

The Season of Advent

By Diane Woods

Advent is a time to reflect on Jesus' birth and look forward to his promised coming again. There is an element of remembrance. We remember Christ's first coming – the Gospel readings convey the joy of Christmas with the incarnation and the events that led up to the birth of Jesus.

There is anticipation as we look forward to Christ's second coming. The Gospel readings focus on the "end times" and the second coming of our Lord. There should also be preparation. A time to slow down, be quiet, and meditate about the real meaning of Christmas. This can be challenging in our consumer-focused world.

There are a variety of practices to help us slow down. One is to use a devotional. We received a donation of several copies of the Living Compass Advent Devotional, *Practicing Peace with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind*. The devotional begins on December 1, the First Sunday of Advent and is available to pick up in the narthex.

Each Sunday begins with a reflection written by one of five featured writers. Then Monday introduces a theme for the week related to *Practicing Peace*. The other days of the week begin with a scripture or quote, followed by a reflection, with space for you to journal. The theme for week one is *deepening our understanding of peace*; week two is *making peace with ourselves*; week three is *becoming instruments of God's peace*; and week four in Advent is *practicing peace as a "holy yes."*

The season of Advent, along with the thoughtful writings and reflection questions in this devotional, provides us with the opportunity to slow down so we can make counter-cultural choices, choices that will help prepare us for the true meaning of Christmas. May you be blessed with God's peace during this season.

PLEASE JOIN US—Sunday, December 1, 2024



**Immediately after the 10:00 A.M. Service
Tamales & Trimmings Potluck**



Our Mission: We serve Jesus Christ as a community rich in the Episcopal tradition by welcoming the seeker, providing a caring family, encouraging spiritual growth, and reaching into our neighborhood and world.

Hospitality Notes

By Melissa Mudge

Many Thanks

Thank you, people of St. Matthew's. Whatever the need, you are there with unique skills, willing spirit, and helping hands to complete our tasks.

On-Going Hospitality

- ◆ Morning Coffee Fellowship after each Sunday Service.

8:00 service—morning coffee and snacks will be ready about 8:45.

10:00 service—coffee and snacks will be ready about 10:45.

Thanks, host families, for the love that goes into planning, preparation, and serving of our coffee snacks (and more) each week.

A Fourth Host is Needed to take a turn in the Coffee Hour rotation after the 10:00 a.m. service. We look forward to sharing this ministry with an additional team.

- ◆ Hospitality Committee – Volunteers are needed to prepare food, set up, serve, and clean-up at some of our church related activities. If you would like to be “hospitality on call,” please let me know. I have a list!
- ◆ On-going Kitchen Clean-up – Keep up the good work in kitchen! Thanks for keeping us all safe and healthy.

Give it – To Go

The bags are put away for a while. It is time to revive/regroup. Please let me know if you are the one to create a new look and invigorate the purpose for giving hygiene bags to those who need them. Pray for all poor and neglected people whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who are broken in body or spirit. Turn their sorrow into joy.

Volunteer Opportunity

Clarity Child Guidance Center is South Texas Nonprofit providing a continuum of mental health care for children and their families is seeking help from church groups to volunteer for its programs.

- ◆ **Food for the Soul**—There is a reason we say, “food is love!” Good food can touch your heart, offer a sense of comfort, and remind you that someone cares about you just because. Participating in Food for the Soul, you provide a meal for kids staying at Clarity for inpatient psychiatric treatment and the staff who care for them. Who knows, by the end of the meal you might feel the love and joy too!
- ◆ **Bridge the gap**—Many kids come to Clarity with only the clothes on their backs. You can help bridge the gap by organizing a donation drive to collect food, clothing, or hygiene products for kids and families who are struggling with more than just mental illness.

More information is available on the website claritycgc.org/get-involved. Interested? Let's talk more!

(Continued on next page)

Hospitality Notes *(Continued)*

Special Days/Events (Some dates to look forward to)

- ◆ Celebration of Saints—Goodbye to all the beloved souls who visited with us these past weeks in photographs and mementos. Thanks for the blessing of your presence. See you again next year.
- ◆ November 28—Thanksgiving Day. Almighty and gracious Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provisions of our necessities and the relief of those in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen
- ◆ December 1—First Sunday in Advent. Tamales and Trimming— Come enjoy a Potluck Luncheon and Deck the (Parish) Hall after the 10:00 a.m. service. Tamales will be provided. There will be a sign-up sheet for everything else. Plan to help decorate the Christmas trees in the hall and in the vestibule, as well as spreading Christmas cheer throughout the building. Please bring old and new Christmas cards to create a collage of blessings and requests.

