



FROM THE RECTOR

There's a story my mother tells of my brother when he was a toddler. He had a habit of going to the picture window when evening fell, looking into the darkness, and, after a while, asking, "Mamma, who's coming?" His question might have been rooted in his life as the son of a parish priest with the frequent emerging from the darkness of babysitters as our father and mother prepared to leave the house. My mother also wondered if he was simply bored, hoping that someone was coming, because someone usually was, and that was exciting. He continued this habit for some time before he outgrew it.



"Who's coming?" was the question of ancient Israel. Their temple and worship were a wonder of the ancient world, but they were an oppressed and war-torn people who suffered to know the presence and coming of God. There was a prophet among them, a mysterious figure known as "Isaiah," who peered through the night window of his own time into the darkness, certain that someone was coming. Heavy with hope and brimming with excitement, he gave us the season of Advent in his ancient, eternal words: *"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight a highway in the desert for our God."* And he prophesied that the one who

was coming was "Immanuel," meaning, "God will be with us."

Over the four Sundays of Advent, we will sing the O Antiphons, known to us in the hymn "O Come, O come, Emmanuel...and ransom captive Israel." We'll sing as though we were these people ourselves, or as though they are with us in the pews, and along with them, everyone the world over and right here in Bellefonte who has longed and longs for the deliverance of God.

Someone *is* coming. It is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There *is* someone in the darkness - the darkness that we fear, as well as the quiet, mystical darkness of the season. It is God with us.

See you in church,
Ruth†

Do you have any concerns or suggestions for change, either for worship or other activities? Please express your wishes to the rector or vestry (see list at the end of this newsletter) or by email:
rector@stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte.org.

WELCOME, REV'D RUTH!

After what seemed like a LONG (sometimes challenging) period, we were delighted to welcome The Very Reverend Ruth Ferguson to St. John's on November 17, along with her fiancé, Sean McGraw. She is juggling unpacking with services, meetings, and clergy duties while she tries to get to know each of us. HUGE thanks to our search committee, vestry, senior warden, parish coordinator, and construction manager Jeff Wilson for the enormous number of hours you worked to help us arrive at this place.

A coffee hour reception was held following the 10:00 Mass.



ARE YOU READY FOR ADVENT?



AdventWord is an inspirational online Advent calendar featuring a daily prompt word selected from the Sunday Lectionary readings.

AdventWord inspires followers of Jesus with an accessible and creative daily prayer practice. During this holy, busy season, disciples are invited to find small moments of reflection to stay connected to their personal faith, to others, and to God.

[Email subscribers](https://adventword.org/sign-up-adventword/) and social media followers will receive a daily meditation (in English and Spanish) and visual image inspired by the day's word, and are invited to share their own personal reflections, art, poetry, or other creative expression. Subscribe at <https://adventword.org/sign-up-adventword/>.

This calendar as well as another with daily readings is provided at the end of this newsletter.

ST. JOHN’S TO HOST COMMUNITY CONCERTS
December 14 | 2 and 3 p.m.



St. John’s will be the host venue for two concerts during Bellefonte’s Victorian Christmas activities:

2:00 p.m.	<i>Cat’s Eye – Jazz voice and trombone</i>
3:00 p.m.	<i>Elizabeth Webb – Jazz voice with ivory</i>

The complete concert schedule can be found at <https://bellefontevictorianchristmas.com/musical-entertainment/>.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE

A special thanks to David King, who filled in as Sunday School teacher during the fall. Ellen has returned to the classroom. We are grateful to both of our dedicated leaders.

ALTAR GUILD

We want the church to be especially festive and beautiful for the Victorian Christmas concerts, as well as for the Christmas season. Many hands make light work, so please volunteer to help decorate.

On Sunday, 12/8, after the 10:00 mass, coffee hour will be held in the church so that everyone can hang the greens, decorate, and polish brass. The greens will be prepped beforehand, so our task should be easier and faster than in other years.

