



## RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends in Christ,

Advent is among us! The green vestments have been stored away and the purple garb laid out; the altar will stand flower-less before being surrounded by poinsettias on Christmas Eve; and for the next four weeks we will sing hymns of expectation and waiting before we gather around the manger to sing "O come, all ye faithful!"

In her most recent book, *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*, the Rev'd. Fleming Rutledge argues that we cannot boil down Advent to a season of Christmas preparation, and I couldn't agree more. Advent is not a four-week prelude for Christmas or an extended tailgate before the game. Advent is a main event in itself. All in one season, Advent invites us to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ on Christmas and in his second coming; to reflect on our lives and seek forgiveness for what we have done and failed to do; and to be aware of our mortality and our inevitable return to God. The richness and distinctiveness of Advent is most vividly seen, better yet heard, in its hymnody. Hymns like "[Lo! he comes with cloud descending](#)," "[Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding](#)," and "[O come, O come, Emmanuel](#)" beautifully capture the multiple layers of the Advent season.

*Lo! the Lamb, so long expected, comes with pardon down from heaven; let us haste, with tears of sorrow, one and all to be forgiven; so when next he comes with glory, and the world is wrapped in fear, may he with his mercy shield us, and with words of love draw near.* ("Hark! a Thrilling Voice is Sounding," vss 3 & 4)

Here at Saint John's, we will journey through the Advent season in our Sunday and weekday masses, which will include seasonal liturgical practices like the Advent Prose and the Angelus. Some of these might be familiar to you, and others might be new. However, I hope they will orient you to walk more intently on the Advent journey.

This Sunday, **December 1**, after the 10 a.m. mass, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall to make Advent wreaths for our homes.



The fresh greens have arrived, and the wreath rings and candles are waiting in the Fellowship Hall. I will give a quick tutorial on how you might decorate your wreath and share a brief liturgy that you can take home to light your Advent wreath candles. As the season unfolds, I want to invite you to two local offerings. In a battle of the goods, both our sister parish, Saint Andrew's, State College (at 5 p.m.), and the Bellefonte Council of Churches (at 6 p.m.) will be offering their Advent Lessons and Carols services on Sunday, **December 15** (during the Victorian Christmas celebration), at the First Presbyterian Church, 203 N. Spring St. Deacon Alex and I will split up so that Saint John's will be represented at both. I hope that you will be present too. I know it will be a lovely evening, whichever service you attend.

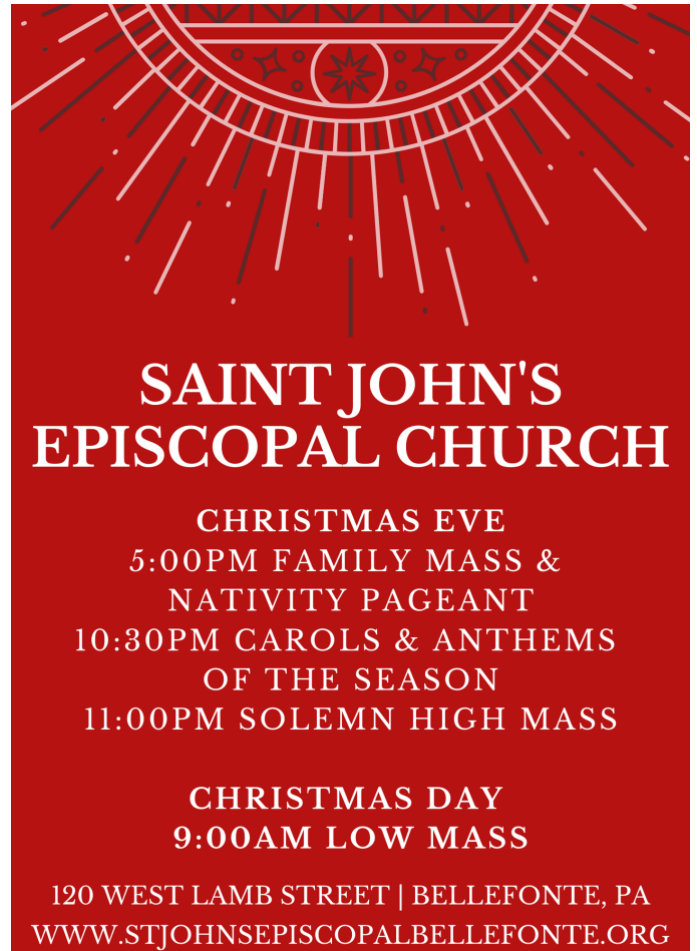
As this will be the last issue of *The Herald* prior to Christmas, I want to invite you to celebrate