Prayer for Sound Government

O Lord our Governor, bless the leaders of our land, that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to nations of the earth.

Lord keep this nation under your care.

To the President and members of the Cabinet, to Governors of States, Mayors of Cities, and to all administrative authority, grant wisdom and grace in exercise of their duties.

Give grace to your servants, O Lord.

To Senators and Representatives, and those who make our laws in States, Cities, and Towns, give courage, wisdom, and foresight to provide for the needs of all our people, and to fulfill our obligations in the community of nations.

Give grace to your servants O Lord.

To the Judges and officers of our Courts give understanding and integrity, that human rights may be safeguarded and justice served.

Give grace to your servants O Lord.

And finally, teach our people to rely on your strength and to accept their responsibilities to their fellow citizens, that leaders we have elected are trustworthy and make wise decisions for the well-being of our society; that we may serve you faithfully in our generation and honor your holy name.

For yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Amen.

(Source: forwardmovement.org – A ministry of the Episcopal Church)

RACAP NEWS

By Kathy Ercoline

Thank you for your generous Harvest Sunday contributions of food and cash. Harvest Sunday is an annual event for our congregation, and this year's donations were over and above years past. "The RACAP Holiday Basket Program" continues through December. If you did not have an opportunity to contribute to the Harvest Sunday collection, the following items will be accepted until the **second Sunday in December**. Food for the Christmas baskets include **Chicken broth; Brown Sugar (1 lb.); Canned Green Beans and Corn; Evaporated Milk; Stuffing Mix; Canned Pumpkin; Yams; Fruit Cocktail; and Cranberry Sauce**. Your monetary donations provide fresh produce, turkeys, and perishable items for the food baskets. Place your checks and cash donations in the Sunday offering plate, or you can bring your donations to the church office during the hours of 9:00 AM-12:00 Noon, Monday - Friday. Cash donations should be in an **envelope marked "RACAP Christmas."** Checks should be made payable to St. Matthew's with **"RACAP Christmas" in the memo line**.

Our Harvest Sunday Luncheon featured several homemade, delicious, hearty, soups; a variety of salads; fruit trays; breads, and desserts. It was a special time of food and fellowship. Thank you to all who brought a dish to share, and a very special thank you to those who helped to clean-up afterward.

Just a reminder...When everyone is focused on the Holiday Basket Program, the day-to-day food items for the RACAP shelves become scarce. The pantry is open five days a week for food distribution. **Any non-perishable foods, cash, and hygiene and paper products are accepted**, but currently the specific needs are:

Canned Fruits	Tomato Products	Ramen	Dried Beans
Rice	Canned Meats	Muffin Mix	Mac 'n Cheese
Meat Helpers	Canned Soup	Jell-O	Canned Beans (no green beans)
Toothpaste	Shampoo	Dish Soap	Laundry Detergent
Toilet Paper	Feminine Hygiene Products	Pet Food is Always Accepted	

As the pantry continues its mission to "Feed their sheep" **remember RACAP and their clients** in your prayers. We are **blessed** to have the RACAP pantry in our community; we **give thanks** for the staff and the volunteers; and we are **grateful** for the many churches, organizations, and individuals who support RACAP with food and cash donations.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

"Thank you for helping us help others."

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RACAP NEWS *continued*

Month in Review

October 2024 Results

Total # of Families Seen: 119

Total # of People: 316

Total # of Pantry Visits: 82

Total # of People Fed: 222

Estimated cost of food given: \$12,955.00

Total # of Families Pledged Assistance With:

Rent: 44

Utilities: 43

Medications: 1

Amount for rent & utility pledges paid: \$3,268.85

December Birthdays

*You have made known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.
(Psalm 16:11)*

Faith Kenealy-O'Connor	Richard Guerrero
Lynn Tidwell	Maribeth Likins
Janet Clere	Jedidiah Barnes
Natalie Copley	John Sampson
Jennifer Bloodsworth	Willow Black
James Odom	Kathy Mulligan

St. Mark's Episcopal Church 2024-2025 Music Performances

December 13 at 7:00 p.m. Christmas Pops Concert

December 22 at 4:00 p.m. A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

February 16 at 3:30 p.m. A Recital by the UTSA Guitar Ensemble, followed by Choral Evensong

March 9 at 4 p.m. The Olmos Ensemble

March 23 at 3:30 p.m. A Recital by David Heller, organist, followed by Choral Evensong

April 13 at 4:00 p.m. Passiontide Lessons and Carols

May 12 at 7:00 p.m. SOLI chamber Ensemble & San Antonio Chamber Choir – World Premiere Concert

May 18 at 3:30 p.m. A Recital by Carolyn True, pianist, followed by Evensong

In addition to the magnificent music, the admission and parking are free! St. Mark's address is 315 E. Pecan St., San Antonio, TX 78205.