On Sunday, 12/22, after the 10:00 mass, coffee hour will be held in the church so that everyone can install the poinsettias, aisle candles, and nativity stable and polish silver.

Teamwork makes the dream work! Speak to Peggy Jackson for further information.

Also at the end of this newsletter is a sign-up form for contributions toward the cost of Christmas flowers and decorations.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 24:

- 4:00 p.m. – Family service with low mass
- 9:30 p.m. – Carols of the season
- 10:00 p.m. – Solemn High Mass, featuring Mozart’s “Coronation” Mass & anthems

DECEMBER 25:

- 10:30 a.m. – Low mass

FOOD BANK COLLECTION



In addition to personal care products (tampons, pads, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, hand soap/bathing soap, toothpaste, and mouthwash) that are needed throughout the year, along with dry cat or dog food (they repackage 25-pound bags into smaller weekly

offerings), here are products that will be needed over the next three months:

December

Chex Cereal
Laundry/Dish Soap/Other Cleaning Supplies
Syrup
Pancake Mix
Salad Dressing
Kidney Beans
Any Flavor Gravy

January

Jam/jelly (EXCEPT Grape)
Prepared Pasta, like canned Spaghettios, etc.
Hearty/Chunky Soup, like Progresso
Microwave Popcorn

February

Any type of Boxed Cereal
Canned Fruit
Basic Canned Vegetables (corn, green beans, peas)
Cleaning Supplies (see December)

Thank you for your consideration to help the Bellefonte Food Bank. Please be generous with your donations. Too many people, especially children, go hungry, and winter is a time when all of us need more food for fueling our bodies. Please don't forget the animals either. You may think, "why do they have animals if they can't afford food for themselves?" Those of you who have pets know that they give unconditional love and comfort. Everyone needs that, most especially children. The Food Bank coordinator sends her heartfelt thanks to our church for our continued support in feeding those in need.

You can drop off your donations next to the baptismal font in the back of the church. Thank you for your generosity to our local

community, and thank you, Charlotte and Scott, for looking after it!

THERE'S MUSIC IN THE AIR!



Support our parishioners in several upcoming holiday concerts:

On **December 7** at 3:00 p.m., **Erik Clayton** (Artistic

Director of State College Choral Society) and several of our choir members will offer *Christmas Gloria!* at State College Area High School Performance Hall. No ticket is required, but you are requested to bring nonperishable food items for donation to a local food bank. Program details are at <https://www.scchoralsociety.org/this-season>.

The Bellefonte Community Band (of which **David Cree** is a member) will perform at Bellefonte Area High School on **December 15** at 2:00 p.m. Free admission and parking.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Sunday, January 19, 2025



The annual parish meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 19**, following the 10:00 a.m. Mass, in the church. The meeting will be livestreamed for those who are not able to attend in person. We will present the 2025 budget and announce new vestry members. Contact Larry Roberson, Sr. Warden, if you have questions (roberson@accuweather.com), or speak to him in church.

COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Sundays after the 10:00 a.m. Mass

We are always seeking coffee hour hosts. We especially appreciate those few who

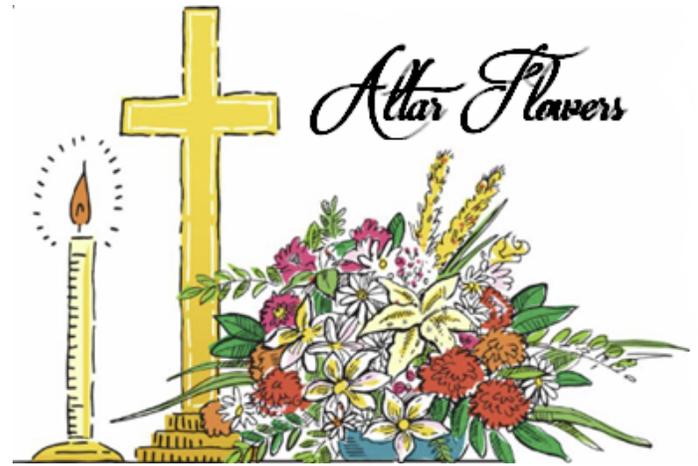


host repeatedly throughout the year, but they would appreciate some backup! Coffee is

provided by the church; you are asked to provide cold drinks and *simple* snacks (cookies/crackers, etc.). No need to prepare special foods. To sign up for a slot, please use the sign-up sheet on the lectern in the back of the church.

