

The Communicator

St. Paul's Anglican Church – Crownsville, Maryland

A member church of The Anglican Province of America (APA)



And behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS.

Luke 1:31

Father Tom's Advent & Christmas Message, 2018

As I was seeking guidance and contemplating what to write this year, my mind “wandered” (actually was led) to the four wonderful grandchildren that are such awesome blessings to Linda and me. They are intelligent, helpful, athletic, attractive, friendly, persistent, loving, shy and outgoing (just like all grandchildren.) Then I thought, “This is great Lord, but what does it have to do with Advent and Christmas?”

The ah-ha moment began to come into focus when I realized that not one of these four young adults possessed all of these attributes, but together they bring much joy, peace and love to our lives. The point hit full force when I remembered that 2,000 years ago, God used four people (or small groups) to accomplish HIS plan to bring joy, peace, love and hope to the whole world.

When God sent the angel Gabriel to tell a young adult named Mary that she had found favor with God, and He had chosen her to give birth to the Savior of the World, she said, “Be it unto me according to thy word.” In spite of the fact that she could be subject to death by stoning for being “with child” while she was unmarried, she said, “Let God use me in any way necessary to accomplish his plan.”

Later, after Joseph discovered what he perceived to be Mary's indiscretion, he planned to protect her from at least disgrace, and possibly death, by ending their betrothment quietly and secretly. When the angel of the Lord told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as a wife because her baby was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and He would be named Jesus because He would save his people from their sins, he trusted God, and married Mary.

On the night of our Savior's birth, the angel of the Lord appeared to a few shepherds in the field watching their sheep. Although they were at first terrified, they listened to the news from the angel that a Savior was born in Bethlehem. After finding Jesus lying in a manger, the shepherds praised God and spread the Good News and joy that a Savior was born.

A short time later, when three wise men came to Jerusalem seeking the "New Born King of the Jews", the evil King Herod instructed them to find the Holy Baby, and return to tell him where He was. He said he wanted to worship Him, but he secretly desired to kill Him. After finding Jesus, God instructed the wise men to not report to Herod, and they obeyed Him, giving time for the Holy Family to flee into Egypt.

These four possessed many, but different attributes which were used to serve God; and because they trusted, obeyed and chose to serve Him as called, great joy, peace, love and hope were brought into the world, and his salvation plan was launched. But there is still much more work to be done; there remains to this day, many "Herod's" in our world who are denying, suppressing or even trying to destroy the truth of God's message of joy, peace, love and hope.

Fortunately, just like Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men, members of our congregation (and Christians around the world) have been blessed with a variety of godly attributes. No one person possesses all of them, but, powered by the Holy Spirit, together we have all the tools required to complete our calling.

Traditionally, Advent is a time to prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth and to ensure we are ready for his second coming. Let us also use this time to inventory our individual God-given attributes to determine how we can best use them to model the shepherds and spread joy, peace, love and hope in this chaotic world. This is not the time to keep the Good News of the birth of our Savior a secret. Nor is it a time to hide from our neighbors all the wonderful ministries the Holy Spirit is enabling through us.

It is, however, the time to invite your friends and family to join us for our services and other offerings. Who would not enjoy and be spiritually fed on December 16th by our adult voice and bell choirs? And, who can resist the innocent presentation of the birth of our Savior by our Sunday school and youth group at 5 pm on Christmas Eve?

Let us demonstrate the joy, peace, love and hope of Jesus Christ to all who visit us during this season, and to each other.

May the power of Jesus Christ fill our hearts, minds and souls with His Hope, Peace, Joy and Love this Advent and Christmas Season.

God's Peace and Love to All,

Tom+



St. Paul's Advent Calendar

Dec. 2	First Sunday in Advent-- Guest: Rev. Mr. Shawn Riley preaching
Dec. 8	11am-1pm Youth Group
Dec. 9	Deadline for Stockings for Salvation Army
Dec. 16	5pm Lessons and Carols with refreshments after
Dec. 22	3pm-6pm Raynaldo Brown's Neighborhood Christmas party supported by our Missions Donations
Dec. 23	Decorate church for Christmas after 11am service
Dec. 24	5pm Family Holy Communion 11pm Holy Communion
Dec. 25	10am Holy Communion
Jan. 1	Church Office closed
Jan. 5	10am Ladies Guild "Epiphany Party"
Jan. 6	Epiphany Last day for poinsettias

The Missions Committee

During this Advent Season, your Missions Committee thought it a good time to reaffirm with you that St. Paul's has a strong commitment to giving to those less fortunate as Jesus has asked us to do. Our Missions Committee supports some International Missions and many Local Missions, but especially during Advent we help infuse the Christmas spirit to areas where that spirit can be uplifted with a little help. These efforts are funded through our Missions Committee by you, our generous parishioners. This Advent season will see St. Paul's support in the following areas:

Annapolis Gardens Christmas Party
Philippines Christmas Party
Christmas Poinsettias for Local Missions

In addition, our Parishioners dress Christmas Bears and fill Stockings for Salvation Army. St. Paul's is full of cheerful givers! Thank you and may God continue to bless St. Paul's and each and every one of you.



Dec. 16 - 5pm Lessons and Carols

Refreshments after

EVERYONE IS WELCOME! BRING A FRIEND!

The Communicator

The Rev. Thomas Burr – Rector

The Rev. Eric Holle – Assisting

The Rt. Rev. Robert S. Loiselle,

Mr. Jack Wyatt, OSV – Senior

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Priest

Sr. – Rector Emeritus

Warden & Editor

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ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

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