Advent

Advent is a time of preparing.

A time to open up your heart, a time to give yourself a start

To get ready for our king Emmanuel.

The babe who's coming soon, He'll be our sun and stars and moon.

Are you ready?

We celebrate this time each year with food and fun and lots of cheer.

But sometimes things get left behind, our hearts, for one, even our minds.

We get so caught up in the joy, we oft forget the little boy.

Advent is a time of preparing.

A time to open up your heart, a time to give yourself a start

To get ready for our king Emmanuel.

The babe who's coming soon, He'll be our sun and stars and moon.

Are you ready?



Have you gotten all the gifts you crave? Found the ones
from last year saved?

Dressed up every house and yard? Gone to concerts, partied
hard?

Have you forgotten on your list to sit, to pray, relax your
fists?

Advent is a time of preparing.

A time to open up your heart, a time to give yourself a start

To get ready for our king Emmanuel.

The babe who's coming soon, He'll be our sun and stars and
moon.

Are you ready?

It seems to start earlier and earlier:

The trees go up, the music starts to blare.

We want to enjoy it all; there's nothing wrong with that,

As long as you remember to prepare!

Advent is a time of preparing.

A time to open up your heart, a time to give yourself a start

To get ready for our king Emmanuel.

The babe who's coming soon, He'll be our sun and stars and moon.

Are you ready?

Are you ready?

JC²

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Happenings Around The Diocese

Family Camp: December 6-8 at Camp Capers. This is the perfect opportunity for the whole family to enjoy the beauty of the Texas Hill Country along the banks of the Guadalupe River. Whether this is your first time or one of many visiting Camp Capers, come and make lifelong memories with those you love. Activities will include arts & crafts, games of all kinds, faith-based discussions, s'mores and much more.

2025 Camp Registration Now Open! Register for 2025 Summer sessions for Camp Capers Summer Camp, Mustang Island Family Camp, Duncan Park Summer Camp and Family Camps. Don't miss your chance to enjoy these fun and exciting camping experiences!

You can find more information and registration on these & other events at <https://www.dwtx.org/events>



IMPORTANT NOTICE

The submission **DEADLINE** for the **DECEMBER 2024** Missive is the **1ST** of the month. Any late submissions will be in the next month's issue.



From the Blog

Save the Date: March 15, 2025 Ordination and Consecration of the 7th Bishop Suffragan of West Texas

The Diocese of West Texas received the exciting news that our new Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe, will serve as the Chief Consecrator at the Ordination and Consecration of the Rev. Angela Maria Cortiñas, Bishop Suffragan-Elect of West Texas. The service will take place Saturday, March 15, 2025, at St. John's Episcopal Church in McAllen. Save the date and plan to participate in this historic and joyous occasion. Watch for more information to come and visit the Bishop Suffragan website page at dwtx.org.

Diocesan Advent Book Study!

Join the Rev. Canon Leyla King, Canon for Mission in Small Congregations and Suzanna Green, Director of Christian Formation in reading *The First Advent in Palestine* by Kelley Nikondeha for a diocesan-wide Advent Book Study on Zoom. This one-day discussion will take place on Wednesday, December 11 at 6:00 p.m. Sign up [here](#).

Save the Date - 121st Diocesan Council: February 20 - 22, 2025 in San Marcos.

Our host churches, St. Elizabeth's, Buda and Holy Spirit, Dripping Springs, along the diocesan staff, are hard at work preparing for Council 2025. More information to come soon.

Diocese of West Texas included in the "Roll Call" video for the Investiture of the Most Rev. Sean Rowe, 28th

Presiding Bishop, Episcopalians from dioceses around the globe sent in virtual greetings preceding the investiture service on November 2. The Diocese of West Texas' video begins around 2:07. View it [here](#).

