



The Beacon

News and events from
St. Christopher's Community Church
Olympia, WA

2016 December

A message from Fr. James

Faith at Home: 5 Simple Ways to Include Advent in your Christmas Celebrations

Advent. It's that overlooked season focused on hope and the anticipation of the Messiah's coming. In Scripture God spends a great deal of time preparing the people to anticipate and recognize the Messiah and his mission. As Christians, that's what we do in Advent also – prepare a way and a home for Jesus, so that there is room in our hearts and lives for the Messiah and his mission. The result is a spiritually centered Christmas celebration that has the coming of the Christ at its vibrant heart.

So how do we do that when most of the culture around us has little room or patience for Advent? Here are five ways.

1. Make a spot in your home for Advent – your kitchen table, your reading nook, a favorite window. Decorate with an Advent wreath and the colors blue, purple, or silver. Perhaps the rest of the house is decorated in gold, green, and red for Christmas, but this is the one area where we might pause to listen to the Prophets, the Angels, to Mary and Zechariah before we get to the birth.
2. Make a special point of Advent devotions. Follow the daily readings we recommend (based on the [Daily Revised Common Lectionary](#)) or find another devotional that brings Advent in before Christmas. Try the [Advent & Christmas Wisdom](#) series or [Songs for the Waiting](#) .
3. Create a Jesse Tree. The Jesse Tree is the retelling of the story of Jesus' ancestors and the Divine preparation of God's People for the coming of the Messiah. Each day focuses on a symbol hung as an ornament on a tree that represents a character from the Bible. Web

- search "Jesse Tree" or try [this site](#) from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie (or if you prefer [this site](#) from our Reformed sisters and brothers)
4. Make an Advent playlist or CD, or purchase a collection of Advent music. Listen to your Advent music first before turning to your Christmas music. Here are two of my favorite recommendations: [Advent II by St. Peter's in the Loop](#) and [Arise! Shine! Advent Festival...](#) . For more contemporary sounds see Fernando Ortega's "Ruby's Advent Song" or Christy Nockels "Advent Song", or Robbie Seay Band's "O Come, Divine Messiah." Many are available free on streaming sites or through Thurston County Library's streaming/download site.
 5. Just stop. Stop eating, buying, running around, or working, just for one minute or five. Stand out in the cold and look around. Sit at your hearth and reflect. Stay in your car for an extra moment and close your eyes. Take a little moment as often as you can to listen for and look to God.

Jesus is coming for us as we are, strung out on tinsel or not, whether dingy or sparkling, feeling festive or somber. Ready or not, here Christ comes. Let's ready our hearts and lives together.

Fr. James+



Stewardship Minute Gift Ideas

As we enter the Christmas season it is again time to take on the daunting task of selecting gifts for friends and relatives. Here are a couple of suggestions to consider; ELCA GOOD GIFTS and HEIFER.

Below are excerpts from each current holiday catalog.

ELCA GOOD GIFTS

www.ELCA.org/good_gifts-800-638-3522

Gifts that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives. Gifts range from chicks to cows to clean water wells. As little as \$10 can fund a clinic visit for a child or buy a chick. You can also give a small amount toward the funding of a more expensive gift.

You choose your gift and designate the relative or friend it is honor of and a card will be sent to that person. 90% of the money goes to support programmatic work and less than 10% to administration and fund raising.

HEIFER International

www.heifer.org/catalog-855-848-6437

Select gifts from goats, sheep, cows, pigs or a gift basket. Fund a scholarship or a biogas stove powered by methane gas captured from livestock waste. You choose a gift, for every \$10 an honor card is sent to you to distribute or directly to the person you are honoring. There is also the option to email the honor card and stay green while you are changing lives.

Heifer International works in the areas of livestock and agriculture to alleviate hunger and poverty. Their programs are considered among the most successful in the world.



Also remember those less fortunate in our community this Christmas season

Help stock the foodbank pantry. Needs include canned vegetables, non-perishable protein sources (tuna, peanut butter, canned chicken, et5c.) other non-perishables such as boxed/canned soups, fruit, lentils beans, rice. Also needed are, laundry products, toilet paper and more. Please check labels and only bring items that are not expired.

