

# Church of the Advent

*Celebrating 150 Years*

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## “...the seasons come the seasons go...”

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I left my hometown to attend college in Connecticut when I was seventeen. The change was more than I could have imagined, going from Central High School (Indiana state basketball champions) to being a lowly freshman at Yale. I was thinking of that move recently while at my 50th college reunion. This gathering of old friends brought to mind the significance of community.

I did learn when I was in college. I “studied....some.” (It’s the refrain from an old Yale song.) On the academic side I will admit to being more focused in law school and then in graduate school and seminary than I was as an undergraduate. Still, I did learn. I learned and experienced the value of community. It was those classmates I met for the first time when seventeen who became a part of a community with me over the next four years and in some cases over the next fifty.

These were lessons I repeated over the years in my legal practice and any number of other places. It is about the networks of friends and colleagues that become a part of our lives. They were lessons which, in retrospect, I had learned growing up in a neighborhood and, of course, in church.

It is the church part that I want to focus in on. I want to mark the importance of the community of faith. We are this gathering that shares values, understandings, burdens, a willingness to love God and each other. We share a story. This is a big deal.

There are those who say they can be “spiritual” all by themselves. I am really not sure what this means since spirituality is a relationship with the divine. Relationships are always community. At the heart of our experience of the Spirit is community, in each other, in helping and caring for one another, in prayer. We offer this experience of a community of faith to our children and to each other knowing that it is a means of support and nourishment that can endure.

The title of this little piece comes from an old Yale song- “Bright College Years.” The line “The seasons come, the seasons go, the earth is green or white with snow” is a

recognition of the fact that change comes to us all. The lines which follow are a hope that friendships made will endure in spite of the challenges of life, separations of distance and time. It is about the endurance of community, even if it is in our memory. Those memories endure because this is how we are formed.

My appeal to community, to the value of being formed in a community of faith, is more than desire for participation, for more of us in church or Sunday school. The numbers will always go up and down. Faith communities need not be large and the best are often quite intimate. The gathering can be in majesty of a great cathedral, or it may be a small rural mission that struggles to survive. The point is that here is where we are shaped and formed as children and as adults. Here is where we become a part of a story, a part of the story. The seasons will come and go but having been shaped, community and our formation remain.

These are the gifts that sustain us. We are not fed by personal accomplishment, at least in any way that is lasting. We are not finally measured by tangible achievements. But we can be fed by our community of faith at the altar, in the word, in relationships made and remembered. We can learn those virtues and values by which those who surround us and those who come after us will measure us. Community, particularly the community of faith, is no indulgence; it is the firm place in which we stand. It is foundation and refuge.

I mention all of this because I am convinced. It is important. I am also reflecting on all of this because we are entering a period of change. With my next birthday (as explained elsewhere in this issue of the Anchor) will come a time of transition for Advent and the search for the XVth Rector of this parish. Even though I will give up my role as your priest, I will retain all the ways you have formed me in this place, all the gifts of allowing me to be present in word, sacrament and friendship. This is community of faith and “though seasons come and seasons go...” for me this all will endure.

--*John*+

### *Notes from the ECM*

The July breakfast meeting of the ECM will be **Monday, July 10**. The August breakfast meeting will be Tuesday, August 1. The meetings begin at 8:30 AM, with coffee ready by 8:00 AM. The cost is \$5.00 and all men of the parish are invited.

## **Transition, Change, Call**

On December 27 of this year, I will achieve the age of 72 years. The Canons of The Episcopal Church require me to resign all cures in the church at that point including the Rectorship of the Episcopal Church of the Advent/St. John's Chapel. My last Sunday will be January 7, 2018, when we will celebrate the Epiphany. The parish will then enter a period of transition, discernment and then calling a new rector under the leadership of the Wardens and Vestry.

I will write more about this process as the time draws closer. I will say, having already spoken to Bishop Stokes and the Rev. Brian Jemmott, Canon to the Ordinary, that the parish is in a very good place to begin this work. It should be work that is productive and exciting.

In the meantime we have an active six months of program and activity. Nothing ever slows down at Advent. There is Vacation Bible School, Choir Week, a picnic, dinners, concerts and all the rest. It will be a busy time.

For now, Dot and I will continue to live in Cape May. We won't disappear from town even though I am not Rector and will not be at Advent. To start we will take time off for a number of weeks of travel. Then, we will watch from a respectful distance as you continue to grow and flourish.

*John+*

## **CHOIR CAMP**

This summer will mark the 29<sup>th</sup> time we have hosted the Diocese of New Jersey Choir Camp. This year's program begins on Sunday, July 23 and ends with a Choral Evensong on Thursday, July 27 at 4:00 PM. All are invited to attend this Evensong. Mark A. Trautman, Director of Music at St. Paul's in Englewood, NJ, is our Choir Camp Director.

## **JULY AND AUGUST**

### **ECM DINNERS**

The July dinner will be held on Saturday, July 22. The menu is Boneless Turkey and will offer coffee, iced tea and homemade dessert. A vegetarian entrée will also be served. The August dinner will be held on Saturday, August 26. The menu will be Baked BBQ Chicken. A vegetarian entrée will also be served. Guests are welcome to bring beer, wine or soda to accompany their meal. Table service begins at 4:30 PM and continues until 7:00 PM. Take-out meals are also available. The cost is \$15.00 at the door (\$6.00 for children). If you purchase your tickets in advance, the price is \$13.00 (\$6.00 for children). Consider purchasing our 10-meal ticket for \$120.00 (a \$150.00 value).

