



November 22, 2020
(#456)

*The newsletter of
St. Paul's Episcopal Church*



Advent

Hope

Peace

Love

Joy

Dear Friends,

What a weird season this is. I'm not speaking of presidential elections or the very long season of covid, though there's no denying that's weird.

Every single year this season of Advent delivers us a strange mix of signals. There is something holy, says the Church, in being present and expectant to these signs. Eyes open, fully engaged, hoping for . . .

Someone has said that the expectation of Advent is that of a lover waiting to greet an overdue train — on the platform, on tiptoe, straining to hear something or see something; as their beloved draws near excitement builds inside them.

But here is the season's great dichotomy: Advent is about getting ready for Christmas, and yet we're not sure what we're getting ready for. For Mary and Joseph it was a child. The greatest gift possible, and an improbable one; it has become the sign of our hope and expectation down the ages. Goodness knows what the gift will be for us, today.

So how should we get ready? Well I'm going to take the Biblical advice and open my ears and eyes. Increasingly, I am convinced, our waiting needs to be active, preemptive. It may not be enough to hope for the best, even from God. It may be that our role as God's people is to demand the good, and not to rest until the peace and goodwill that we will sing is the reality for all people on earth.

So what to do? We are investigating how to improve air quality — on the inside.

And we are going to decorate the church — extravagantly, on the outside, because everyone needs to know that "the Earth is God's, and everything in it." This and this alone is the ground of all hope. If you are saying your prayers and turning your eyes to God's horizon then hope may be born in you too. If it is, then do not (you can not) keep it to yourself.

Your friend in Christ,
Michael

Advent

Hope Peace Love Joy

Treasurer's Note

We are grateful to have received over two-thirds of the 2021 pledges we were hoping for. We are still hoping to receive another ten or so pledges. If you have not turned yours in, it is not too late. At the moment, we have approximately \$3000 in our checking account compared with \$4000 at this time last year. So far this year we have withdrawn \$10,000 from our reserves (2 separate withdrawals) and may need to do an additional withdrawal of \$5000 in December. Last year we were able to get through the entire year without a single withdrawal from our pooled investment funds (although that was exceptional and this has been a most unusual year).

We need and appreciate everyone's help as we head toward the end of the year.

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Vestry Notes

Vestry has continued to meet monthly during this time of separation. When the weather permitted, we met together outdoors. Now we are back to Zoom meetings. We have been discussing ways to keep us connected and celebrating despite being apart; our ideas for Advent are described elsewhere in the Leaven. We have also been keeping an eye on church finances (see the treasurer's report). We applied for but did not receive funding through the Steele County CARES grant, and we have applied for an ECMN grant to add air filtration to our furnaces in preparation for the day we can return to in-person worship. Diane met recently with a representative from a stained glass window company to have our windows evaluated. (They reached out to us.) We discovered a few spots that will need attention down the road, but nothing that is in immediate danger. In the meantime, we continue to be grateful to Fr. Michael for the time and effort he puts into the Sunday videos. He spends nearly 30 hours each week creating the worship video, and between FB and [our website](#) we are reaching over 100 people a week. No bad outreach for our small church! He is always looking for readers. (As Jody and I learned last summer when we took over during Fr. Michael's vacation, finding and recording readers takes 40% of the production time.) If you would like to participate, let him know. If we step up to help, that will save him time.

from the November, 1973 Leaven

HARVEST FESTIVAL

How many of you remember the glorious celebration of the harvest which used to be held at St. Paul's? Most have only heard about this marvelous fete. However we are going to attempt to revive this festival for our return to the newly-decorated sanctuary. Helen and Rene Durand have agreed to chair the project. They will be happy for all of the help anyone will offer, so please do offer. We hope to be in the sanctuary again by November 25.

Additional Information: During the 1940's and 1950's the church was beautifully decorated by Luther White for an annual Harvest Festival service. From his farm he brought pumpkins, gourds, varicolored ears of corn, corn stalks, and sheaves of grain. In more recent years there have also been Harvest Festival Sundays, but it is difficult to equal the abundance of the fruits of the land provided by Luther White.

(From: The History Of St. Paul's Episcopal Church from 1858-1976 by Virginia Hart)



And Now for Some Good News!

Katie McKey-Dunar and her husband Edward Dunar had a beautiful baby boy on November 14. Paul McKey Dunar weighed 8 lbs, 5 oz and measured 20 inches long. Rob says Paul has evened out their grandchildren to three boys and three girls. They are unsure when they will get to see him in person, but they feel very blessed nonetheless.