Our fellowship hours are well attended and provide a valuable time for catching up with our church family. However, coffee hour will be held only on those Sundays when someone signs up to host. Make 2025 the year that you volunteer!

2025 SANCTUARY CANDLES & ALTAR FLOWERS



The parish's 2025 Sanctuary Candle and Altar Flower calendars are posted on the bulletin board in the vestibule. Your generous donations, which can be given in honor of or in memory of a loved one, help us adorn and uplift our church each week. Please consider signing up to sponsor one of these liturgical items throughout the year. Suggested prices are \$45 for altar flowers and \$7 for the altar candles. We are always grateful for these as well as altar donations and votive candles.



**GROUNDS
MAINTENANCE**

A big thank you is extended to Larry Roberson, David King, Steve Dillon, and Scott Mauger

for doing a great job in mowing and caring for the church grounds during the summer. We are seeking volunteers to help with ice and snow removal during the coming winter months. Speak to Scott Mauger or Larry Roberson if you can help.

AROUND THE PARISH FAMILY TABLE

The Hough family have been blessed this fall!



Congratulations to **Bryan Hough and Samantha English**, who were married on October 5 at the Lighthouse Wesleyan Church in

Jersey Shore, PA.



Congratulations also to **Sean and Brianna Hough** on the birth of their son, Isaac, in September. Isaac is the first grandchild for **Stuart and Paula Hough**.

Jose and Laura Chipe celebrate a day without any doctor's appointments. Jose is living well in Nashville despite his lung cancer. **Adela and Alex Germano** offer praise to God and prayers of gratitude



for all his medical staff and prayer warriors at St. John's and beyond!

Ruth Germano celebrated her third birthday on November 1. Her St. John's family offers thanks to God for keeping her in his care.



Rick Yoder, who is currently on a Fulbright Fellowship in France, updates us:

“So far, my time in France on Fulbright has been wonderfully fruitful. I arrived in late September and have really made myself at home. I have begun working on new archival deposits, found several sources that add nuance and depth to my dissertation, improved my French, and made new contacts with European academics. I've also had time to enjoy the unique pleasures that Paris has to offer—from organ concerts at the gothic church of St-Gervais to after-hours wanderings at the Louvre with friends; and from exploring the autumnal cemeteries of the city to sipping vin chaud at cafés on cold November evenings. Paris is a wonderful city, especially as the Christmas season approaches. Strings of hanging lights frame the streets, and Christmas markets are popping up all over!

I have yet to find a church community like St. John's, though. There are no Anglican churches very close to me, though I do sometimes attend Mass at the nearby Catholic parish of St-Médard. This also happens to be the church that is centrally important for my research, so I'm always pleased to pay it a visit. Still, it's not the same as Bellefonte or Episcopal at Penn State. I was very saddened to learn of Deacon Alex's death and mourned with the community from abroad. Please do pray for me and know that I continue to pray for everyone at St. John's!"

