

St. Francis of Assisi Newsletter

Advent/Christmas Time

December, 2016



Mission:

We are a Christ-centered faith community where all are welcome; loving one another by embracing diversity, fostering spiritual growth, living the gospel in the world, and recognizing the God who lives in all.

Events

Things are happening in our community. Our church is alive and active. Come, participate and enjoy fellowship with your church community and your greater community.



Faith Sharing

From the first Thursday of Advent until after Easter, we will be having faith sharing sessions **EVERY Thursday evening** from 6-7:30pm. During that time we will be studying our Catechism, the Mass, as well as Old Catholic history and its foundations.

ALL ARE WELCOME.



Women's Spirituality Group

All women in the Faith Community are invited to join this group for sharing our stories of struggle and joy in our faith journeys.

Meetings rotate among members' homes and conclude with a potluck dinner.



Outreach



Diaper Jar

There is a continuing need for diapers for the York County Shelter. We have made a commitment to help fulfill this need so thanks for all of your donations thus far.

In November we delivered

299 diapers

plus two large boxes of food to the shelter.



BLESSING BAGS

As part of our ongoing outreach to the greater community, we are handing out "blessing bags" (filled with several essentials for an individual on the street) to those who need them.

Please consider becoming a part of this ministry.



Donate Bottles and Cans

Thank you to all in the community who collect returnable bottles and cans for our CLYNK campaign. The money collected goes to the Wells Fuel Fund for those who need help during our cold winters.

**So far this year we have collected
\$200.15**

Calendar

Mass:

Every Sunday – 9:00 a.m.

952 Post Road (Route 1)
Colonial Square
Wells, ME

Thursday, December 1

Faith sharing 6-7:30pm

Saturday, December 3

Craft Fair at Wells Jr. High School
9am-4pm

Saturday December 10

Advent Day of Reflection 10am-4pm

To take place at

**38 Whippoorwill Ln. Shapleigh
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED**

Friday, December 16

Women's Spirituality Group 6pm
at Carol Olmstead's house

Saturday December 24

CHRISTMAS EVE MASS
4pm



Sunday, December 25

CHRISTMAS MASS
9am

January 8

Feast of the EPIPHANY

Potluck and Yankee Swap after Mass



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Lectionary Theme:

Decades ago, a friend and mentor gave me what I then thought to be quite an unusual gift. As I look at it today, where it stands upon my bureau, the seven-inch brown wooden representation of an obviously pregnant Mary, head bowed, hands clasped in prayer, reminds me of the wisdom of its giver. This small figure represents who each of us is called to be, said my mentor of years ago, i.e., believers who embody Jesus Christ and bring him forth into the world. Mary, in her humble cooperation with God, brought forth her Savior into the world; so are we to continue to do so for one another. During this month, which is almost entirely given over to Advent, this special responsibility becomes all the more significant.

There are so many people and places in our world where the presence of Christ is difficult if not impossible to detect; those are the people and the places who beg for our active and positive intervention. A kind word, a service rendered, a deliberate act of love can transform an empty void into a source of God's presence. Bringing Jesus to birth in every person and place is to acknowledge that God is already present there but, perhaps, not so perceptibly. Through our positive and purposeful efforts, we might draw attention to the God who awaits discovery and rejoice in our recognition and acknowledgment of that great and graced gift.

A special season within the liturgical year, Advent speaks to the heart of who we are, pilgrims on the way, companions on the journey, fellow explorers, always making our way toward God, yet also a people in waiting and hope, knowing that our journey will end only when God intends that it will. Until then, we join together in passionate anticipation of what God has instore.

Our word advent, derived from the Latin *adventus*, means coming and calls to mind the Greek word *parousia*. Scholars agree that during the fourth and fifth centuries in Spain and Gaul, Advent was a season set apart for the preparation of catechumens who would be baptized on the feast of the Epiphany. During this special period of preparation, the faithful devoted 40 days to penance. However, by the sixth century C.E., Christians in Rome had come to associate Advent with the coming of Christ, not so much in his first coming through his humble birth in Bethlehem, but in his *second* coming at the end of time and as judge of all the world. Only in the Middle Ages was Advent explicitly celebrated in remembrance of Christ's first appearance at Christmas *and* in anticipation of Jesus' future coming in glory.