Volunteer at the Thurston County Food Bank. They need support providing holiday meals. Or you can make a donation at www.thurstoncountyfoodbank.org or mail checks to them at 220 Thurston Ave. NE, Olympia, WA 98501.

Save the dates!!

Christmas Blue Service December 14, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday school teacher meeting December 15, 6 – 8:00 p.m.

Greening Party December 18, 11:30 a.m.

In preparation for Christmas Eve services, the Altar Guild and Worship Support Committee will be hosting a "Greening Party" to prepare and decorate the church. This event is on Sunday, 18 December, after the service. Please join us as we change banners and paraments, put up lighting around the sanctuary, adorn the windows with candles and greens, and enjoy each other's company.

Sign-ups for Christmas Poinsettias

It's time to think Christmas here at St. Christopher's Church. The Altar Guild will be ordering poinsettias for Christmas Eve services and, like every year, we're asking you, the congregants to sign up and donate toward one or more poinsettia plants.

We are suggesting a \$15 donation per plant, but please do not let this hinder anyone from signing up and giving what you can. These donations help to cover the costs of purchasing the plants, but we would like to enable everyone, who would like to, to participate in this activity. Also, any extra donations go toward the purchase of beeswax votives and other candles for the holiday decorating.

A sign-up sheet will go up on the kiosk in the vestibule. If you wish to have a poinsettia plant "in celebration" or "in memorial" of someone, please sign up on the chart with your name and put the name or occasion of who or what you'd like "in celebration" or "in memorial". If you sign up for more than one plant, please sign up on multiple lines.

A list is made up from this sign-up that will go into the Christmas service bulletins to acknowledge those of you who donate and to remember those "in celebration" and "in memorial".

There will also be donation envelopes to use. Please use these for the poinsettia donations so that the bookkeeper knows where to credit the money. Checks are to be made out to "St. Christopher's Church" (for poinsettia) and the envelope with the check can be put in the collection plate.

If you attend the last Christmas Eve service or Christmas Day (Sunday service), you may take your poinsettia home with you!

*St. Christopher's Community Church
7902 Steamboat Island Road NW*

Olympia, WA 98502 ~ Phone: 360-866-2111 ~ Email: office@stchristopheryoung.org



Here's *Your* Good News!

This is a new column that we hope YOU will help us write! We want to know about recent celebrations in your life, special birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, accomplishments or whatever Good News you want to share. The Beacon is a monthly publication, so please submit your contribution to stchrisbeacon@gmail.com by the 20th of the month prior.

Thinking of inviting a guest to join you for worship service? Here's some great information you can share with them

Visiting a new church can be intimidating. Will the worship style be familiar or very different from what I'm used to? Will the service be long or short? Will the people make me feel welcome or like an outsider? Will I have to juggle too many heavy books?

We welcome all persons as we would welcome Christ; it is our hope that you would feel at home in our community.

Here's a little of what you can expect if you join us for Sunday morning worship:

- We share a deep confidence in the good news of God's love for the whole world made known in Jesus. You can expect this good news to be at the center of worship and life at St. Christopher's.
- Our worship is liturgical, based in the rich traditions of the Christian church. We gather for song, prayer, readings from the Bible, a homily, and weekly Communion.
- We welcome all to the Eucharist each week. The table is Christ's not that of any denomination or church, and Christ welcomes all to this meal of grace.
- Our music is eclectic, coming from classic and contemporary sources and from worshipping communities all over the world.
- We draw particularly from the resources of the Episcopal and Lutheran traditions. Many of our members are from other Christian backgrounds and find themselves at home in this generous style of worship.
- We value difference of opinion and belief. Doubts, questions, wonderings, and dreams are all welcome.

You can expect to be greeted by members and invited to stay for coffee hour after the service. Inquirer's classes are held periodically throughout the year. Feel free to [contact](#) the church office with any questions about worship or other ways to get involved at St. Christopher's.



Our newest Acolyte, Harper Plughoff

Great job, Harper!