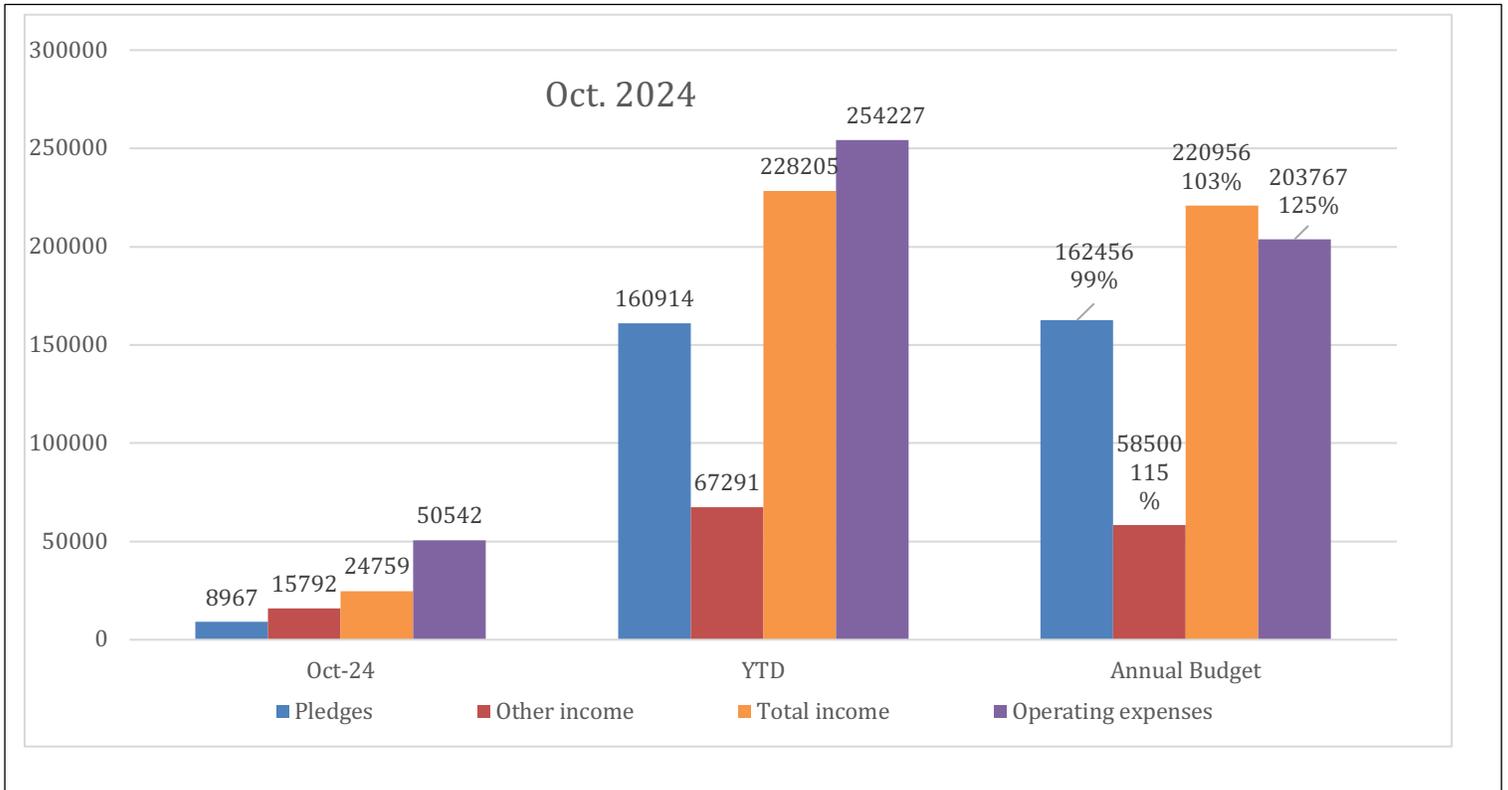


BIRTHDAYS

December 02	Lillian	North
December 06	Kathryn	Grossman
December 07	William	Donovan
December 09	Vivienne	Clayton
December 10	Thomas	Quigley
December 23	Stuart	Hough
December 27	Ellen	Dyakiw
January 02	Joyce	Banker
January 02	Rachel	Pifer
January 04	Paula	Hough
January 08	Christine	Holt
January 10	Trinity	King
January 27	George	Holt
January 29	Scott	Mauger
February 01	John	Fusco
February 13	Gabe	Holland
February 13	Trish	Weidemann
February 14	Andrew	Pifer
February 15	Matt	Perkins
February 16	John	Harwood
February 18	Debra	Cree
February 28	Isaac	Pifer

