



St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

Bay Shore ✠ New York

*We extend a warm welcome to everyone, and especially any visitors who may be worshipping with us today.
If you do not already have a church home, please feel welcome to join this Parish family.*

*Our Services begin with the Opening Voluntary. You are invited to enter
quietly into the spirit of worship as the music is played.*

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT YEAR B

THE HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE I

29 November 2020 ✠ 10:00 am



THE WORD OF GOD

Opening Voluntary Chorale Prelude on “Savior of the Nations, Come”

Johann Pachelbel

The Opening Acclamation

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Celebrant says the Collect for Purity

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Song of Praise: Trisagion

Celebrant Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal one,

People Have mercy upon us.

Celebrant Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal one,

People Have mercy upon us.

Celebrant Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal one,

People Have mercy upon us.

The Collect of the Day (The First Sunday of Advent)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

The Lessons

The First Lesson: Isaiah 64:1-9

Lector A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence--
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil--
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 (*Said by all*)

- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.
- 3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 4 O Lord God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?
- 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.
18 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

The Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Lector A Reading from the First Letter to the Corinthians.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind-- just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you-- so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The congregation stands for the reading of the Gospel.

The Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

People Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Jesus said, "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The Sermon

The Right Reverend Johncy Itty

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

The Intercessor says

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church and the world.

Almighty and ever living God, who in thy holy Word hast taught us to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks for all men: Receive these our prayers which we offer unto thy divine Majesty, beseeching thee to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord; and grant that all those who do confess thy holy Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and other ministers, especially Michael, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church; Lawrence, GERALYN, Daniel and William, Bishops of the Diocese; and Johncy, our Bishop-in-Residence; that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments.

Lord, hear our prayer.

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and especially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy Word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We beseech thee also so to rule the hearts of those who bear the authority of government in this and every land, especially the President of the United States, the members of Congress, and all regional and local authorities, that they may be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Open, O Lord, the eyes of all people to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works, that, rejoicing in thy whole creation, they may honor thee with their substance, and be faithful stewards of thy bounty.

Lord, hear our prayer.

And we most humbly beseech thee, of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succor Alan, Andrea, Ann, Annakutty, Anthony, Autumn, Ben, Betty, Betty C., Caroline, Chris, Crystal, David, Deborah, Diane, Donna, Elinor, Emily, Gary, George, Greg, Hannah, Helen, Jackie, Joanne, Joel, John, Joy, June, Kamryn, Ken, Lenore, Lorraine, Mark, Matthew, Michelle, Roger, Ronald, Sarah Grace, Shanti, Sister Joy, Steve, Sue, Theresa, Tria, and William; and all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

We pray for those in military service, and especially for Christian, John, Robert, and Stephen;

And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; remembering especially all whose lives have been lost to Covid-19; beseeching thee to grant them continual growth in thy love and service; and to grant us grace so to follow the good examples of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Peter, St. Edmund, and of all thy saints, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant these our prayers, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

The Confession of Sin and Absolution

Celebrant

Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways: Draw near with faith, and make your humble confession to Almighty God,

All

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men:

We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness,
which we from time to time most grievously have committed,
by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty,
provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us.

We do earnestly repent,
and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings;
the remembrance of them is grievous unto us,
the burden of them is intolerable.

Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter
serve and please thee in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Celebrant

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Presider may then say one or more of the following sentences, first saying

Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to him.

Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. *Matthew 11:28*

God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *John 3:16*

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And with thy spirit.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Music at the Offering—Chorale Prelude on “Sleepers wake! A voice astounds us” Gottfried Homelius

The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer II

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People We lift them up unto the Lord.

Celebrant Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

People It is meet and right so to do.

The Celebrant continues

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God; because thou didst send thy beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,

Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts:

Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.

Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Then the Celebrant continues

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks to thee, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy people do celebrate and make, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory.