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Plans are underway for Vacation Bible School at Church of the Advent. The dates are July 31 through August 4, and will be held in the early evening (6:00 to 8:00 PM). Children from the age of 3 and up are invited to attend. Music, stories and crafts will be included in the program. If you would like to be a part of the VBS adventure this year, please contact the church office at 884-3065 or [adventsecretary@comcast.net](mailto:adventsecretary@comcast.net). Many small tasks go into creating a successful event, so please do not hesitate to share your talents and interests!

### ***Parish Picnic Time--- Sunday September 17***

Come one, come  
September 17 at  
the 10:30 service  
grill masters

There will  
so that you can  
we can get an  
have already



all. Our annual parish picnic this year will be  
the Coast Guard base pavilion. We will gather after  
for hamburgers and hot dogs prepared by our crack  
along with sides and deserts from all the rest of us.  
be sign-up sheets on the Sundays before the picnic  
indicate what you are planning to bring and so that  
idea of how many are going to join in the fun. You  
heard the announcements to get your names on the  
list so that we can be ready to pass the base security gate. Remember to bring photo ID.

See you on September 17<sup>th</sup> to mark the end of summer and the beginning of a new  
program year.

## HYMN SING

Join us on Sunday, July 23 at 4:00 PM for a Hymn Sing, followed by a reception in the Parish Hall. Only hymns from the hymnals in the pews or submitted beforehand can be requested. We will also be using the song sheets from last year, so if you submitted a hymn then, it will be available.

## Bishop's Coming!

### Advance Planning For Confirmation and Such

We are on the calendar for a visit by Bishop Stokes on October 29. That Sunday will be a time for confirmations, receptions and renewals of vows. We have already begun planning for a confirmation class for our youth. The class will meet from the beginning of September. If you or someone you know is interested and has not been contacted let the church office know.

**For adults** there will be separate gatherings to explore confirmation, reception and renewal of baptismal vows. As the words imply it is for those who were never confirmed but would like to be, for those who were confirmed in another tradition and would like to be formally received and for those who want to renew their commitment. The class will be an exploration of some of the ways we act out our faith within The Episcopal Church. Everyone is welcome to attend even if just for the learning and fellowship. During the summer let the church office, or Fr. John know if this is something that might be of interest.

## PLANNING AHEAD

It makes sense to plan ahead. We plan ahead for vacations, for weddings, for construction projects, for our finances. End of life and estate questions are just as important. Maybe as a summer time project we could get these questions on our agenda and calendar. These are things that are not that hard to do; but one does need to get started. Sometimes love involves making a plan and not leaving it to others. Here are some thoughts.

*Powers of Attorney and Medical Directives.* Have you made your wishes known? Have you made provision for end of life care, what you want done for you and what you do not?

*Wills and Estate planning.* Having a will and doing your estate planning is not difficult or expensive. What can be expensive, at least for your family, is doing nothing. Do you really want to leave everything to New Jersey default law provisions for those who do not “get around to it”?

*Remembering Advent and others.* We are blessed with gifts from generations long past. If this place and community are important to us, shouldn't we consider those who are yet to come? We have heard that one way to repay our debt to the past is to make the future indebted to us. When you are thinking of your estate plans or remember others, especially your Advent.

*Final arrangements.* Some of us have already made provisions, specifying the sort of funeral or memorial arrangements we like to have. Forms for this purpose are available in the parish office. Remember that all these thoughts only become acts of love when we are able to get up and “get around to it”.

## **WATERING THE SEED**

When a farmer plants the seed  
Deep in the rich, brown earth,  
He depends on the showers from heaven  
To bring that seed to birth.

The precious seed of the gospel,  
Planted by missionaries who care,  
Would never come to fruition  
If it wasn't watered by prayer.

When watered by prayers of God's  
children,  
The gospel seed begins to sprout;  
Soon it grows as a tender plant,  
Ready to blossom out.

So faithful prayer band warriors  
Be encouraged as you pray;  
Seed that is lovingly watered  
Will be ready for harvest one day.

When we go home to heaven  
And our praises we begin to share,  
We'll find that many were redeemed  
Because we watered the seed through prayer.

*-Freda Dehoff*

**THE NEXT VESTRY MEETING IS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 IN THE UPPER ROOM**

## **WATERCOLOR MINIATURES WORKSHOP**

Diana Heitzman will hold a Watercolor Miniatures Workshop on Monday, July 10 and 17 from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM in the Parish Hall. To register call 610-247-7284 or [dhdesign5@aol.com](mailto:dhdesign5@aol.com). The cost is \$35 for both classes or \$20 for one.

## **THE WAY OF SAINT PAUL**

The diocese is beginning a program called "The Way of Saint Paul." The program focuses on the spiritual growth of a group and the congregation as a means toward renewed vitality. The effort is being led by The Rev. Dr. Rob Droste, Canon for Congregational Development. The idea is to begin by forming a team of six or so members from the different parishes. The teams will be coached and trained and then bring what they have learned back to their home congregations. Training sessions will be spread around the diocese for easier accessibility. There is an explanation of the program on line at [www.dioceseofnj.org/wayofstpaul](http://www.dioceseofnj.org/wayofstpaul). If this is something you think you might be interested in please contact Father John for more information.