In order to celebrate these two elements of remembrance and anticipation, Advent's first two Sundays focus on Christ's final appearance among humankind, while the last two Sundays draw attention to Jesus' first appearance. In remembering one appearance, we prepare worthily for the other yet to come.

As the first season in the liturgical year, Advent engages believers in a process of growth and is intended to be a transformational experience. As Henri Nouwen (*Eternal Seasons*, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN: 2007) has explained, the liturgical year, beginning with Advent, engages believers to hear and acquiesce to an entirely different rhythm. It is a journey from *chronos*, the chronological world of clocks and calendars, to *kairos*, time viewed as opportunity or encounter. *Kairos* is the fullness of time, that time made sacred and full by Jesus Christ; it is a time for welcoming in the Christ and allowing him to come to birth in us and in our world.

Therefore, while some may be caught up with shopping, parties, gifts and decorations, Advent believers appreciate, enjoy and then see beyond the secular accoutrements of the season and find joy and hope in the Christ who is being revealed among us. He is Son of God, Lord of All, Hope of the Hopeless, Joy of the Sorrowing, Healer of Hearts, Lover of Sinners and Forgiver of All. This is the God, the Christ whom we are to bring forth to the world, as Mary did. Therefore, this Advent, as we strike the careful balance between remembering and anticipation, let us be ever mindful that "Advent offers the opportunity to deepen my memory of God's great deeds in time and sets me free to look forward with courage to the fulfillment of time by him who came and is still to come" (Henri Nouwen, *The Genesee Diary: Report From a Trappist Monastery*, Doubleday, New York, NY:1989).

Come, Lord Jesus!

Patricia Datchuck Sánchez and Rafael Sánchez Alonso
In *Celebration*, Oct. 2016



Are you “too busy” in December for a retreat? It is during those times we most need to “come away and rest awhile.” Consider God’s invitation to you to “be still and know that I am God.” Don’t let Christ get lost in Christmas!

Advent is a time of waiting, of preparation for the coming of the Messiah. We are called to wait for God on our faith journey. Let’s explore the gifts of waiting.

ADVENT RETREAT: A Lesson in Waiting

Saturday, December 10
10am-4pm

38 Whippoorwill Lane, Shapleigh
(Lunch will be provided)



Spotlight!

Christmas Giving

Each year we are blessed with the opportunity to help a local family in need. This year, the town of Wells has asked us to help out a family of six who are in dire need of transportation, food and clothing. The two youngest children, a 9 month old and a 13 year old need gifts. Mom is asking for clothing (size 2T) and diapers for the baby and Legos, drawing pencils, magic tricks for the 13 year old. Both children are boys. The rest of the family will benefit from gas cards (Cumberland Farms) and Hannaford gift cards.

In addition we will be making our usual donations of food and clothing to the shelter.



This past month we were blessed by two anonymous donations of cash, from individuals in Ogunquit, to help us pay for the Thanksgiving dinner for the above family. In addition, a huge thanks to **Coastal General Construction** for their extremely generous donation of food and diapers for the shelter.

We are grateful for your help.



Meditation/Prayer

The purpose of daily meditation/prayer is the cultivation of a sense of the sacred. Sacred energy renews us. Prayer enables us to transform the world, because it transforms us! Let's commit ourselves to daily meditation/prayer...

Advent God,
we journey with you,
to Bethlehem's stable
and a new-born King,
ears attuned
to the song of angels,
eyes alert
for Bethlehem's star.
Forgive us
if on our journey
if we are distracted
by the tempting offers
of this world.
Keep our hearts aflame
with the hope
of Christmas,
and the promise
of a Saviour. Amen



The Most Reverend Dr. Rosemary Ananis, Pastor

Parish Council

- President: Carol Olmstead
- Vice-Moderator: Dana Cole
- Treasurer: Dawn Saporito
- Secretary: Debbie Gaudreau
- Members-at-large: Janet O'Day
Laurie Ross
Maryann Stacy

Monthly Financial Report: November

Income	\$1714.09
Expenses	\$2588.44
Balance	\$-874.35

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