RECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Rev. Sunil Chandy

"Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight"

Luke 3 verse 4

The Advent season invites us to hope as we envision God's reign with the birth of a child. We are encouraged by ancient prophets to have hope and "to prepare the way," by building a world of fairness and compassion for all people.

To modern people, when we see violence in our world or feel the cynicism of the moment and when acknowledging our profound alienation from one another, this hope may seem only wishful thinking. The reality is that for many, life is not fair nor just. But the promise of God's reign on earth is more than a wish because it gives us a vision and inspiration to act.
The birth of God in Jesus inspires us because as he grows to adulthood, Jesus offers practical ways to build a just and kind world. Jesus shows us that we are to love. Through our love, we share, we show compassion, and we serve to help the world. In the story of the birth of Jesus, we see that faithful people take action to fulfill the hopes of the Kingdom by sharing, having compassion and serving. These steps help us "modern day Christians" know with confidence that the Reign of God can be achieved, not by God alone, but by God working through us. Sometimes we don't see the immediate effects of that vision fulfilled, but we work toward it. Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw said it best in a prayer:

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us...

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,

An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, ....not messiahs...
In this time of preparing for the celebrations of Christmas, may you be blessed in many joyful ways, and may you also be blessed with a passionate resolve to have hope in the Reign of God! And may you take courageous steps to make that vision a reality in our world.

In Christ,

The Rev. Sunil Chandy+
Rector
Christ Church
As we all busily prepare this Advent season, the Altar Guild will also be busy, most especially during Christmas Week.

First, we are extremely pleased to announce that four members of our parish have joined the Altar Guild. David Holt, who was a longtime Honorary Member, has agreed to join us as a member. Pamela Gentile, Lido Mochetti and Patrick Regan have also been welcomed as new members. We welcome these dedicated parishioners and thank them for agreeing to serve with us.

Seth Tulman, who also was a longtime Honorary Member, had recently joined us as well. Seth did so much “behind the scenes” and will truly be missed. We send our heartfelt condolences to Mary, Sarah and his family.

Soon, you should be receiving your letter from us regarding memorial flowers for Christmas. If you do not receive your letter early in December, please contact the office. We are planning this year to deliver plants to our sick and shut ins around December 16th. We feel that they will be able to start enjoying the “beauty of the season” before Christmas as well as after.

Our December meeting will be cancelled for our Annual Christmas Party at Stoneridge in Mystic, CT. We look forward to this gathering each year when fun and fellowship is enjoyed by all.

We will be putting up the Nativity on the front lawn by the Second Sunday in Advent (December 8th) We are so happy to provide this beautiful representation to our community.

Purple hangings will be used for Advent with the exception of the third Sunday when we will be using the lovely handmade pink hangings.
Decorating of the church for Christmas will take place on Sunday, December 22nd after the 10 AM service. We so enjoy this “labor of love” each year when all of us work together to embellish our beautiful church for the season. A Blessed Advent to you all!

This month, we felt it appropriate to talk about the ADVENT WREATH.

**History of the Advent Wreath**

The Advent wreath is a circular garland of evergreen branches representing eternity. On that wreath, four or five candles are typically arranged. During the season of Advent, one candle of the wreath is lit each Sunday as a part of the Advent services. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

The lighting of an Advent wreath is a custom that began in 16th-century Germany among Lutherans and Catholics. In Western Christianity, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, or the Sunday which falls closest to November 30, and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24th.

**Symbolism of the Advent Wreath Candles**

Set on the branches of the Advent wreath are four candles: three purple candles and one pink candle. A more modern tradition is to place a white candle in the center of the wreath. As a whole, these colored advent candles represent the coming of the light of Christ into the world. Each week of Advent on Sunday, a particular Advent candle is lit.