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies. Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord;

By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

People and Celebrant

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,

so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. *Amen.*

AT THE TIME FOR COMMUNION:

- ◆ *Only the Host (Bread) will be distributed; not wine*
- ◆ *Please approach the Altar in SINGLE FILE from the CENTER AISLE only, not the side aisles*
- ◆ *Observe Social Distancing in the aisle by using the pew markers for vacant pews*
- ◆ *Communicants should sanitize their hands before receiving the host. You may use your own, or a bottle is placed at the head of the aisle*
- ◆ *The Host will be placed in the palm of each Communicant, not on the tongue*
- ◆ *Please return to your seat, by way of the side aisles*
- ◆ *Remove your mask to take the Host, then replace the mask for the remainder of the service*

The Post Communion Prayer (BCP, p. 339)

Celebrant *Let us pray.*

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Advent Blessing and Dismissal

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

Bishop Let us bless the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Closing Voluntary Chorale Prelude on “Savior of the Nations, Come”

Gottfried Homelius

— FOR THE SERVICE —

Officiant and Preacher

Lector

Lay Eucharistic Minister and Intercessor

Acolyte

Organist

Ushers

Altar Guild

The Right Reverend Johncy Itty

Linda Brady

Joan Derle

William Logan

Mark Engelhardt

Irene Feola, Theresa Macario, Jeannie Taylor

Linda Brady, Juanita Moon, Jeannie Taylor

*The Advent Greens are given to the Glory of God
and in thanksgiving for the people of St. Peter's Church.*

Diocesan and state health guidelines prevail. Please observe the procedures listed below, and as always, thank you for observing these protocols, which is an expression of your care for everyone in the Parish family.

AT THE TIME FOR COMMUNION:

- ◆ Only the Host (Bread) will be distributed; not wine
- ◆ Please approach the Altar in **SINGLE FILE** from the **CENTER AISLE** only, not the side aisles
- ◆ Observe Social Distancing in the aisle by using the pew markers for vacant pews
- ◆ Communicants should sanitize their hands before receiving the host. You may use your own, or a bottle is placed at the head of the aisle
- ◆ The Host will be placed in the palm of each Communicant, not on the tongue
- ◆ Please return to your seat, by way of the side aisles
- ◆ Remove your mask to take the Host, then replace the mask for the remainder of the service

Please also remember, *per the mandates of the State of New York and
The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island:*

- **Face Masks** are required to be worn by all in attendance at all times.
(We have a supply on hand, if you forgot yours.)
- **Physical Distancing** of 6 feet must be maintained at all times, and pews are marked for that purpose.
- Check in upon arrival, and if your name is not in the data base, please provide your **NAME, E-MAIL ADDRESS, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER** for Contact Tracing.
- **One-time use paper bulletins** are provided, and must be taken away by the user. Please be sure to take yours with you, and don't leave it behind in the pew or in the Narthex.
- **PLEASE PLACE YOUR OFFERING IN ONE OF THE OFFERING PLATES** near the Altar before the service begins. If you came in late, please place it in the plate immediately following the service.

Until further notice, all Day-by-Day booklets and sign-up sheets will be kept in the office. To pick up a tract, or sign up for anything, including memorial flowers, please ask Mark or Brian, or on Sundays, an usher.

Parish Financial Snapshot for the Week ending November 22, 2020
Compared with the Fourth Weekend in November, 2019

	2020	2019
Total 2020 Annual Budget	\$363,544	
Total Parish Expenses Per Week	<u>\$6,991</u>	<u>\$7,465</u>
Donations Fourth Weekend in November	3,007	3,670
LPL Transfer	<u>1,865</u>	<u>1,865</u>
Weekly Overage (Deficit)	<u>(2,119)</u>	<u>(1,930)</u>
Year-to-Date Deficit	(\$87,877)	(\$107,068)

— PARISH NOTICES —

PLEASE PLACE YOUR OFFERING IN ONE OF THE OFFERING PLATES NEAR THE ALTAR BEFORE THE SERVICE BEGINS. IF YOU COME IN LATE, PLEASE PLACE IT IN THE PLATE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SERVICE.

THE ALTAR GUILD WILL MEET NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, AT 9AM IN THE LOUNGE.