Betty Kristo turned 93 on November 22! She was treated to a drive-by party this past Sunday.

Additional November birthdays:

Nov. 14: Jack Spitzack

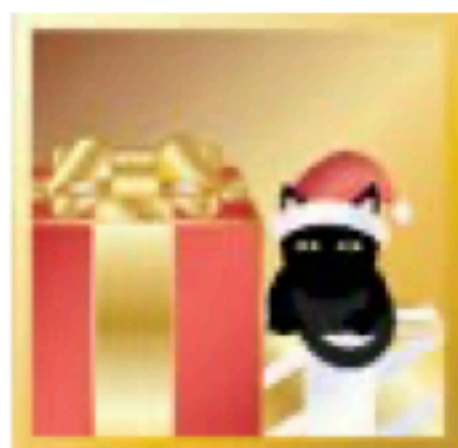
Nov. 27: Alan Peterson, Gloria Simon

Upcoming December birthdays:

Dec. 3: Kristin Warehime, Roger Warehime

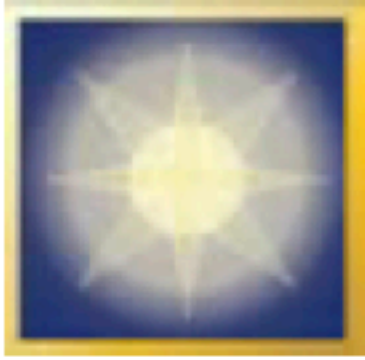
Dec. 8: Maggie Dixon

Dec. 12: Judy Erck



Transitional Housing of Steele County

St. Paulites have long been strong supporters of THSC. We usually have at least a dozen show up at the annual fundraiser. This year the event was virtual. If you missed it, you can still donate online at donate.onecause.com/scth or mail a check to church and we will get it to them for you,



St Paul's Becomes a Living Advent Calendar

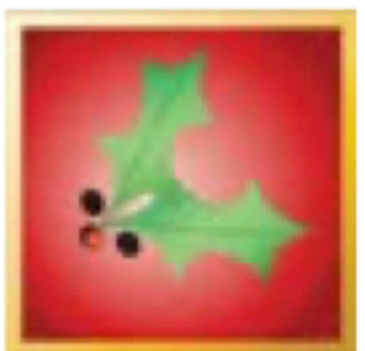
Advent is a time of waiting, of hoping, of expecting. Children count down the days of Advent with a calendar; at church we light candles. Since we cannot celebrate together this year, vestry has decided to meld these two ideas and turn our church building into a living Advent "calendar." Each week on Sunday evening at dusk, a different set of windows along Mill Street will be lighted from within. This progression of lighted windows symbolizes not only the coming of the Christ child, but also our vigil as we wait separately together until we can be reunited. Please plan to drive or walk by church to see which new windows are lit. In this way, we can still count down the weeks of Advent together.



Let's Decorate the Church Together, Separately

In addition to lighting the windows as an Advent Calendar, we hope to also progressively decorate the church as well. We are asking you and your family to contribute in any way you would like. We have clear glass windows and an entryway that could be dressed up from within (think old-fashioned store display) and a small yard with bushes that could be lit or otherwise decorated. To enable social distancing and to make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, we have created a Sign-Up Genius account where you can volunteer for a particular time. Decorations should be church-appropriate, of course. Fr. Michael would love to see a nativity scene and/or a giant advent wreath of some kind built on the church's "yard." If you have an idea how that might happen, either chat with him or—better yet—just do it.

You can access the [Sign-Up Genius here](#), or find the link on FB.



And on Wednesdays . . .

On Wednesday evenings at 6:30 during Advent we will hold a Zoom Bible study of interesting or challenging passages. If you have not used Zoom, we recommend trying it out beforehand so you can login easily. We will post a Zoom practice link on Monday, November 30. Zoom links for the Bible study will be posted on FB on Wednesday evenings by 6:00.

Leaven is published monthly to keep the people of St. Paul's informed and united in thought.

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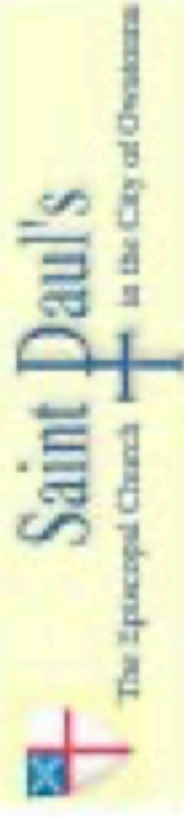
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