**Prophecy Candle**

On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, primarily Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14, this first candle represents hope or expectation is anticipation of the coming Messiah.)
Bethlehem Candle
On the second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit. This candle typically represents love. Some traditions call this the "Bethlehem Candle", symbolizing Christ's manger: "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12, NIV)

Shepherds Candle
On the third Sunday of Advent the pink, or rose-colored candle is lit. This pink candle is customarily called the "Shepherds Candle", and it represents joy:

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:8-11, NIV)

Angels Candle
The fourth and last purple candle, often called the "Angels Candle", represents peace and is lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:13-14, NIV)

Christ Candle
On Christmas Eve, the white center candle is lit. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. The color white represents purity. Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Savior. Those who receive Christ as Savior are washed of their sins and made whiter than snow:

"Come now, let us settle the matter, says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18, NIV)
Joel Stein, author and former staff writer for Time Magazine, wrote rather glibly that “Heaven is totally overrated. It seems boring. Clouds. Listening to people playing the harp. It should be somewhere you can’t wait to go to, like a luxury hotel.”

December 1st begins a new liturgical year, a cycle devoted to the Gospel of Matthew. The central theme of his Gospel is the kingdom of heaven. Were Jesus to describe the kingdom in actual terms, we could not process or inwardly digest the enormity and complexity of the information. So we are left to wonder, and speculate, like Mr. Stein, but with eyes of faith that perceive ineffable truth.

Jesus describes the kingdom as paradox: “The last will be first and the first will be last.” When Jesus reverses the order of things it is to make us think in new ways about the kingdom of heaven. He does not mean that there are automatic role reversals in heaven. The rich and powerful are not always last in the kingdom and the poor and weak are not always first, but God does favor anyone who gets left behind.

Boring? Clouds? Harp music? Luxury hotels? The kingdom of heaven is not a whimsical or fanciful destination. It is not a figment of the imagination. It is an experience of the creative and redemptive power of God in the present time, for all of time. When we see the will of God made manifest in our lives and in the lives of those around us, we are living the kingdom life. It doesn’t come with room service, but it does require humble service, something Mr. Stein has yet to recognize.

Faithfully,
Anne
Gintick Baptism
Young Families Gathering
Acolyte Recognition Sunday
A message from Kristy Livingston...

Christian Formation is the lifelong process of growing in our relationship with God, self, others and all creation. As we move into Advent, there is lots of activity going on with our youngest parishioners! December 1st starts the season with Advent wreath making. This family activity is one that we’ve reintroduced, and is sure to become a tradition once again. Our kids will be actively participating in this year’s Christmas Bazaar selling treasures to be given to Moms, Dads and loved ones. They will be lovingly wrapped downstairs in Santa’s Workshop. We will also be selling reusable shopping bags this year as a fundraiser for the Confirmation class trip to NYC for Nightwatch in January. This trip will have a lasting impact on teens as they experience a safe, spirit centered program of joyful fellowship, contemplative, contemporary spiritual direction, devotional singing, and lots of fun activities. We will be caroling to local nursing homes and visiting some of our shut-in parishioners once again this Christmas season. This is a community event so all are welcome, not just those with young children-the more merry voices, the better!

Alison Patton and Rae’Ven Kelly will be spearheading our annual Christmas Pagaent again with the flair and finesse! As we did last year, visiting children at the Christmas Eve service will be invited to join in the fun! Rehearsals for our main ensemble will be each Sunday in December during regular Sunday School time. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas. Thank you for your support of this important ministry! ~ Kristy

DECEMBER TRIVIA

1. Most of us already know that Dec. 6 is the Feast of St. Nicholas, but what do we really know about him?

2. The day after, on Dec. 7, St. Ambrose is observed. What do we know about him?

Answers on page 16
HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Living Supplies Closet
Closed: December 24th & 26th

Office Closed: December 25th, 26th & 27th

PRAYER LIST
Please help us keep our prayer list current! Please take a look and send any updates to the secretary.christchurch@verizon.net. Please also contact us if you would like to be placed on the Thanksgiving List of Healing. Thank you, The Pastoral Care Commission.