THE ANGEL TREE 2020: Traditionally, we hold the annual ornament workshop at the start of Advent and proudly display our hand-made ornaments which are then printed with first names and Christmas wishes for a child and/or family in need. This year, for safety reasons, we will still be displaying our ornaments but instead have a sign up sheet available by the tree in the narthex so that members of the congregation can “adopt” and shop for a person in need. If you are unable to shop or would like to make a donation so that we can shop for you, please reach out to Anne Perry at 631-894-7806. Please arrange to have all gifts in gift bags labeled and back to the church by 12/20 so they can be safely delivered to those in need. Thank you for all of your support!

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2020 (VIRTUALLY!) Plans are underway for our first virtual Christmas Pageant! We are working on a safe, creative way to deliver the Gospel and wonderful news of Jesus' birth and are asking for children who are interested in participating with a small part from home to reach out to Anne Perry. The traditional script for our pageant will be shared amongst participants and pre-recorded, and Christmas Carols will be added with the assistance of Mark Engelhardt. Please let us know of your interest in participating by today, the First Sunday of Advent!

BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES: Tuesdays at 10:30am in the Lounge and Sundays at 9am in the Lounge. Bring your bible and a mask! All are invited.

IN RECENT TIMES AN AVERAGE OF 15% OF AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS DO NOT HAVE DEPENDABLE OR CONSISTENT ACCESS TO FOOD AND HEALTHY LIVING. This is regarded as low food security and has been at its highest level since the mid 90's. If we can help please call St. Peter's Food Ministry 631-665-0051.

THE LADIES OF THE THRIFT COTTAGE have asked that no Donations be made until further notice. They are in the midst of reorganizing for an opening at a later date.

ST. PETER'S IS NOW HOSTING SEVERAL SUPPORT GROUPS in addition to Volleyball Clubs and two Soccer Clinics. Our two long-standing AA groups continue to meet on Monday and Friday evenings. New groups now meeting are Al-Anon on Friday mornings at 10am and Sunday evenings at 7pm, and a new support group for heroin addiction, also meeting on Sunday evenings. Please contact Megan via the hotline: 631-210-6297 or www.halongisland.org if interested in joining the HA group. Call the parish office if interested in attending the AA or Al-Anon groups for contact information.

COPING WITH THE HOLIDAYS—A VIRTUAL WORKSHOP - FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE DUE TO COVID-19: Good Shepherd Hospice is offering a free virtual workshop for those who are grieving a loss due to COVID-19. This workshop, which is facilitated by Bereavement Specialists, will offer support, education and strategies to cope with loss of a loved one during the holiday season. The workshop will be Thursday, 12/3/2020, from 7:00PM-8:30PM. To register, please call 631-465-6262 / 516-465-6262. ***Zoom and email information required to participate.*

— PRAYERS FOR THE WEEK —

We pray for those who have asked our prayers: Alan, Andrea, Ann, Annakutty, Anthony, Autumn, Ben, Betty, Betty C., Caroline, Chris, Crystal, David, Deborah, Diane, Donna, Elinor, Emily, Gary, George, Greg, Hannah, Helen, Jackie, Joanne, Joel, John, Joy, Kamryn, Ken, Lenore, Lorraine, Mark, Matthew, Michelle, Roger, Ronald, Sarah Grace, Shanti, Sister Joy, Steve, Sue, Theresa, Tria, and William;

We pray for those who have died; remembering especially all whose lives have been lost to Covid-19; and those grieving the death of a loved one, that they may they find comfort and peace;

We pray for those in military service, and especially for Christian, John, Robert, and Stephen;

We pray for the unemployed and underemployed; for all who suffer from addictions; for all who suffer chronic illness, and for all caregivers;

We pray for our companion dioceses of Torit & Ecuador-Central; and for mercy, peace, and justice among all peoples, especially those whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters, terrorism, war, famine, tyranny, or injustice;

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for St. Luke's, Sea Cliff; Brotherhood of St. Andrew; Ministries in our Diocese to those with HIV/AIDS; St. Michael & All Angels, Seaford; Convention Committee on Dispatch; Holy Trinity, Valley Stream; St. Jude's, Wantagh;

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for the Lusitanian Church (Extra-Provincial to the Archbishop of Canterbury); and the Dioceses of Sekondi (West Africa); Eastern Michigan, Eastern Oregon, Easton, Eau Claire (The Episcopal Church); Seoul (Korea); Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador (Canada); Seychelles (Indian Ocean); Sheffield (England); Eastern Zambia (Central Africa); Shinyanga (Tanzania); Gasabo (Rwanda); Edinburgh (Scotland).

