

# St. John's Good News

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## From Reverend Sarah...

*All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. (Luke 2:3-5)*

Dear Friends,

My strongest and deepest experiences of God's liberating love have come from travelling to new places outside of the U.S. Going to a place I have never been before forces me to admit that I do need God! Surrounded by a new environment and new people I know that my dependence on God is natural and unavoidable.

As an adult I have been blessed to travel to Europe, the Caribbean and Africa. I lived with a family in Nantes, France for a semester in college. I provided pastoral care and taught Vacation Bible School at churches in Jamaica during seminary. After graduation I joined a pilgrimage to South Africa with the Rev. Mpho Tutu. And now after lifetime of waiting I was able to travel to the Holy Land with Bishop Gayle Harris and 30 others from our Diocese.

In the Bible we find stories and writings that describe the landscape of the Holy Land: the hot sand, the solid stones and the life-giving cool water. The land itself hasn't changed but the buildings and people have changed. Groups of have been exiled, kingdoms have come and gone, religious groups waged war one another. Temples, churches and mosques were built or destroyed. Roads were moved or paved over.

The season of Advent holds the tension of travelling and sacred geography. Joseph and Mary travel to a foreign, or at least new to them, place in preparation for the birth of Jesus. Where most women might want to remain home in those final weeks, Mary must ride a donkey without the guarantee of shelter at the end of the journey. At the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, we pilgrims attended an early morning Holy Eucharist. After the service, the priests showed us the spot where they believe Mary gave birth to Jesus. The stones look like any other stones you

*Cont'd.*

## December 2018

### Winter Worship Schedule

**Sunday Morning**  
**8am Rite II**  
**10am Rite II**

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might find here in Lynn or Rockport and yet they were more than stones. Amidst the chaos of travelling and not finding a room, these solid stones held Joseph, Mary and Jesus. They offered the only hospitality available to this new family.

After seeing these stones, I'm reminded that Advent is a journey. It doesn't matter where we start or how we get there, but we do need MOVE! We need to get up from what feels good and comfortable and walk towards the unknown despite the uncertainty and fear. We must travel to the miracle of Christmas trusting that the grace of God will travel with us over the hills and into the deep valleys of our souls.

I hope we can journey together this Advent as approach the destination of Jesus' birth.

Advent peace and Christmas blessings!

Sarah

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## **DECEMBER EVENTS**

**WELCOME TO ADVENT ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2!** It's time to get ready! Each Advent we await and anticipate the birth of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and study. This Advent our Sunday worship will include new hymns like "Hallelujah! We sing your praises!", "People look east," hand bells during the procession and a sung Eucharist. Let Rev. Sarah know what you think of our Advent worship!

**YOUTH GROUP MEETS SUNDAY, 12/2!** Before the craziness of December begins the youth will meet after church on 12/2 for tacos and minute to win it games! Bring supplies for your favorite Christmas/winter theme games and a treat to share. It's also time to start getting read for the 2019 30-Hour Famine which will be held in February. Come and enjoy some food and fun!

**WE ARE STILL COLLECTING PLEDGE CARDS!** The Stewardship Ministry Team is excited to announce that so far we have received \$78,278 towards our 2019 goal of \$84,000. This has been a great stewardship season with several new pledgers and many who increased their annual pledge. When you pledge to St. John's, no matter the amount, you are investing in the future of YOUR CHURCH! Thank you to those who have already pledged and if you haven't yet please signed in your pledge card today!

**HOW ARE YOU CELEBRATING ADVENT?!** St. John's is offering multiple opportunities for youth and adults to patiently, or maybe impatiently, wait for Christmas Day. Although there were not be a weekly program there is still something for everyone!

**#AdventWorld global calendar:** Join Christians around the world by posting a meditation or image each day from December 2 through Christmas Day. You can sign up through email or at [adventword.org](http://adventword.org) and follow on Facebook or Instagram. There are also printed calendars to use at home (in Ashworth Hall). Please speak to Rev. Sarah or Julia Aston if you would like to participate but do not use social media.

**Advent Bible Study, Tuesdays, 10:30-noon** We will read scripture passages and reflections from St. Francis (who created the first Christmas nativity scene) in the book, "The Living Nativity: Preparing for Christmas with Saint Francis" by Larry J. Peacock. There are extra copies of the book for people who can't attend Bible Study so please speak with Rev. Sarah.

**Icon Class, Tuesday, 12/4, 6pm:** Our Verger, Stephen Belyea, has graciously agreed to offer another icon class this Advent. He will lead us in creating our own icons to enhance our prayer lives during this season of preparation. Artistic skills are not required, just an open mind and open heart!

