

THE ST. FRANCIS BULLETIN

AT THE END OF ADVENT

Fr. Lee Nelson, Rector, Christ Church, Waco

This year, I have been reminded that one of the great joys of Advent has nothing to do with waiting, or even delayed gratification. It has to do with the truth that the Word of God has already come to us, and has already taken up residence in our souls and bodies. This, to put it succinctly, is the basis for Christian hope, the glorious mystery, as Paul puts it, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27) Our souls are awakened and cleansed by the indwelling Word, and though we might find ourselves sluggish or plagued by sin, the work of God in Christ is to call the sleeper to be awake, to call the sinner.

This is particularly important as we are often given cause to meditate and think upon the reality that this world and the order of it are passing away. We await a renewed creation, even a new heaven. We yearn, often with eager groans, for bodily redemption. I have noted a certain restlessness in me and those around me. The joy of this Advent has been that Jesus, the Incarnate Word, is the ground of my hope, even as I experience the frailty of my body, the fact that whatever safety I am tempted to trust in, is an illusory thing. The truth we Christians proclaim is that the invisible mystery behind all that we see and experience, is Christ, who not only made all things, but joined himself in the Incarnation to the created order, not to ignore it or demean it, but to redeem it.

I have been reminded of the urgency of proclaiming that truth to a broken, disturbed, and uneasy world. This truth is to be proclaimed to a parish family which experiences all of that brokenness, all of that fear. We have members who are dying. We have members who are afraid. We have members who are disillusioned. I feel in myself a call to proclaim the truth of the hope of the Gospel, and the joy of the Christian sacramental life with renewed vigor. We exist, as a parish church, to

lead all people to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4), to build up the Church and make disciples. Mature discipleship requires seeing the world, and the people around us, through the eyes of hope.

Advent does not catechize us in a way of unfulfilled hopes. It instructs us to rejoice, even, as Father Nicholas reminded us last Sunday, when life is filled with despair and pain. Our hopes, the deepest longings we have for constancy, for love, and for life to be more than what we see now, are fulfilled in the Lamb of God. That wonderful Advent hymn “On Jordan’s Bank” calls to memory John the Baptist, crying out that the Lord is nigh - meaning adjacent. The New Testament story culminates in the Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord, in the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost: all of which point us, not to a presence which is adjacent, but to one that is right where we are, inside us, dwelling in the Eucharist, dwelling in the Christian, dwelling in the Temple of the Lord’s Body, the Church. We live in expectation of the day when the reality that we cannot see, breaks in upon this world to be visible to all.

As we enter the twelve day solemnity of Christmas, I want to remind you of this simple hope, the joy of life lived in the presence of Jesus, and the joy of knowing that we will one day see Him face to face.

I encourage you to truly keep this feast, even if this Advent has been difficult or distracted. I hope it is filled with fires, and meals, and desserts, and warm beverages, but more so, with the awareness of Jesus Christ in your midst.

<https://www.christchurchwaco.org/post/at-the-end-of-advent> (adapted)

CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY

On Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24, we will have our usual service of Lessons and Carols, followed by Holy Communion. The service will take place at 8:00 pm. We are currently working on the music program for the service, and hope that it will be as festive as it always is.

Christmas falls on a Sunday this year and we will have a Holy Communion service at 10:00 am that morning. This service does not have quite the fanfare as the night before, but it is no less a solemn ceremony since it commemorates the birthday of Our Lord. For those of you who cannot attend the Christmas Eve service, you are encouraged to come Christmas morning. It is a beautiful start to a wonderful day.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you wish to donate for the Christmas poinsettias as a remembrance, memorial or thank offering, please use an envelope from the table in the back of the nave to enclose your donation. Fill the envelope front out as appropriate and place in the wooden box on the same bookshelf. If you are not attending services and wish to contribute, you can mail a check to the church 3401 Oak Creek Dr, Austin, TX 78727) or use PayPal to donate on our website: <http://stfrancisaustin.org/donate.html>.

ADOPT A FAMILY

At Christmas time each year, St. Francis adopts a family from the Trotter house, a community outreach assisting women and families in an unplanned pregnancy and beyond. This year we are helping a family or two with multiple needs - clothing, shoes, toys. Donations are being accepted to purchase gifts for the children with the extra going towards a gift card for the family. The funds we collect are given to the Trotter House staff who purchase the gift for the family. Please see Susan Rambin or Charlotte Ready if you would like to contribute to help this family. Monetary gifts are accepted through Nov. 27. Make checks payable to Trotter House with St. Francis Christmas Family on the memo line. There are two displays with an envelope for collecting funds: in the Narthex and in the Fellowship area.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD 2022

Thirteen St. Francis youth from four families packed 74 boxes for Operation Christmas Child on November 13! Thank you to everyone who donated gifts and funds for the boxes. Your thoughtfulness and generosity in choosing items is so appreciated, and the monetary gifts are equally appreciated. Please pray for the children who will be receiving these gifts. It is wonderful how much joy they bring.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR STILL NEEDED

A couple of folks inquired about assuming the duties of the St. Francis Newsletter editor, but all decided to not take this on. The volunteer position is still up for grabs. Please talk to Doug Cooper or Amy Crandell if you are interested in taking on some or all of these duties.