Financial:

	Oct-24	YTD	Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
Pledges	8967	160914	162456	99%
Other income	15792	67291	58500	115%
Total income	24759	228205	220956	103%
Operating expenses	50542	254227	203767	125%
Net	-25783	-26022		



Numbers do not reflect investments or checking account balance.

Vestry Members: Larry Roberson (Sr. Warden), Scott Mauger (Jr. Warden), Liz Helms, Debra Cree, Alex Germano, Kathryn Grossman, Peggy Jackson, Steve Dillon, Charlotte Zmyslo

2024 CHRISTMAS FLOWERS & DECORATIONS



Saint John's Altar Guild is receiving contributions to assist in decorating the church for Christmas. Please use this form for making your donation. All forms and donations should be returned to the parish office no later than **Sunday, December 22**. Checks should be made payable to **St. John's Episcopal Church** and should be clearly marked **Christmas Decorations** on the memo line. You can also donate online by visiting our [giving page](#) and selecting "Give to Altar Guild" from the drop-down menu. You may type your dedication in the message box, or you can email your dedication, which will appear in our Christmas Orders of Service, to the parish office (office@stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte.org).

YOUR NAME(S):

IN MEMORY OF:

IN HONOR OF:

IN THANKSGIVING FOR:

AdventWord

DECEMBER 1-25 **2024**

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | HUMILITY | 14 | PROCLAIM |
| 2 | ABOUND | 15 | REJOICE |
| 3 | REDEMPTION | 16 | GENTLENESS |
| 4 | SPROUT | 17 | TRUST |
| 5 | EARNESTLY | 18 | GATHER |
| 6 | FAITHFULNESS | 19 | HOME |
| 7 | SAFETY | 20 | LOVE |
| 8 | SPLENDOR | 21 | MERCY |
| 9 | REFINE | 22 | LIFTED |
| 10 | JOY | 23 | SHINE |
| 11 | PREPARE | 24 | COME |
| 12 | RIGHTEOUSNESS | 25 | FRUIT |
| 13 | SALVATION | | |

