent candles every Sunday and have done it for years. The candles sit in the Advent wreath on our kitchen table and serve as a gentle reminder of the season. —Dan Dent



WITH ALL that Advent offers and asks of us, it's often difficult to carve out time for what we're actually called to do: be quiet, reflect, and let that still, small voice within us to have its 15 minutes of fame in our heart. —Sarah Dent



ADVENT is a reminder that GOD is always with us. —Ansley Martin

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Officers & Staff

Warden Lynda Sperry lynda.sperry@verizon.net

Warden Michael Vanin mcvanin1@gmail.com

Treasurer Arnout Eikeboom treas@standrewswellesley.org

Clerk Sarah Harris sarginharris@gmail.com

Rector Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole adrian@standrewswellesley.org

Associate Rector for Adult Formation and Membership

Rev. Margaret Schwarzer margaret@standrewswellesley.org

Assistant Rector for Youth and Family

Rev. Catherine Healy catherine@standrewswellesley.org

Pastoral Associate Rev. Karen Vickers Budney revkar7@comcast.net

Parish Administrator Katharine Clark kate@standrewswellesley.org

Music Minister Helen Ward Mannix wardie@standrewswellesley.org

Financial Secretary Ruth Hubert ruth@standrewswellesley.org

Christian Learning Coordinator

Susan Jackson susan@standrewswellesley.org

Director of Youth Choirs Amanda Kern amanda@standrewswellesley.org

Sexton Stephen F. Killeen steve@standrewswellesley.org

Assistant Sextons William Clover and Matthew Killeen



ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

79 DENTON ROAD
WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 02482

Non Profit Org
U S POSTAGE
PAID
Boston MA
Permit No 54023

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Artwork: Edward Hicks, The Peaceable Kingdom

AN ADVENT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday Evening, December 11, at 5 o'clock

"...and a little child shall lead them" —Isaiah 11:6-7

The Parish Choir singing under the direction of Helen Ward Mannix;
Thomas Handel, Guest Organist.
Music by Boris Ord, John Tavener, John Joubert, and Jonathan Dove.