A Prayer for the First Sunday of Advent

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord,
God of our ancestors:
to you be praise and glory for ever.

You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith
and to journey in the hope
of your promised fulfilment.

May we be obedient to your call
and be ready and watchful
to receive your Christ,
a lamp to our feet
and a light to our path;

for you are our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.





BULLETIN INSERTS

November 29, 2020 – Advent 1 (B)

First Week of Advent: Saying “Yes” to the Journey

As Advent begins this week, we invite you to orient yourself to the coming of Jesus at Christmas through the practices of *Journeying the Way of Love*. This journey begins by saying “yes” to God’s call to birth new life into the world—a call that is both powerful and gentle, a call that will, if fully embraced, grow beyond our imaginations, spilling out of ourselves and into our family, friends, community, and the whole world. Over the course of this holy season, we invite you to respond to that call using these daily practices, and encourage you to offer them to your friends, family, and neighbors.

Sunday, November 29

WORSHIP

What word or words from worship today have found a home in your heart? Share these words with a friend or family member.

Monday, November 30

GO

Take time to listen closely to someone you may not ordinarily take seriously or someone with a different perspective than you. Pray that you hear this person as God does.



THE WAY OF LOVE
Practices for Jesus-Centered Life

Tuesday, December 1

LEARN

Read Luke 1:30. What are you afraid of that keeps you from saying “yes” to God?

Wednesday, December 2

PRAY

Set a timer for three minutes. Silently repeat this prayer – “Here I am, God” – until time is up.

Thursday, December 3

BLESS

The angel blessed Mary with the gift of presence. To whom can you give the gift of presence this week?

Friday, December 4

TURN

In giving generously, St. Nicholas turned from a sense of scarcity to a posture of abundance. What do you need to turn from in order to be generous of heart?

Saturday, December 5

REST

From what could you rest in order to receive renewed life? Find that rest today, and do it for as long as you are able.

For more Advent resources related to the Way of Love, visit episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove. There, you’ll find links to the full Advent curriculum *Journeying the Way of Love*, as well as *Living the Way of Love in Community*, a nine-session curriculum for use anytime.

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Advent 1 (B)

Waiting Upon the Lord

[RCL] Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Waiting is the hardest thing to do because it feels like you're not doing anything. And it seems twice as hard when you're young. When we're children, Christmas always seems eons away and we think the end of school or our birthday will never arrive.

And we 21st-century folks certainly have an ever-shrinking attention span; our wealth and technology allow us to access virtually anything we want any time we want. Everything is sooner, faster, now. And boy, do we love that speed, especially technological speed. Wait ten seconds to let a webpage load? Are you kidding? Get a faster connection! Wait five seconds for a document to print? What the heck is wrong with this printer? Wait to let yourself cool down before sending that email or posting that social media rant? Are you kidding? Go, go, go! You snooze, you lose, that's our motto. If anyone needs to learn the Advent virtue of waiting upon the Lord, it's us.

Virtually the only things we haven't been able to speed up or shorten are our basic biological processes. It still takes nine long months to have a baby, whether we want to wait that long or not. And so, if we want to be with Mary in her journey toward giving birth to Jesus, we need to settle into the long haul. We've already been busy doing other things for the first eight months, and now in her last month of pregnancy, we're just going to have to take these four weeks of Advent and wait.

Our scripture from Isaiah today has an interesting take on waiting. The writer is marveling at how different the God of Israel is from the other gods in the cultures of the time. And then the writer remembers, "When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him."

