



SAINT ANDREW'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

WWW.STANDREWSASHEBORO.ORG ♦ ASHEBORO, NC 27203

November/December 2010

Dear Friends,

Though the secular New Year is not until January 1st, the Church Year begins later this month with the start of Advent on Sunday November 28th. There are 4 Sundays in Advent (the season of Advent lasts about 40 days, not counting the Sundays) leading up to Christmas. There are a number of special things that we will be doing together as a church during Advent, including: Advent wreath making; a service of Lessons and Carols; a Christmas Caroling party in a local neighborhood, lighting our Advent wreath each week in our worship service and of course – singing those wonderful Advent hymns such as *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*; *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*; and *Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending*.

You will likely notice that these songs are not Christmas Carols (we will wait until after Christmas to sing carols in our worship service). Many of the songs of Advent have a certain solemnity to them. This is not because Advent is not a time of great joy, but because the joy which we have in celebrating the birth of Christ is mingled with our awe at His expected Second Coming. In the Manger He came in meekness and humility to save the world – but when He returns He comes in power and glory to judge all flesh. The season of Advent celebrates both Jesus' first coming and His promised return at the end of time. Here are some interesting and instructive facts about Advent and Christmas:

- Originally the Church Year began on Easter Day (this is still the start of the Church Year in the Eastern Churches). It was not until the 8th century that Advent was commonly considered to be the beginning of the Christian Year in the west.
- Today we think of Advent as being connected to Christmas, but this was not always so. It used to be that Advent was the 40 day season of fasting in preparation for Epiphany (Epiphany is January 6). Why fast and pray in preparation for Epiphany? Because Epiphany was 1 of the 2 major days on which adults were admitted to the Church through baptism (Easter Day was the other).
- Easter and Epiphany were the typical days for baptisms for fairly obvious reasons: Easter is the day that Jesus rose, victorious over death and Baptism is the sacrament of new birth; likewise Epiphany is the celebration of the baptism of Jesus, making it a fit time to baptize others.
- Prior to both Easter and Epiphany, the church fasted and prayed for 40 days (the 40 day fast before Easter is Lent).
- It was not until the 4th century that Christmas Day began to be celebrated. (Thus the celebration of Epiphany is a more ancient tradition than the celebration of Christmas.) Observing the feast of Christ's birth (i.e. Christmas) began in Rome in the 4th century and from there spread to the rest of the Church in the west.
- As the celebration of Christmas Day spread across Europe, Advent gradually became detached from Epiphany and "reassigned" to Christmas. Advent was still a time of penitence and fasting, but no longer was this primarily in preparation for the baptisms at Epiphany – now the emphasis became preparing one's self for the Mass in celebration of Jesus' birth.
- Eventually the season of Advent took on a second theme: preparation for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. "The double emphasis, therefore, on both the first and second advents of Christ gives to the season its unique mixture of devotional color: joy in the redemption that has come to us in the Incarnation, and awe before the Judgment that yet awaits us."

I encourage you to make plans to celebrate a holy Advent. Though usually less strict than Lent, Advent is still an appropriate time both for self-denial and added efforts to take on some spiritual discipline. For practical advice, see the "Writings & Reflections" link on our website where you can read "Some suggestions for the keeping of a holy Lent" (which is also applicable to Advent) and where you may also read more about Advent.

BRIEFLY NOTED

- **Daily Bible Commentary for the Season of Advent** - your pastor has written a booklet containing daily commentary on the Scripture readings assigned for each day in Advent. If you think that this will be of use to you, please pick up a copy or download it from our website.
- Many of you had a **background check** completed last year so as to be able to serve in our Nursery and Children's Church ministry. Anyone who did not have a background check **MUST** have one before being involved in these ministries. Speak with Marlo Francis for more information.
- We continue to need volunteers to **help clean the church** every other week. Interested in helping? Speak with Fr. Patterson.

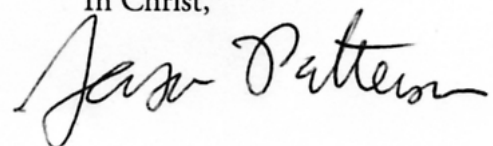
ON THE CALENDAR

- **Advent Wreath Making** - Following the service (November 28), all are invited to participate in an Advent Wreath Making Party (to make a wreath for use in your home). Pizza will be provided. If you want to make a wreath, please sign up so we know how many supplies are needed!
- **The Feast of Saint Andrew** – Please join us for a Holy Communion service in celebration of our patron, Saint Andrew. November 30 at 7pm.
- Our 1st annual **Christmas Caroling party** is scheduled for December 12, following the service. We will walk around a neighborhood in Asheboro, singing Christmas carols. Following the caroling, all are invited for a time of fellowship and refreshments (location TBA).
- Our service of **Lessons and Carols** will be on December 19, (6:30 – musical prelude, 7pm - service). Note: this service *replaces* our regular HC service on this day!
- Christmas Eve – Holy Communion,
- **The AMiA Winter Conference** is scheduled to be held in Greensboro, February 9-11, 2010. Registration packets are available in the fellowship hall or you may register online at www.theamia.org.

THANKS!

- Many thanks to those of you who have come out to help clean the church!
- Thanks also to: Pauline for all she did to organize 2 Potluck dinners (in October and November); Stuart who hosted us for the Men's Retreat (it was a great time of rest and fellowship); Ben for printing our bulletins each week; Sara for organizing the Thanksgiving Ministry; Marlo and Sharon for helping to organize the Advent Wreath making and Dick for removing the nonfunctioning door knob and replacing it with a new one.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.