

December 1, 2019

St. Thomas's Episcopal Parish  
276 S. College Ave Newark, DE  
302.368.4644

weekly newsletter

# The Carpenter's Helper

*This Week...*

## Advent is 4 weeks of preparation

What will you do to  
prepare your  
heart and home?

## Weekly Parish Schedule

Add your group's event to  
the calendar: email  
stthomassooffice  
@googlegroups.com

## Sing-Along with Marc at Longwood Gardens

Advent is not something we hear much about outside of church – or even outside of liturgical churches. If you asked a retailer when the “Christmas season” begins, they would probably say the beginning of November. **In our faith tradition, the Christmas season does not start until Christmas Day, and it is only twelve days long!** How do we process this, when the culture around has pronounced that Christmas is already here? I would encourage us all to consider the ways Advent differs from Christmas, and conscientiously **use the season of Advent for its original purpose: preparing our hearts and homes for Christmas.**

Like Lent, Advent is meant to be an opportunity to slow down, meditate on our lives, and “clean house” before the coming of Christ. While we are really good at preparing our homes, in the midst of the busy-ness of the season we often struggle to find moments of quiet to contemplate what Our Lord’s birth really means.

**Let us consider these four questions:**

### *1. How can I keep things simple?*

The weeks before Christmas are notorious for being jam-packed with parties and events. We also have important family traditions to keep alive. Plus, there’s church stuff, school stuff, concerts, plays... It’s almost impossible to keep up with it all! Perhaps take an honest look at our holiday calendars. What is important, and what can we let go? Maybe we buy a store-bought pie this year. Maybe we don’t worry about buying new outfits for that work party. It is so easy to get caught up in the “spirit” of the season and forget the True Spirit of the season, which leads to question two:

### *2. How can I remind myself of the meaning of Advent and Christmas?*

In our attempt to experience everything the “holiday season” has to offer, we often find ourselves physically, financially and/or spiritually broke: we have nothing left. For the sake of our own spiritual health and that of our families, we must find spaces of quiet and calm during this time of year. **(Advent Evening Prayers with Fr Howie may serve this purpose for you).**

### *3. What traditions help me/my family build positive memories centered on Christ?*

Every family has traditions that they hold dear. Some count down the days until Christmas on an Advent calendar. **(Look for a special Advent Calendar from Fr Howie soon!)** Some pick out a live tree as a family. Some go caroling in their neighborhoods and at retirement homes. The traditions we model will impact the experiences of the next generation. Not every tradition needs to be profoundly spiritual, but they should add to our experience of Advent as a time to draw near to Our Lord.

### *4. How can I/my family share the Good News of Jesus?*

Just by pondering the first three questions, we are halfway there! People notice the way we spend our time and the way we treat other people. Beyond that, we can begin or continue praying for those around us. Pray that opportunities arise that we might share about our faith with the courage and wisdom promised to us in the Holy Spirit.

**As Advent approaches, may we remember the what and why of our preparations. Keep it simple, draw near to The Lord, invest in meaningful traditions, and spread the word about Jesus through words and actions!**

This is an excerpt from an article written by the Children's Minister, Becky Gleason

**On Dec 1st, 8th, 15th at 6pm, and 22nd at 5:30pm  
please join Fr Howie in the sanctuary for Evening Advent Prayers  
Prayers will also be available electronically and in a leaflet that you can take home.**



It's almost the season to enjoy caroling, candy canes, Christmas trees and the Longwood Gardens' holiday light show, which adds a merry twinkle to December's dreary days.

Gardening and conservation were passions of founder and industrialist Pierre S. du Pont. In 1906, du Pont bought Peirce's Park — future home of Longwood — to rescue its trees from the lumber yard chopping block, then he transformed the arboretum into a horticultural showplace. Du Pont loved Christmas and threw holiday parties for his employees starting in 1921. After his death in 1954, the first public Christmas display was in the conservatory in 1955. The first outdoor display was added in 1962 and featured three evergreens with lights, which roughly 1,000 guests drove around the parking lot to see. Last year, nearly 500,000 people visited the displays during the 45-day event.

Did you know that they have Christmas Sing-Alongs at Longwood each year? And, that our very own **Marc Cheban** is a featured organist, *and has been since 1981*? Come and join in the fun, and make this outing an annual tradition. If you cannot make it out to Longwood, you can enjoy some past performances on YouTube, eg. <https://youtu.be/OmXBLz4BjTU>

Marc's performances are at 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8pm.

11/23, 11/27, 11/29, 12/1, 12/7, 12/13, 12/20, 12/22, 12/25, 12/31, and 1/4. Whoa!



## PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday, December 1

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I  
9:00am (U) Youth Confirmation  
9:15am (P) Adult Education  
9:15am (U) Nursery  
9:30am (C, U) Children's Worship  
10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II  
11:45am (GH) Coffee, Fellowship  
12:00pm (C) CREW Youth Group  
2:00pm (C) Girl Scout Troop 513  
6:00pm (N) Advent Evening Prayers  
7:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

Monday, December 2

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
7:30pm (GH) Scottish Dance

Tuesday, December 3

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
4:30pm (U) Girl Scout Troop 719  
5:00pm (CO) AIDS Delaware  
6:00pm (U) Girl Scout Troop 513  
7:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance  
8:00pm (U) KIS AA meeting

Wednesday, December 4

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
10:30am (C) Bible Study  
4:00pm (C) Blue Hen Bounty  
5:00pm (C, N) ECM  
5:45pm (P) Centering Prayer  
8:30pm (GH) South College Speakers AA

Thursday, December 5

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
10:00am (U) Newark Music Makers  
12:00pm (P) Property committee  
7:30pm (MR) St Gregory's Choir  
7:30pm (U) Bluegrass Jam

Friday, December 6

**St Thomas Bazaar 9am-5pm**

*Lunch 11:30-1pm*

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA  
12:00pm (P) Al-Anon  
5:00pm (N) Poets' Corner  
6:30pm (P) Women's AA

Saturday, December 7

**St Thomas Bazaar 9am-4pm**

*Breakfast Buffet 9-10am*

*Lunch 11:30-1pm*

10:00am (N) Altar Guild In-Service

Sunday, December 8

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I  
9:00am (U) Youth Confirmation  
9:15am (P) Adult Education  
9:15am (U) Nursery  
9:15am (C) Novel Theology  
9:30am (C, U) Children's Worship  
10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II  
11:45am (GH) Coffee, Fellowship  
12:00pm (C) CREW Youth Group  
2:00pm (C) Girl Scout Troop 513  
7:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

location key:

(C) Classroom	(MR) Music Room
(GH) Great Hall	(U) Undercroft
(N) Nave	(BO) Business Office
(P) Parlor	(RO) Rector's Office