TRIVIA ANSWERS
(from previous page)

1. Not too much, really. We do know that he was Bishop of Myra in Lycia in the 4th c. and that he suffered torture and imprisonment during the persecution under Emperor Diocletian. After his release, he might have been one of the bishops that attended the Council of Nicea in 325, but this has not been confirmed. He was honored as a saint in the 6th c. by Emperor Justinian, and is famed as the traditional patron of sailors, as well as of children. The stories of his giving of gifts to children grew, and he became associated with Christmas, as the observances of that, in December, also grew. Over the course of time, his name changed, depending on what language was in use, and when Dutch colonists came to colonial New York, it got changed into the "Santa Claus" that we call him today. 2. He was another 4c. bishop, and started out as the son of a Roman governor in Gaul. Around 370, he too, became a governor, with his seat in Milan. Upon the death of the Arian bishop of Milan, a battle arose between the Arian and Orthodox factions as to who should succeed him. As the governor, Ambrose became involved as a mediator, and after exhorting them to keep the peace, they then called for him to be the next bishop, which he initially protested. Even though he had been raised with Christian values, he had not yet been formally baptised, due to his duties as a Roman governor, so this created quite a problem for him! Nonetheless, the crowd persisted, so he agreed to accept the position, and was baptized and ordained on the same day–Dec. 7,373, quite an unusual situation, but it turned out well in the end. He rapidly won renown as a strong defender of Orthodoxy and was also a skillful hymnodist, introducing a style of chant that would be named after him-"Ambrosian". His preaching was also an important factor in the conversion of Augustine of Hippo, and he is revered as one of the four traditional Doctors of the Latin Church, along with Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great. He died in 397.
Sign ups are Nov. 24 and Dec. 1 at coffee hour
Rehearsals are Dec. 8, 15, 22 from 11:15-12.
It is important to come to rehearsals each week!
Pageant is December 24th at the 5 pm service.
We need your children to make this tradition a success! Many parts need filling!
Children 4 and older may participate.

To sign up, contact: pattonband@verizon.net
Less than 2 months until Christmas!!

Mark your calendars...
Parish Advent Wreath Making
Sunday, December 1, following 10 am service

We will need greens and greens and more greens! If you are willing to cut and donate (or have someone come and cut) greens from your yard, please contact Kristy Allardyce at kristylivingston13@gmail.com, 203-209-1711 or call the church office 596-0197. Delivery of greens will be Nov. 29 by noon.

There will be sign ups in the parish hall. Wreath make and take will be $15. This is a fundraiser for the Confirmation Class trip to Night Watch in NYC at St. John the Divine.

Thank you for your support!
A Festival of Lessons & Carols for Advent

Sunday, December 1st
5PM
Reception to follow

Christ Church
7 Elm Street, Westerly, RI 02891
christchurchwesterly.org

All Welcome
The Choir of Christ Church
Christmas Bazaar Book Sale

We will have a selection of newer books, published in the last few years, which we will sell for $3 - $6. Please check your libraries for such books, as well as for older books in good condition (preferably dusted!), and bring them in boxes or bags. Leave them under the stairs to the Parish Hall the week of Thanksgiving, starting Sunday, November 24.

The Book Sale Room will be open early, on Friday, December 6, the eve of the Bazaar, from 5-7 pm, with wine and cheese. (This is a special preview for the Book Sale only, not for the rest of the Bazaar.)
Christmas Dinner

Will you be alone for Christmas this year?

No plans?

I will be preparing a Christmas Dinner on that day after the 10 am service. If you would like to join us, please email me at pouismom@gmail.com, or call 401-212-0468, by December 19.

Hope to hear from you!