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am(L) Tamales & Trimmings 11am (CH)	2 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	3	4 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, L, VEB) Eucharist 11am (ARC)	5 Choir Practice 4:30-5:30pm (C) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	6 HOME Piano Recital 6-7pm (C)	7
8 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	9 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	10	11 HOME 10am-3:30pm (CH, C, L, VEB) Eucharist 11am (ARC)	12 Choir Practice 4:30-5:30pm (C) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	13 HOME Christmas Concert 6-8:30pm (C)	14
15 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	16 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	17 Vestry Meeting 6pm (CH)	18 Eucharist 11am (ARC)	19 Choir Practice 4:30-5:30pm (C) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	20	21
22 Worship 8 & 10am (C) Sunday School 9:15am (L)	23 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	24 Christmas Eve Carols 7:15pm (C) Christmas Eve Service 7:30pm (C)	25 Christmas Day Service 10am (C) <i>Office Closed</i>	26 <i>Office Closed</i> AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	27	28
29 Worship 8 & 10am (C)	30 Staff Meeting 9am (L) Prayer Meeting 12pm (L) AA Meeting 8-9pm (CH)	31				

C – Church; **CH** – Creasy Hall; **VEB** – Vellom Ed Building; **L** – Library
ARC – Army Residence Community

DECEMBER 2024 SUNDAY MINISTRY SCHEDULE

Ministry	December 1 Advent 1	December 8 Advent 2	December 15 Advent 3	December 22 Advent 4	December 29 Christmas 1
Altar Guild	Maggie Barnes Stephanie McBride Diane Woods	Melody Johnson Diane Woods	Tarawanda Howard Suzanne Milton	Maggie Barnes Stephanie McBride Suzanne Milton	Tarawanda Howard Suzanne Milton
8 AM Reader	Joan McClain	Max Hopkins	Suzi Hopkins	Jayne Dunlap	Max Hopkins
8 AM Greeter/Usher	Shawn Cooksey	Ben McClain	Joan McClain	Max Hopkins	Jayne Dunlap
8 AM Coffee	Joan McClain	Jayne Dunlap	Suzi Hopkins	Tarawanda Howard	Joan McClain
10 AM Server	Terry May	Sean Keane-Dawes	Mendell Morgan	Wayne Mudge	Sean Francis
10 AM Reader	Maribeth Likins	Mendell Morgan	Sean Francis	Janet Clere	Liz Sampson
10 AM Greeters/Ushers	Diane Woods TBD	Wayne Mudge TBD	Melissa Mudge Arlene Stalvey	Kathy Ercoline Bill Ercoline	Maribeth Likins Arlene Stalvey
Prayers of the People	Susan Brown	Sean Keane-Dawes	Janet Clere	Bill Ercoline	Maribeth Likins
Newcomer Visits	Terry May Diane Woods	Terry May Diane Woods	Ellen Yelverton	Ellen Yelverton	Ellen Yelverton
Home Communion	No Home Communion	Sean Keane-Dawes	No Home Communion	Janet Clere	No Home Communion
Prayer Ministry	Mendell Morgan	Maribeth Likins	Ellen Yelverton	Mendell Morgan	Maribeth Likins
10 AM Coffee	Melissa Mudge	Diane Woods	Melissa Mudge	Kathy Ercoline	Kathy Ercoline
Audio Visual	Kristina Robinson	Terry May	Wayne Mudge	Kristina Robinson	Kristina Robinson
Lockup/Security	Arlene Stalvey	Janet Clere	Richard Guerrero	Jayne Dunlap	Maribeth Likins

May the blessing of God be upon you.
 May God keep you safe when you are in danger.
 May God guide you in the way of love.
 May God support you in danger or hardship.
 May God lift up your heart when you are feeling low.
 May God comfort you when you are feeling lonely.
 May God give you strength when you are weak.
 May God bring you home when you are lost.
 May God surround you with loving care, always and forever.
 You are holy, you are chosen, you are loved, and you are blessed.
 Rev. Jane R. Dunning—Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts

OCTOBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

Monthly	Pledge	Plate	Other	Total	2024 YTD	Pledge	Plate	Other	Total
Operating Income Received	\$12,419	\$1,870	\$955	\$15,244	Operating Income Received	\$151,849	\$18,389	\$11,849	\$182,087
Operating Income Budgeted	\$13,869	\$1,652	\$380	\$15,901	Operating Income Budgeted	\$138,695	\$16,516	\$6,760	\$161,971
	Monthly	YTD				Monthly	YTD		
Overall Operating Expenses	\$14,084	\$184,279			Outreach	\$424	\$8,481		
Budgeted Operating Expense	\$17,414	\$191,251							

ST. MATTHEW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
 810 Kitty Hawk Road, Universal City, Texas 78148
 210-658-5956 www.stmatts-uc.org