
St. Paul's Red Door Chronicle

Volume 11, Issue 11

December 2009

From the Priest-in-Charge:

Advent tells us Christ is near;
Christmas tells us Christ is here.
In Epiphany we trace
All the glory of his grace.
-Katherine Hankey, 1888

The lines above come from a lovely children's hymn found in the 1940 hymnal. Its purpose was to teach children the importance of the church seasons and its exclusion from our current hymnal (likely due to its inclusion of a season we no longer observe- "pre-lent") is unfortunate. In any event, as we begin a new church year—for the church year does not begin with January 1st, but with the first Sunday of Advent—it is important that we, too, think about the importance of the calendar (yes, that's "kalendar" with a "k").

Too often we can approach the church year *passively*. We see the colors of the vestments, altar frontal, and pulpit and lectern hangings change; we are presented hymns, lessons, and (hopefully) sermons appropriate to the season; and we notice other small changes in the liturgy. All of this is good, but it is mostly passive. Might I suggest that we each make an effort to observe Advent, and all the other seasons of the church year, more *actively*? Here are just a few suggestions:

- Often, people engage in disciplines of self-denial during Lent, and this is likewise appropriate during Advent, which is in some ways Lent's companion season.
- Advent would be a good time to take up a new prayer practice. It could be something as simple as praying with one's family at a particular time every day (for a good model see "Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families", beginning on page 136 of the Book of Common Prayer). It could be something grand, like starting a bible study group with some of your friends (yes, Episcopalians do bible studies!).

- Many people engage in giving to their favorite causes or make special donations to the Church during this time of year. I have found myself concerned with getting tax deductions as we come closer to December 31st, which is not a bad thing, but it is also important to see giving in terms of spiritual discipline and commitment. Maybe Advent, one of whose central themes is preparing ourselves for the coming reign of Christ, could serve as a better lens through which to see our giving.

- Perhaps you would find an Advent devotional booklet edifying. Such booklets contain a brief meditation for each day of the season. I would commend to you *Alert for Signs: Seeing and Praying through Advent* by the Rev'd Dr Titus Presler. It is available from Forward Movement Publications for three dollars.

- Some families have taken up the practice of having their own Advent wreath, and of using that as a means of prayer and meditation. Most such wreaths come with a small booklet including household lighting liturgies and similar devotions which might be observed at supper time or before bed. There are all sorts of wreaths on the market and most are reasonably priced.

Finally, to revert to my own hobby horse, Advent may be a good time to avail oneself of the "Rite of Reconciliation", our prayerbook's form for private confession (see BCP, 446ff.). I have, for years, availed myself of this Sacrament bi-annually—during Advent and Lent—and have found it extraordinarily useful in my own spiritual development. If you are interested, or if you have questions about the rite and want to "test the waters", please do not hesitate to give me a call.

(Continued on the next page)

GIVING THE GIFT

We will begin the third and final year of our fundraising campaign for Giving the Gift in 2010. Please plan on submitting your contributions.

(Continued from page 1)

These are just a few suggestions, and there are, no doubt, many other salutary ways to observe Advent. The important thing is to see the season not just as our preparation to celebrate Christmas, but as our preparation to receive Christ at his Second Advent. There is a prayer which I sometimes say before celebrating the Eucharist which reminds me of this responsibility and which I hope some of you might find helpful in the same way:

O Lord, sanctify our lives, we beseech thee, by thy visitation, that thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, when he cometh, may find in us a mansion made ready for himself, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.
Amen.

Yours in service to the Gospel,
John+

CHRISTMAS EVE

CHRISTMAS EVE at St Paul's:

5:00 PM – The “family” celebration for young and old, who like an informal celebration and carols.
11:00 PM – The full choir will lead us in the festal celebration.

Either of our Christmas Eve celebrations will bless us by the beauty of the decorated church and the carols of the season, mixed with the people who touch us with Christian faith.

DEADLINE FOR 2009 DONATIONS: NOON ON DECEMBER 31

Checks **must be received** by noon on December 31, in order for them to be recorded as donations for 2009. Checks received in the office or through the postal service after December 31 will be recorded as donations for 2008.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FLOWERS AND GREENERY

The **deadline** for inclusion of memorials and thanksgivings in the Christmas Bulletin is **Friday, December 11th**. Please complete the form found in this newsletter or in the weekly bulletin and return to the office by the deadline.

GREENING OF THE CHURCH 11:30 AM SUNDAY DECEMBER 20

Bring your family to church, then join us for this fun time.

THANKS

We received approximately \$600 for the United Thank Offering. Thanks so much for your generosity.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

**Average Cost Per Week
to Operate St. Paul's: \$4,645.19**

Pledge/Plate Giving Per Week:
Oct 25-Oct 31 \$3877.15
Nov 1-Nov 7 \$6156.15
Nov 8-Nov 14 \$2193.15
Nov 15-Nov 21 \$5185.40

Average Giving Per Week: \$4352.96

USHER SCHEDULE December 2009

6– Gary Perkey & David Wade
13– Pat Mulick & Tim Lindblom
20– Pam Skinner & Bill Olson
24– Allan McSpadden & Lee Conditt
24– Alan Bufford & Dwight Ford
27– Deborah & Jim Johnson



Christmas Memorial

Flowers & Greenery

The deadline for inclusion of memorials in the Christmas Bulletin is Friday, December 11. Your help in returning the following form on time is greatly appreciated.

Persons memorialized:

Donor:

Some prefer their gift to be designated as a thank offering; include those here.

Thank offering for:

Donor:

Please mail these to the church office at P.O. Box 2255 or you may place them in the alms basin. Please denote on your check "Christmas Memorial."