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ADVENT CALENDAR 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Worship</p> <p>Advent 1</p> <p>Read Luke 21:25-36. How do the symbols of the Advent season help you understand the story of Jesus? Where do you see them in your worship today?</p>	<p>2 Pray</p> <p>Pray along with the Collect for Advent 1, found on page 211 of The Book of Common Prayer. Set a timer for three minutes to sit in silence and hear what God might be saying back to you.</p>	<p>3 Turn</p> <p>Read Isaiah 58. How does this reading challenge you to think about feasts and festivals differently? How might this lesson change the way you celebrate or recognize this holy season?</p>	<p>4 Bless</p> <p>Call or write a letter to a family member with whom you would like to have a closer relationship. Make plans in the new year to chat on the phone or meet over Zoom or in person. Let them know how much you love them and look forward to knowing them better.</p>	<p>5 Rest</p> <p>Put your phone on airplane mode and leave it in a dresser drawer for an hour or two. Whatever happens in that time, you can handle later. Give this time to yourself and Jesus, to rest and recharge for the week ahead.</p>	<p>6 Go</p> <p>Go out into your neighborhood today. Where is God at work? Ask God to show you how you can celebrate that good work and name God's presence in your community.</p>	<p>7 Learn</p> <p>Read Luke 1:59-80. When Zechariah's speech returns, he praises God. If you lost the power to speak for nine months like Zechariah did, what would be your first word of praise? Share this with your family, friends, and on social media.</p>
<p>8 Worship</p> <p>Advent 2</p> <p>Read Luke 3:1-6. How does the story of John the Baptist fill your heart with hope?</p>	<p>9 Pray</p> <p>Pray along with the Collect for Advent 2, found on page 211 of The Book of Common Prayer. As you are out and about for the rest of this week, notice the people you pass. Ask God to bless them in their lives and work. See how this changes the way you go about your week.</p>	<p>10 Turn</p> <p>Do you have amends or apologies or adjustments you need to make? Ask God to open your heart and mind to those opportunities for reconciliation and growth. Thank God for the gifts of mercy and love, and the courage to make the changes necessary. And then do your best, with God's help, to make those changes.</p>	<p>11 Bless</p> <p>We know that angels are God's special messengers to us, and that Gabriel spent intentional time with Mary, helping her to understand her part in God's story. Who has shared an important lesson or their presence with you this week? Thank them today with a call or note.</p>	<p>12 Rest</p> <p>Set aside 30 minutes to spend in silence with your best friend today. Sure, it may feel a little weird to be silent on the phone or while sitting next to each other on the couch or across the table. Just give it a try. Make sure to set aside time after your silence to pray for each other and to say thanks for the time of rest.</p>	<p>13 Go</p> <p>Go out of your way to have a conversation with someone you might not normally visit with today. Ask God to open your heart to hear this person as God does.</p>	<p>14 Learn</p> <p>Read Luke 1:45. Share your faith story with one new person this week. It can be someone you have known for a while who has not heard the faith part of your story.</p>
<p>15 Worship</p> <p>Advent 3</p> <p>Imagine the faces you'd like to see at church — an all-star list of folks you want to worship with. This could be people you know from summer camp when you were a kid, people who might have already died, people you work with — all your favorites. Commit to pray for those folks this week. And make a commitment to ask one of your all-stars to come to church with you in the next month.</p>	<p>16 Pray</p> <p>Pray along with the Collect for Advent 3, found on page 212 in The Book of Common Prayer. How will prayer guide you through the rest of the week? Set aside special time today to focus your intentions on stirring up peace and spreading joy.</p>	<p>17 Turn</p> <p>Turn away from the busyness of the world right now. Turn your heart and mind toward giving thanks for this time of reflection, refreshment, and renewal.</p>	<p>18 Bless</p> <p>Spend a significant amount of time today discerning if there is a special blessing or gift you can share with your church, a local ministry, or with your community. Ask God to inspire and equip you with the fortitude and tools to make this gift something truly memorable and heartfelt.</p>	<p>19 Rest</p> <p>Spend at least 45 minutes outside today, without doing yard work or fixing lights or redoing bows on the garland. Take some time to just sit outside and let the air wash over you, taking away the stress and worry of the moment. Read Psalm 100 before and after your outside time. See how this psalm may help you rest and recharge your spirit.</p>	<p>20 Go</p> <p>Read or watch your local news. Ask God to open your heart and eyes to ways you can promote reconciliation and healing in your community.</p>	<p>21 Learn</p> <p>Read Matthew 4:18-22. How do these verses from Matthew inspire you to read Scripture with new eyes? Try reading several different translations of this passage. See how the language might change your reading of it.</p>
<p>22 Worship</p> <p>Advent 4</p> <p>Linger before leaving your worship time today. How is God calling you to hear and sing along with Mary's Song? Read Luke 1:39-55.</p>	<p>23 Pray</p> <p>Pray along with the Collect for Advent 4, found on page 212 in The Book of Common Prayer. Pick three or four of your beloveds to focus your prayers on today. Make sure to leave some silent space for God to offer you some wisdom about what they may need right now.</p>	<p>24 Rest</p> <p>The conventional wisdom is that new parents should rest when the baby is resting. Make sure you take some time out to rest with Baby Jesus — and marvel in the wonder of a fresh, new, clean, shiny, tiny, precious start. Take a nap and thank God for the gift of Jesus and for peace at Christmas.</p>				