**Cookie/Treat Swap, Sunday 12/16:** By the halfway point of Advent we may all need some sugar! So please sign up to bring a favorite cookie/treat (candy, brownies, etc.) to share with your church family. Bring some cookies and take home lots of goodies!

**PACKING FOOD BAGS ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6 AT 7PM.** On December 6 St. John's will host packing bags for *Healthy Students, Healthy Saugus* which provides food for children that may not have enough to eat over the weekend. The packing takes about 15 minutes and then we gather for a quick meal and fellowship. Teachers report that parents/grandparents are extremely grateful for the extra food on the weekend. During the month of December St. John's will be collecting TUNA FISH cans to go into the bags.

**WARMING TREE TO GATHER GIFTS FOR CHILDREN IN SAUGUS.** We all know that winter can be brutally cold even with hats and mittens so imagine going outside with bare heads and hands! Please donate hats, mittens, scarves, etc., for boys and girls of all ages and leave on the Warming Tree in Ashworth Hall.

**CHRISTMAS PAGEANT IS COMING!**

Each year at the 4:30pm Christmas Eve service the St. John's children and youth will offer the Christmas Pageant to tell the story of the birth of Jesus. The rehearsal will be at 2:30pm on Christmas Eve and will include pizza. Sign up ASAP! For more info please speak with Alison Coppola.

**CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICES.**

There will be two Christmas Eve services: at 4:30pm with the Christmas Pageant and at 10:00pm (please note time change) with the Church Choir. There will be a Christmas morning service at 10:00am in the Hurl Room. **And help us decorate the church on Sunday, December 23 starting at 2pm!**

**LESSONS AND CAROLS ON DECEMBER 30 AT 8AM AND 10AM.** On the first Sunday after Christmas our worship service will be a Festival of Lessons and Carols. This service of bible reading and hymns date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. During worship we will listen to readings beginning with the Fall in the Garden of Eden through the birth of Jesus. Each reading is followed by a carol or other song that reflects on the readings message and a brief prayer.

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**From the Sr. Warden...**

December is here again, and as we enter Advent in anticipation of the birth of Christ it is helpful to reflect on the past year at St. John's.

It was an active year at St. John's and one that has seen us led by Rev. Sarah in her first full year with us. Throughout the year, Rev. Sarah and your vestry have been working on developing goals to not only guide us through the Priest-in-Charge process, but to help us think about St. John's place in the community.

*Cont'd.*



WORD SEARCH

N Y K Y C A R O L S E D L S T K H  
 C B E T H L E H E M I H G Z R R G  
 J B I G U S N B E L L S P J A Y B  
 O E L E K U M A D V E N T M V U B  
 G K V N T Z C I T P H O S O E L Z  
 Z M N E A T G O R I L K D Z L E F  
 J O A R R G W Z O A V K B T I T R  
 W L V O I G Q E O K C I H I N I A  
 F L I S Q P R W A H I L T S G D N  
 E L D I A N G E L I C E E Y K E K  
 S C A T O W H I E N P Q S Y B O I  
 T A D Y D R E G C N M Z B I A S N  
 I N X T R H T T R A D I T I O N C  
 V D G H B P A R T R I D G E Z T E  
 A L T C C Y P I N E C O N E S C N  
 L E W W D E C O R A T I O N S H S  
 L B Y E U G F R U I T C A K E T E

Advent ~ Angelic ~ Bells ~ Bethlehem ~ Candle ~ Carols ~ Cookies ~ Decorations  
 Evergreen ~ Festival ~ Frankincense ~ Fruitcake ~ Generosity ~ Miracle ~ Navidad  
 Nativity ~ Partridge ~ Pinecones ~ Traveling ~ Tradition ~ Yuletide

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Christmas Prayer List

**\* Mark your calendars \***

Please forward your remembrances for the Christmas Prayer List  
 no later than **Monday, December 17th**. Thank you!

**Officers:** The Reverend Sarah van Gulden, Priest-in-Charge ~ T. J. Martin, Sr. Warden ~ Fritz White, Jr. Warden ~ Phil Littlehale, Treasurer ~ Janet Lancaster, Asst. Treasurer ~ Sandy Mears, Clerk of the Vestry

**Vestry:** Brenda Caggiano (2019) ~ Dale Coogan (2021) ~ Al Coppola (2019) ~ Paul Felci (2020) ~ Sandy St. Clair (2019) ~ William 'Bill' St. Clair (2021) ~ Jeanne Seaboyer (2020) ~ Jenna Sharwood (2020) ~ Diana White (2021)