Outreach Ministry

Fourteen Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to families in need from St. Christopher's on Nov 21st. This is part our outreach ministry led by Lindy Vincent and coordinated through the Thurston County Food Bank. The Sunday school children made Thanksgiving cards for each basket complete with cornucopia and a prayer for God's blessings. A lovely hospitality ministry has been added to these food distributions at St Christopher's too. If you would like to participate in outreach ministries like the please contact Lindy Vincent as she will be working hard around Christmas to gather and distribute gifts.

Chris Craft Group

The Chris Craft group meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at 7:00 pm at Annette Settle's home, 4040 61st Ave. NW by Frye Cove Park. In December those dates are the 5th and 19th. All are welcome!

The Group accepts donations and/or gift cards (JoAnne Fabric's, Annie's Quilt Shoppe - Shelton, Canvas Works - downtown Olympia, Black Sheep Yarn - Capital Mall Dr.).



Government is a Good Gift of God
By Pastor Kim Latterell, Bishop's Associate

It has been noted widely that some see America's election as the beginning of a brave new world of economic growth and expansion of individual rights...while an equal amount worry that this election is the start of a grave new world of oppression, the limitation of rights and freedoms, and a rise of hate, prejudice and misplaced nationalism. Time will help us soon enough to see which vision rings truest over the next few years.

It has also been noted that Jewish prophets in Scripture often begin with a call for all rulers to repent from unjust social practices that cause or allow for the oppression and economic exploitation of the poor. The prophets have the ability to see the world not only as it is, but to envision the world as God (the Creator) would have it be. The prophets invite their listeners to share in and work for that vision. Those in power are still to do what is right and just. They are still to act as shepherds in the care and protection of those whom they lead and serve. The prophets call is not partisan, not directed to only Democrats or Republicans, but to any and every leader and to them all comes the same charge: Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Ah, you who make unjust and malicious rules and laws that turn aside the needy from justice, robbing the poor of my people from their right...what will you do on the day of correction? (Isaiah 1 & 10)

The prophets ask for all who would listen to imagine the world as it could be. A world of justice, compassion and fair balance for everyone. A world where no one has too much to waste or too little to sustain life. A world undivided by color or creed, by national boundary or dividing wall. They cry out for both the ruled and the ruler to imagine this God-designed life. And then call for everyone to work each day in word and action to bring about such a balanced and enriching world, beginning in our own families and communities.

Time will tell whether or not those who lean to the Right or lean to the Left can find a way to work together to truly bring about God's vision for one and all. An affirmative response to the challenges at hand will be noteworthy no less

Additional information is available on these websites:
www.lutheranssw.org
www.elca.org

To subscribe to the newsletter:
<http://bit.ly/SWWASynodNews>

Did you know that *Electronic Giving* is now available at St. Christopher's Community Church? It is a very convenient way to provide financial support to our church. Please contact the church office to learn how you can participate!

Please send your Beacon content to Suzann Stahl, Editor, no later than the 20th of the month stchrisbeacon@gmail.com

Our Staff and Leadership

The Rev. James L. Thibodeaux, Pastor and Priest
The Rev. Patti Sells, Deacon
Tiff West-Schaub, Office Manager
Jeff Sprengel, Music Minister
Annaka Thibodeaux – Faith Formation Coordinator
Annette Settle - Bookkeeper

Bishop's Council (i.e. church board)
Greg Settle – Senior Warden
Mark Soetenga – Junior Warden
Carrie Bowen – Clerk
Tucker Smyth – Treasurer
Steve Andrew
Bob Buel
Wyatt Finn
Bonnie Finn
Brian King
Pat Kelly
Damien Kolb

The Bishop's Council works with Fr. James and other leaders to develop and implement the shared mission and ministry of the congregation. The council especially oversees financial, business, and legal responsibilities of the congregation. Terms of service are three years. Council members commit to the following:

- support the mission of the congregation,
- faithfully attend monthly meetings
- worship regularly at St. Christopher's
- actively pray for and participate in the life of the congregation.

All members "in good standing" at St. Christopher's who are over the age of 16 are eligible to serve. If you are interested in serving or would like to nominate someone to serve, please contact Fr. James.