The prophet is surprised not just by the mighty deeds like earthquakes – the writer is equally stunned that here is a God who *works* for the people, and the people for whom God works are the people who wait for God.

What is it like to wait for God? Many of us know exactly what that is like. We wait for God to explain why a family member died too young. We wait for God to open a path out of a marriage that has ended, into a new place where healing might begin. We wait for God to reveal an open door back into a faith community when we've been hurt by so many churches before.

And of course, virtually this entire year has been a time of waiting. We've waited during lockdowns and quarantines. We've waited on masks and respirators and toilet paper. We've waited on test results for the coronavirus, wondering whether we are positive or not. We've waited endless weeks and months, not able to visit our loved ones in hospitals and nursing homes, in order to protect them.

We've waited on our kids going back to school and waited to see if our jobs would hold out during the crisis. We've waited on unemployment checks and stimulus checks. We've waited in line to vote and waited to see if our mail-in ballot went through, and then waited on the results of the election. We've waited for a vaccine. And we've waited and waited and waited to go back to church in the old ways that were familiar and comfortable to us.

2020 has been nothing but a year of waiting. Perhaps we are better equipped now than we ever have been to understand the oft-repeated Biblical mandate to wait upon the Lord. The Good News shared with us today is that God is working for us as we wait for God.

And we're actually doing two kinds of spiritual waiting right now. We're waiting for the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas Day, that glorious moment of incarnation when God comes to be with us in human form. That's a fixed endpoint that we know ahead of time. Come December 25, we will be celebrating Jesus' arrival.

But we're doing another kind of waiting. We're waiting for the signs of the Incarnation in our own lives. We're waiting to see the new and next way that God will be manifest in our own individual time and place. God is with us, but where and how? That is how we keep company with Mary: as the watchful sentinels always on the lookout for the new revelation waiting to be discovered among the everyday.

Patience is a hard-earned virtue, and many of us are deeply wearied by all the waiting we've had to do, all the times we've had to say no to ourselves and our children this year in order to stay safe and keep others safe. It might feel like 2020 is a year out of time, a wasted and empty expanse that consisted of nothing but life on hold.

But is that true? Was this time of waiting really wasted? Mary's time of waiting was almost as long as ours has been. What has been blossoming and growing in your heart during this time of waiting? What new thing is ready to be born in your spiritual community after having been forced to slow down and really ask what is most important about church? How has your family found new strengths and graces by the call to adapt and the sudden multiplication of time together and new challenges with school and work?

Mary's time of waiting was to a purpose. It had a goal and an end, and she faithfully pursued it with God's help. As you reflect on your waiting this year, what has God grown in you? What will be the gift you offer the world this Christmas as Mary did? It takes awake and alert eyes to see the grace even amid the suffering we've endured.

But the Good News is that the slow, necessary, at times painful work of being changed, of being made ready for incarnation, is not up to us alone. God is the agent of our transformation as we wait. Knowing that reminds us that we don't have to figure this out on our own. There is peace and comfort in the truth that as the endless days of waiting crawl by, God is active within us and our communities. Isaiah tells us in our scripture today, "Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the

work of your hand.” We are God’s work of art, being painstakingly shaped into the vessel of incarnation that will bring the presence of Christ to the world. You are a masterwork. And a masterwork takes time.

And Paul reminds us of what we most need to hold on to through the long weary days of waiting for grace: “You are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end.” Look back on this year and see the strength with which you endured its trials. See the creativity with which your spiritual community sought to walk together in new ways. See the call to justice and peace that rang even through our most bitter divides in society. And know that it has all led to this, the season of Advent, the time of upheaval and waiting, of change and pause, of grace and truth.

And so, we pray, and we stick together, and we love one another, and we wait upon the Lord. And Isaiah, the great prophet of the Advent season, announces the Good News: “Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Amen.

The Rev. Canon Whitney Rice serves as the Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development for the Diocese of Missouri. See more of her work at www.roofcrashersandhemgrabbers.com.

St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

500 South Country Road • Bay Shore, New York 11706

Phone 631-665-0051 Fax 631-665-0052

www.stpetersbayshore.org

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