

Dear Parishioners,

We are now in the midst of this season of Advent; this time of waiting now is a good time to focus on what is inside us. Is there within our hearts a discipline of patient waiting, a spiritual poise that is open to the prompting and imagination of the spirit in this season ripe with meaning and purpose, or, is our inner mind more like a playground of unruly children running off in all directions unable to listen and pay attention?

At All Saints one of the gifts we offer is the ability to listen and pay attention to marvelous music performed by the choir. Last Sunday afternoon those fortunate to be present could listen to the choir sing advent carols and listen to scripture, hopefully entering into the mystery of stillness and waiting for our Lord to come into our midst. That service allowed us to hear the beautiful prophesies of the coming of Christ by the alternating reading with splendid Advent carols and anthems.

Next Sunday morning, Sunday, December 11th at 10.30, our Diocesan Bishop, Archbishop Colin Johnson, will be our celebrant and homilist. There will only **ONE liturgy** on the 11th

The choir will assist with glorious music to engage in the mystery of Christ's coming.

Advent is a time to put normal life on hold. So let's not look busy this year. Let's get ready instead. Ready to remember Christ's first coming among us. Ready to anticipate his coming anew. And ready to do for him whatever he asks of us this year. The liturgy for December 11th is a sequence of poetry and music reminding us to be still and listen to voice of God within us, the enduring melody of God.

Following the service, please do stay and enjoy a lunch and fellowship with the Archbishop in the parish hall.

During the weekend of December 17th and 18th we will have another chance to partake in music making. On Saturday December 17 at 3.00pm there is carols sing a long in the church where all five parishes of the Anglican - Lutheran covenant will join together for singing and refreshments in the church. Please do make an effort to attend this time of fellowship. Music and food always work for a good time!

On Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the choir will continue offering to us the gift of music via the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols at 4.00pm. The service as we now know it originated out Kings College, Cambridge. Its actual beginning originated from Truro Cathedral in 1880. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols as we know it was first held on Christmas Eve in 1918 and was planned by Eric Milner- White, aged 34 who had been an army chaplain during World War One. He also devised the Advent Carol Service in 1930 when he was Dean of York.

By then the church will be decorated for Christmas after much time and effort by the chancel guild. On behalf of all of us I want to thank the chancel guild and the choir who spend countless hours to make this season of Advent and Christmas so special at All Saints.

May I remind you please that your generous offering during this month is what allows the parish to provide such a rich variety of music for Advent and Christmas. Please do make every effort to help the parish meet its financial goal for 2016! Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of living each day in gratitude for all the blessings that God has given to us. The roots of stewardship can be found in the Bible, which tells us over and over that God is the Creator and Giver of all gifts. It is our responsibility to show our gratitude to God for these gifts, by giving back to Him the "first fruits. "We do not own the gifts God gives to us. We are only here on earth to use those gifts to do God's work.

So, in this month when the pace of life quickens, the information and advertising builds up to a crescendo in advance of Christmas, let's not lose sight of Advent as a season of waiting, discipline and readiness. As we stand together around the Holy Table in the quietness of this sanctuary and minister to one another by passing bread and wine, as we wait in silence for the day of Christ's coming that "no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the son, only the Father", let us trust that in the quietness and in the waiting, the meaning of these events we celebrate in this season will come to us more intensely.

Blessings  
Fr Geoff