Sandy Thibault
2019 Christmas Bazaar
Saturday, December 7  9:00am – 2:00pm
Christ Church, 7 Elm Street, Westerly, RI

Silent Auction and Raffle
* Fine Crafts * Hand-knitted Items * Visit with Santa * Poinsettias *
* Boxwood Trees * Attic Treasures * Book Room * Tag Sale
* Jewelry * Children's Room * Fair Trade Items *
* Homemade Holiday Baked Goods *
* Thaw & Heat - Homemade Casseroles, Soups & Meatballs *

Luncheon Served 11:00am – 1:00pm
Santa Visits 10:00am – 12:00pm
Adults $10 * "Child Friendly" $5
Homemade Soups, Breads, Salads, Desserts

Christ Episcopal Church
7 Elm Street, Westerly, RI 02891
(401) 596-0197 • Fax: (401) 596-6528
Email: christ-church@verizon.net • ChristChurchWesterly.org
Parish Caroling and Cookie Swap

December 15th at 12pm

Gather in the Parish Hall following the 10am service;
Bring a lunch; maybe share a carol together;
then leave to go to different caroling spots
~shut-ins / nursing homes etc.
Gather back at the Parish Hall to retrieve your cookies

Open to everyone!

Bring 4 dozen cookies & a take home container
Children under 8 with a parent please.
A Festival of Lessons & Carols for Christmas

Sunday, December 29th
5PM

All Welcome

The Choir of Christ Church
Reception to follow
CALL TO THE 186TH ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020

The 186th Annual Meeting of Christ Episcopal Church in Westerly, Rhode Island will be held on Sunday, January 26, 2020 at 11:15 or immediately following the 10am Service. All members of the congregation are invited to attend. A copy of the Annual Report will be sent via email one week in advance. A full hard copy will be available in advance only upon request.

PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE NO 8AM SERVICE ON JANUARY 26
**Chaplains:** The Reverend Sunil Chandy and The Reverend Della Wager Wells

**When:** November 2, 2020 - November 16, 2020. Although a group of us will be leaving from Christ Church Westerly on October 31st to fly out of JFK Airport.

**Where:** Room and Boarding will be at St. George’s Seminary, an Anglican Seminary in Jerusalem.

**Cost:** About $3450/person plus $1200/person for travel. A $500 deposit is required to reserve your space.

**Description:** Our Pilgrimage lasts for 14 days and combines biblical and historical studies with pilgrimage to selected sites connected with Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection. It will focus on the historical context and culture in which Jesus exercised his earthly ministry. The trip will integrate contextual biblical study with theological and spiritual reflection, encountering the roots and traditions of Christian faiths East and West. We will also explore some of the contemporary issues in Israel and Palestine. Classroom mini-lectures prepare course participants for site visits.
Service Hours

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Holy Eucharist spoken service

Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist spoken service

Sunday 10:00 a.m.
Choral Eucharist
w/Children’s Chapel and Nursery Care

Wednesday 7:00 a.m.
Holy Eucharist

Wednesday 10 a.m.
Holy Eucharist

Wednesday 10:45 a.m.
Bible Study

COME JOIN US!

Christ Episcopal Church

CLERGY
The Rev. Sunil Chandy, Christ Church Rector
The Rt. Rev. David Joslin, Rector Emeritus; Bishop in Residence
The Rev. Sandra Haines-Murdocco, Priest Associate
The Rev. Erik Larsen, Priest Associate
The Rev. Deacon Anne Burke, Deacon

STAFF
George Kent, Organist & Choirmaster
Jacquelyn Smith, Parish Administrator; Wedding Coordinator
Dorothy Adams, Office Assistant
Kristy Livingston, Director of Christian Formation
Phillip Kurk, Sexton
Madeline Therrien and Sarah Poole, Childcare Coordinators

VESTRY
Betsey Rice, Senior Warden
Caswell Cooke, Jr., Junior Warden
Sarah Starkweather, Clerk
Stephanie Blanchette, Treasurer

Fred Allardyce  Paul Kuhn
Connie Annand  Doug Lawrence
Barbara Capalbo  Emily Mugge
Mike Evering  Natalie Pukas
Katherine Hoxsie  Thomas Quaratella
Lisa Kitchen  Richard Roy

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