

ST. PETER'S NET

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH → 654 N. EASTON ROAD → GLENSIDE, PA 19038 → (215) 887-1765

Second Sunday of Advent to the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

December 2009/January 2010

Be still and know that I am God

My former church, St. Stephen's, was located in the very center of town. Its stone façade, white columns and large steeple could not be missed on Ridgefield's Main Street. Every Advent the altar guild placed large wreaths with purple bows on the front doors of the church. It never failed that during this season members of the Ridgefield community would stop me in the grocery or hardware store and ask, "Aren't you a minister at that pretty stone church on Main Street?" Knowing exactly what was to come next, I'd smile and say, "Yes, I am!" "Well, I'm curious," the individual would continue. "Why do you have purple bows on your doors during Christmastime?" I'd take a few minutes and explain to him that it wasn't actually the Christmas season. I'd then go on to talk briefly about the four weeks of Advent which we, Episcopalians, celebrate in preparation for Christmas. I was always amazed to see that all of the other mainline churches: the Methodists, Catholics, Lutherans, and Congregationalists in town—those who supposedly celebrated Advent as we did, donned red bows on their doors. I came to realize that in these four weeks, we Episcopalians in Ridgefield, CT were being countercultural! Whether we liked it or not, it was our opportunity to stand out in the crowd. I always relished those conversations as I was waiting in line to buy my groceries. I felt like it was my moment to practice evangelism.

In our world where the secular Christmas season begins on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, our celebration of Advent may seem out of step and even rather odd to onlookers. We gather in worship and listen to stories of a wild prophet crying out in the wilderness and of the invitation to prepare for Jesus' second coming. We sing mournful, yet hopeful hymns and pray for the light of Christ to shine in the darkness. The frivolity and gaiety of the world outside is

countered with a quiet stillness and solemnity which we Advent people are called to embrace. We are told be still and wait, to watch and pray.

I must admit that I do enjoy indulging in some of the traditions of the secular season. I don't wait until Christmas Eve to put up my Christmas tree, decorate the house for the holidays, or listen to my favorite Christmas carols. I enjoy going to holiday parties and sharing in seasonal good cheer. However, I do use these four weeks as a time to deepen my prayer life and my connection to the One whom I am called to wait upon. I believe that the season of Advent is an invitation for us to live out the words of Psalm 46: "Be still and know that I am God." For me and I hope for you as well, Christmas becomes more meaningful when we find time to be quiet and listen more deeply for our God who has promised to come among us and transform our lives.

There will be new opportunities during Advent to engage in such holy listening and waiting. Beginning November 30th Evening Prayer will be held in the chapel every Monday through Friday at 5 p.m. This is a 20-minute service of silence, prayers and scripture readings. Please come join me and find a quiet, peaceful way to welcome in the evening. On December 20th the Worship Committee and I are offering a Blue Christmas service at 7 p.m. in the church. I invite you to share in a quiet, contemplative candlelight service of prayers, scripture and music. This is an opportunity to be in God's presence for those of us who mourn, or who simply feel a need to await the coming of the Christ Child in quiet contemplation and solemnity. Of course we will celebrate Advent in our weekend liturgies and with our monthly Taizé service, as well.

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Be still ... (continued)

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I also encourage you to find ways among your own families and friends to honor this season of waiting. Place an Advent wreath at your dinner table, light the candles and say prayers with the passing of each week. Place candles in your windows to remind you and your family of Christ's light which shines in the darkness. Practice being still and quiet by turning off your TVs, computers or iPods occasionally in order to listen for

God in your midst without all these distractions. Read scripture daily either as an individual or as a family. See how you encounter God in these ancient stories.

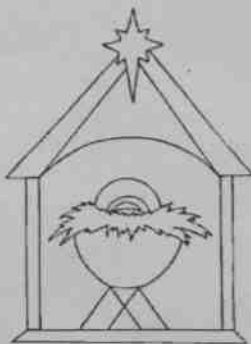
May we all embrace this holy season in which we are called to be countercultural. And may these four weeks be a gift which leads us deeper into the mystery of the Incarnation.

Advent Blessings,
Emily+

Please join Emily, Daniel, and Maggie

*On the sixth of December
For an Advent Open House
At St. Peter's Rectory*

*From four o'clock
Until seven o'clock*



Calling all kids! Get out your crayons and find the Christmas story pictures to color in this issue of the NET.

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Rector's Warden;
Audrey Kipphut,
People's Warden;
John Brennan,
Accounting Warden;
Carmen Gelinias,
Vestry Secretary;
Maralyn Bryan,
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Nicole Doyle,
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Matthew O'Keefe,
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NET Editors

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Please send articles, photos,
suggestions by the 15th of
each month for the
following month's NET

From the Rector's Warden

I am in my second month as Rector's Warden and enjoy a unique position to observe all the activity at St. Peter's. While I was always aware of the work happening at the Church, now that I attend a lot more meetings I am even more impressed with the dedication of the members of this congregation to St. Peter's mission. People step up and unselfishly give their time to do what needs to be done. The range of work is wide, from education to property to outreach to fundraising to liturgy and on and on. We all bring our particular gifts and interests to the needs of the Church and the congregation.

I am aware of the fact that I do not know everyone in the congregation, and I am not aware of the special interests that many members may have. I have a request. If you do feel called to serve on a committee, if you have an interest in finance (Finance Committee), real estate (Property and Tenants Committees) investments (Endowment Committee), or any other area (numerous other committees!), please talk to me or Emily or Audrey Kipphut. We encourage you to become an active member of the team, and we welcome and appreciate your involvement.

I make this plea because the Vestry has worked to make the committee system more effective for accomplishing our work. I personally enjoy working on committees because I get to know the members better. That is a great byproduct of getting involved.

I am dismayed at the recent reports on hunger in America. I am particularly pleased that the Stuart Grant Fund Committee designated a sizeable portion of this year's grants to Philabundance, a local organization that distributes food in the Delaware Valley. I am usually remiss at remembering to bring food items for the Sunday basket. This is just a little prod to me and all of us to do what we can to donate food items.

Please feel free to talk to me about any questions or concerns you may have. I wish everyone a Happy and Peaceful Christmas Season and New Year. We have so many things to be thankful for, not least of which is the successful conclusion of our Rector Search and the beginning of our journey with Emily. It is an exciting time at St. Peter's. Thanks to all of you who are part of it.

— George Luskus, Rector's Warden

November's Vestry Meeting

On Tuesday, November 10th the Vestry held their regular monthly meeting. In addition to reports from the Rector, the Rector's Warden and the People's Warden, we heard two presentations from working committees:

- Dave Mosteller, who heads the team that is looking into a new sound system for St. Peter's, presented proposals from three contractors. The Vestry discussed the three estimates and unanimously voted to accept the bid presented by James Stembe. He is a colleague of Charles Glandorff and we felt very comfortable with his proposals.
- Jeanne Robson of the Property Committee asked the Vestry to consider the disposal of several items including a grandfather clock in the Library and possibly a Baby Grand Piano to be donated to the church. A small committee of 2 or 3 people will be asked to look into the matter and suggest solutions as to how to take care of the disposal of these items.

The Rector announced that she and Daniel will host an open house at the Rectory for all the members of St. Peter's Church on Sunday, December 6, from 4 to 7 p.m. Finally, the Vestry is discussing ways in which St. Peter's can gradually become a "greener" church, possibly by making greater use of the Internet and less use of paper. More about this soon.

— Maralyn Bryan, Corresponding Secretary