PLEDGE DRIVE

We are at that time of the year where money needs to be mentioned. The annual pledge drive continues through Sunday, December 4. The hope is that all of you have your pledges in by that time so that the Vestry can begin working on the budget for next year. You are encouraged to seek the Lord's guidance about your pledge, both for our Operating Fund as well as the Capital Campaign. God's work needs to continue in every time. We're doing God's work here and regardless of how things seem, the future is always bright in the kingdom.

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Ed and Ruth Ann Stillman
- 12 John and Veronica Armstrong
- 15 Mary and Clifford Collins
- 29 Ikenna and Ngozi Ifesineke

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Mack Lindsey
- 8 Ginger Dickson
- 11 Rick Fleming
- 12 Ngozi Ifesineke
- 17 Ethan Hoyt
- 18 Angie McCown
- 19 Dinah Arce
- 30 Genevieve Hatley

READINGS FOR DECEMBER

12/4 2 Advent (Link to reading)

- Isaiah 11:1-10
- Psalm 72:1-8
- Romans 15:4-13
- Matthew 3:1-12

12/11 3 Advent (Link to reading)

- Isaiah 35:1-10
- Psalm 146:4-9
- James 5:7-10
- Matthew 11:2-11

12/18 4 Advent (Link to reading)

- Isaiah 7:10-17
- Psalm 24:1-7
- Romans 1:1-7
- Matthew 1:18-25

12/24 - Christmas Eve

- Genesis 3:8-19
- Genesis 22:15-18
- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Luke 1:26-38
- Luke 2:1-7
- Luke 2:8-16
- Matthew 2:1-12
- John 1:1-14

12/25 - Christmas Day (link to text)

- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Psalm 96
- Titus 2:11-14
- Luke 2:1-20

Notes on the readings:

- St. Francis follows the [1979 BCP Lectionary](#) for the lessons. We are in Year A.
- The text read at the service is from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.
- Each of the listed Sunday readings is linked to the corresponding page on [LectionaryPage.net](#).
- The Sunday collects and text of the psalms are generally from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.
- On the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, the psalm is chanted during the 11:00 service. The pointing is from the St. Francis Psalter, found at <http://stfrancisaustin.org/psalter>, which is based on the Cathedral Psalter.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sundays (except on 12/25)

9:15 a.m. Nursery is provided.

9:30 a.m. Holy Communion in person, live streamed and recorded. Healing prayers at the altar rail follow the service

9:30 a.m. Sunday School for youth (not on 12/25)

10:00 a.m. Choir Practice (not on 12/25)

11:00 a.m. Holy Communion in person with healing prayers after the service.

Tuesdays

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Home Group. Meeting online via Zoom.

Wednesdays

7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Catechism class via Zoom

Thursdays

7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer in person in the church and via Zoom

1st Saturday, Dec. 3

10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Prayers for the Nation in person in the fellowship hall

2nd Friday, Dec. 9

7:30 - 9:00 p.m. Home Group. Meeting in person at the McCowns' house.

2nd Sunday, Dec. 11

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Home Group. Meeting in person at the Crandells' house.

2nd Monday, Dec. 12

6:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting via Zoom

3rd Friday, Dec. 16

NOON to 1:00 p.m. Mother's Prayer Group in person in the fellowship hall

3rd Monday, Dec. 20

7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Readers of First Things group online meeting. Contact Karl Stephan at kdstephan@txstate.edu to join the online meeting via Zoom or come in person to the fellowship hall.

December 24 (Christmas Eve)

8:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols and Holy Communion

Christmas Day, Dec. 25

10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Holy Communion Service.

Note on the calendar:

- To join any of the meetings or services held via Zoom, email info@stfrancisaustin.org.



ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

ST. FRANCIS ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTIN

A parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth
Diocese Office: 2900 Alameda St.

Fort Worth, TX 76108

<http://www.fwepiscopal.org/>

Bishop: The Rt. Rev'd Ryan Reed

Interim Rector: Fr. Rogers Meredith

Organist: Yunzhi Guan

Parish Administrator: Mark Rambin

Treasurer: Grady Collins

Vestry Officers

Senior Warden	Junior Warden
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Doug Cooper	TBD
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Secretary

Jim Crandell

Vestry Members

Doug Cooper, Jim Crandell, Michael Ready

Christina Hatley, Bill Palmer,

Dinah Arce, Susan Rambin, Mack Lindsey

St. Francis Anglican Church

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ST. FRANCIS' MISSION STATEMENT

- We are a community of believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ whose mission it is to spread that Gospel in what we preach and in the way we live.
- We are called to know the Word of God, to act on it in our lives and to share it with our brothers and sisters in the world.
- We are determined to uphold the ancient faith of our ancestors in the Anglican tradition, to offer traditional Christian values based on the Holy Word of God and to be faithful witnesses to the person of Jesus in the Austin Community.
- St. Francis parish is dedicated to the presence of Christ in the lives of the poor, the needy, the sick, to each other and to all those to whom Jesus comes to minister in his life on earth.
- As a community of believers, we intend to entrust our growth in love, in faith and in resources to the generosity of God.