For the Children



Each month the Diocese of Olympia sends an email that contains interesting news you may be interested to read.

Visit their website at www.ecww.org.

To subscribe to the newsletter:
<http://bit.ly/DioOlyNewsSignup>

Sunday Volunteer Schedule

As many of you have seen, our Sunday worship service needs the help of lots of regular church members (laypeople) – just like YOU– in order to run smoothly.

As you can see below, volunteers are needed for Altar Guild, Greeters (1 or 2), Acolytes, Readers, Eucharistic Minister, and Coffee Hour Host (1 or 2).

It's very easy to sign up. You can call the church office (360) 866-2111 or send an email to Tiff at office@stchristopherolympia.org.

Volunteers are still needed for December services

	12/4/2016	12/11/2016	12/18/2016
Altar Guild	Marilyn Walther	Lisa Andrew	Sherry Christianson, Bonnie Finn
Greeter	Bonnie Sinclair		
Acolyte	Reagan Smith, Serenia Thibodeaux	Spencer Settle	Michael Walther
Reader	Dixie Reimer		Jim Morrell
Eucharistic Minister	Jim Morrell, Patti Sells	Dixie Reimer, Patti Sells	Lee Murray
Coffee Hour Host	Grace Aeschleman, Teresa Staal-Cowley	Annette & Greg Settle	
Christmas Eve	12/24/2016	12/24/2016	12/24/2016
	3:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	8:00
Altar Guild		Joyce Hanna	
Greeter	Bill & Suzann Stahl	Bonnie Finn	
Acolyte	Michael Walther	Michael Walther	Michael Walther
Reader			
Eucharistic Minister			
Coffee Hour Host			
Christmas Day	12/25/2016		
Altar Guild			
Greeter			
Acolyte			
Reader			
Eucharistic Minister			
Coffee Hour Host			

Sunday school: Sunday school has 2 classes (preK-1st grade or 2nd-5th grade) from 10:30-11:15 on Sunday mornings September to May.

Special Sundays: The first Sundays of the month (Family Service) and Christmas/Palm Sunday/Easter there are no Sunday school classes so that families can worship together. During Family Services children can participate through noisy offering or by being readers, acolytes, greeters, musicians or flower arrangers. December 4th is the next date to participate. Please email your interest to Annaka.Thibodeaux@gmail.com.

Christmas Pageant: The Sunday school children are working on a Christmas Nativity Pageant. 8-10 children age 2-7 yrs. are rehearsing and will be sharing the message a Christ's birth as the "sermon" during the 10:30 worship on December 18th. Homemade costumes are being sewn by Cindy Goldsmith. Jeff Sprengel our music director is helping the children learn *Away in a Manger* and *Soon and Very Soon*. John and Pam Nistler are helping with sets and rehearsals. We are using scripture from the gospel of Luke as this year's script so the lines the children memorize will be scripture they can keep in their hearts long after they have outgrown their angel wings.

Confirmation Classes: Fr. James is offering a confirmation class to middle school and high school youth interested in exploring their faith at a deeper level. There are 13 classes planned during this school year with a confirmation set for May of 2017. We are using a modern curriculum aimed at stirring up real questions about faith and scripture paired with traditional catechisms from the Lutheran and Episcopal traditions.

Please let Annaka Thibodeaux know if you have any questions.

Prayer for the Children: Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

St. Christopher's Events

Specific details regarding youth activities, committee meetings, men's breakfast, women's Chris Craft group, AA meetings and other events are available on the St. Christopher's Community Church website at: <http://bit.ly/StChrisCalendar>

Every Sunday:

9:00 Education Hour

10:30 Sunday school (infant to 5th grade)

10:30 Worship (Eucharist)

Youth Group/Confirmation alternating Sundays

<http://bit.ly/StChrisYouthCalendar>

Monday and Wednesday:

8:00-Noon Church office open

Tuesday:

6:45 Centered Living

2:30-5:30 Fr. James office hours

Thursday:

2:30-5:30 Fr. James office hours

7:00 Choir practice

*The Church office will be closed
On Monday, December 26th*