Christmas at Saint John's. Our round of services will begin on Christmas Eve with our Family Mass & Nativity Pageant at 5:00 p.m. Ellen Dyakiw and Deb Cree have been organizing a wonderful celebration. I hope that you will come and bring yourself, your children, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren to this service led by our parish youth. Later on, we will begin our traditional midnight observance with a musical prelude at 10:30 p.m., followed by Solemn High Mass at 11:00 p.m. Expect breathtaking and glorious music, accompanied by orchestra, along with holiday classics like "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and "Silent Night." On Christmas Day, our celebration continues with a simple yet solemn Christmas liturgy at 9:00 a.m.

During Advent, one of the seasonal liturgical practices you will notice is the Advent Blessing. While it differs in language and imagery from our traditional blessing, it beautifully captures our hope and trust in God, allowing us to hear his faithful promise anew. I cannot think of a better way to end this note than that with this blessing:

*May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.*

Yours in Christ,  
*Father Carlos*



**SAINT JOHN'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
5:00PM FAMILY MASS &  
NATIVITY PAGEANT  
10:30PM CAROLS & ANTHEMS  
OF THE SEASON  
11:00PM SOLEMN HIGH MASS

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
9:00AM LOW MASS

120 WEST LAMB STREET | BELLEFONTE, PA  
[WWW.STJOHNSEPISCOPALBELLEFONTE.ORG](http://WWW.STJOHNSEPISCOPALBELLEFONTE.ORG)

## NEWS FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL



Please join our Sunday School families as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Our children will participate in this service with music, songs, poetry and stories, all centering around the theme of peace on earth. Mark your calendar for this Christmas Eve service, **December 24** at 5:00.

## THE DEACON'S PERCH

**“Peace be within your walls and quietness within your towers.”** (Psalm 122)

And we're off! We have Thanksgiving leftovers to snack on, our e-mails are loaded with 10-20-30%-off coupon offers, stores are staying open all sorts of hours for our “convenience,” and they offer discounts beyond belief (humor intended). Oh, did I mention interest-free loans for 90 days to a year? Aughhhhh, I can't take all this goodness. **“Quietness** within your towers.”

I take many early morning (2-3 a.m.) walks at Bald Eagle State Park, mainly because of the lack of cars, but also because of its darkness. There is only the reflection of the stars and the moon lighting my path and the **stillness**. Well, almost: sometimes you hear the strangest sounds coming from the woods, or a sudden tree branch that decides to fall just as I pass by, or the animal that waited for me to come close and then decided run across the road. But seriously, this is the **quietness** I relish as I see God in the midst of creation.

In this season we have the image of the star guiding the Magi to the Nativity Mary with the baby Jesus in her arms, the animals in the stable, and the simple scene and **quietness** of the realm. I pray for many things during this season: for the poor, the incarcerated, those having trouble making ends meet, and those who are unsettled because of the high cost of electronics the younger generation “must” have. I pray for the person who must chose between food and heating fuel; I pray for the folks who lost a loved one during this time and the pain

they feel; I pray for our troops away from home and for first responders; I pray for all in the medical field; I pray for the unchurched or those who have fallen away, that they may seek God's infinite love once again. I pray for all my friends and acquaintances that peace be with them, and I pray for those with whom I disagree.

I do all of this in the **Quietness** of my tower with Christ who resides in my heart. I used the **“I”** pronoun many times. My intention is to guide you and help you find your tower of **Quietness**, to find that space in your heart, mind, and soul that resides with Christ. In this Advent season we once again have hope for a better tomorrow, better relationships, and emotional stability. One of our topics at prison is being sane in an insane world. We talk of having a loving God who will guide us in difficult times. So let us have hope that God is in our tower, loving and nourishing us, as the Mother Mary nourished the baby Jesus. May God be with all of you during this season and always. Amen.

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Many thanks to all who supported the cranberry sauce drive. We collected more than 218 cans, which were accepted gratefully at the food bank. Thanks to all who contributed, and thanks to Ellen for being our eyes and ears at the food bank as a volunteer.



The area ministerium will host an event entitled “When Christmas Hurts“ at the Runville Methodist Church in Milesburg on **Dec. 20** at 7 p.m. See me for more details.

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I am always grateful for all the gifts given to me personally at Christmas, but I am making a request this year that instead of a gift, please support my discretionary fund. I am making a purchase of a new book out by Augsburg press, *A Prisoner’s Prayer Book*, which I would like to distribute at the County Prison. The warden has given full support. I read passages to the incarcerated citizens there and would love to provide a copy to each one who is participating in my life recovery program. Again, thank you for always supporting our work in the community. I wish a blessed Christmas to all of you and your families. ~ **Deacon Alex**

## HOLIDAY BAZAAR

This year’s bazaar was held **November 15 and 16**. Thanks to our hard-working



committee and volunteers, we raised more than \$2000 for the treasury. Congratulations to all who helped.



**Vestry Members:** Larry Roberson (Sr. Warden), Jim Jackson (Jr. Warden), John Fusco, Carol Fyfe, Debra Cree, Mitch Holland, Matt Perkins, Thomas Quigley, David King

*Herald* Editors: Debra Cree and Kathryn Grossman

## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

St. John's Altar Guild is receiving contributions to assist in decorating the church for Christmas. Please use this form for making your donations. All forms and donations should be returned to the parish office no later than **Sunday, December 15**. Checks should be made payable to **St. John's Episcopal Church** and should be clearly marked **Christmas Decorations** on the memo line. More forms are on the table in the back of the church.



**YOUR NAME(S):** \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE PRINT)

**IN MEMORY OF:**

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**IN HONOR OF:**

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**IN THANKSGIVING FOR:**

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## Vestry Collection Counters

Matt Perkins and Larry Roberson

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### Dec 1

Subdeacon	C. Fyfe
Book/Server	S. Dillon
Crucifer	M. Perkins

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### Dec 8

Subdeacon	T. Quigley
Book/Server	S. Dillon
Crucifer	M. Perkins

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### Dec 15

Youth in Worship

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### Dec 22

Subdeacon	M. Holland
Book/Server	TBD
Crucifer	M. Perkins

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### Dec 24 (Christmas Eve 11:00 P.M.)

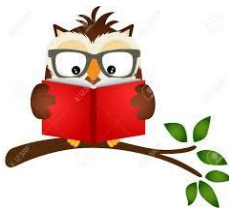
Subdeacon	D. Cree
Book/Server	S. Dillon
Crucifer	M. Perkins

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### Dec 29

Subdeacon	T. Quigley
Book/Server	S. Dillon
Crucifer	M. Perkins

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## Readers

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Dec 1	Mike Duminiak
Dec 8	Dave Cree
Dec 15	Youth in Worship
Dec 22	Bill Donovan
Dec 29	Bill Donovan



## Birthdays

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2	Lillian North
	Ian Ousley
6	Kathryn Grossman
10	Thomas Quigley
17	Carl Meeker
23	Stuart Hough
27	Ellen Dyakiw
30	Harrison Holland



## Coffee Hour Hosts

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Dec 1	Advent Sunday Parish
Dec 8	Trish Weidemann/Jeff Wilson/Claire Bonner
Dec 15	Open
Dec 22	Hanging of the greens, Hot chocolate and cookies
Dec 29	Open

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HOST COFFEE HOUR FOR THE OPEN SPOTS, PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW. THANK YOU.

# December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 First Sunday of Advent Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10	2 7pm Men's Group 8 pm AA Mtg	3 7pm AA Mtg	4 9:30 Monthly Parish Requiem - Lady Altar 12pm AA Mtg	5	6 Community Lunch @ Presbyterian Church, 10:30am	7
8 Second Sunday of Advent Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10	9 7pm Men's Group 8 pm AA Mtg	10 7pm AA Mtg	11 9:30 Healing Mass - Lady Altar 12pm AA Mtg	12	13	14
15 Third Sunday of Advent Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10 Youth in Worship	16 7pm Men's Group 8pm AA Mtg	17	18 9:30 Healing Mass - Lady Altar 12pm AA Mtg	19	20	21
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10	23 7pm Men's Group 8pm AA Mtg	24 5:00 P.M. Family Mass & Nativity Pageant 10:30 P.M. Carols & Anthems of the Season 11:00 P.M. Solemn High Mass	25 9:00 A.M. Low Mass 	26	27	28
29 First Sunday after Christmas Day Low Mass 8am Solemn Mass 10	30 7 pm Men's Group 8pm AA Mtg	31 7pm AA Mtg 				