

December 2024

Rector's Corner

"How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?" 1 Thessalonians 3:9

Human societies and cultures have long set aside days to give thanks for their blessings, and hold feasts to celebrate a harvest. In the US this has become the holiday of Thanksgiving. Hot on its heels (only 3 days later this year!) is the church's season of Advent—a whole season of gratitude and joyful expectation.

The epistle lesson for the first Sunday of Advent comes from the first letter to the Thessalonians. Christians in that early community have turned away from the cultural norm of worshiping idols, and as a result they have suffered. And yet, they pray. In the face of hardship and persecution they claim joy. They choose to be grateful.

How about us today? Here in 21st century North America very few of us can truly claim persecution; but that does not mean an absence of suffering and hardship. We live in a land of abundance, and some still suffer lack; a land of opportunity, and some are still unable to claim it; a land of justice, and some still find themselves unjustly treated. So where do we start, knowing that poverty and wealth, comfort and suffering live side by side?

As Christians, we begin as Jesus always did, in fervent prayer. We can pray that God open our eyes to see both the need and the blessings all around us. We can pray that God open our hearts with compassion and with gratitude. We can pray that God open our hands to give and to serve with humility, purpose, and joy.

This year, I hope you will join me in stepping into Advent with prayer and thanksgiving. Lift up your soul to God, and allow the Holy Spirit to lift your spirit in response.

God's peace,
Jane+



Advent Wreaths on Dec. 1

We will be making Advent Wreaths after both services on this first Sunday of Advent—open to all ages! We provide the wreath forms, wire, and candles. If you have one of the wire forms from previous years, please bring it in to reuse.

Cuttings of FRESH greens are needed, so bring some to share if you have them. Donations of greens will be taken that Sunday (Dec. 1), please cut them fresh so they will last through Advent. A nice variety of greens are good to use in making the wreaths. The materials will be available after both services for people to make their wreaths to take home, one per household.

AGO Christmas Choral Festival

On the first Sunday of Advent, **Dec. 1**, join the All Saints' choir for the 42nd annual American Guild of Organists' Choral Festival! This beloved multi-denominational concert of hymns, choral music, scripture, and organ solos features local organists and choirs from all over the Tri-Cities.

Admission is free, but show up a bit early - last year was a full (overflowing!) house. A freewill offering will be collected to benefit the local food bank.

Hope we'll see you on December 1st at 4pm, just down the road at Central Church!

If you have any questions, see Assistant Musical Director and chairman of the festival Adam Muhlestein.

Children and Youth Ministries—December 2024

Godly Play! Our Sunday school for preschool and elementary age students is from 9 to 10 AM on Sunday mornings. Visitors are always welcome!

Our stories this month are:

Dec. 1—no story, we are making Advent wreaths!

Dec. 8—Story of Ezekiel

Dec. 15—Story of Advent

Dec. 22—no class

Dec. 29—no class

January 5—The Epiphany, for all ages.

Youth Class. Youth will meet up in the loft from 9 to 10 AM on just two Sundays in December, **December 8 & 15**. We will be learning about “How to Read the Bible” with special guests. Anyone in grades 6-12 is welcome to come join the class. On Dec. 1, come make an Advent wreath in the parish hall.

Parents' Night Out, December 15. Our Youth Group will hold an evening of child care so that parents can have a night out. Supervision, and dinner, will be provided at the church on this Sunday between 4 PM and 8 PM. There will be a variety of activities during the evening. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex

so we have an idea of how many are coming. This is provided as a service by the youth and at no cost to the parents. Go to dinner, a movie, or get some last minute Christmas shopping done. (This is the Youth Group event for December.)



Nursery will be open for Candles & Carols on Dec. 21, and the 5 PM service on Christmas Eve, but not the late Christmas Eve service, nor Christmas morning service.

Christmas Eve 5 PM service, No Practice Pageant. Any children at the 5 PM service on Christmas Eve are welcome to participate in our “no practice” pageant. See Theresa in the entryway before the service if you wish to be included—we will be there getting ready into costume, between 4:30 and 5.



Blessing Bags in January. The Youth Group will be putting together Blessing Bags in January for parishioners to keep in their cars and hand out to people in need. Any donations of the following are welcome: **warm socks, gloves**, hand warmer packs; toiletries of deodorant, bar soap, small shampoo and conditioner, combs, razors, nail clippers, Band-aids, plain lip balms, washcloths; food items such as canned ready-to-eat meals with pop top lids, packages of crackers with peanut butter or cheese, granola or protein bars, trail mix or nuts, fruit cups, individual water bottles, gum. (We have plenty of toothbrushes and toothpaste thanks to a generous donation!)

Bring your donations to the church office by **January 9**, so we can purchase what else is needed; our goal is to pack between 50 and 70 bags.

WinterCross, February 14-16, 2025, will be back at Lazy F Retreat Center in Ellensburg! This retreat weekend is a fun Camp Cross-like experience in the wintertime for youth in middle and high school from

around the diocese. There will be large and small group time, arts and crafts, tubing in the snow, ice skating, prayer stations, a camp fire and s'mores. Registration should open soon in CampDocs.

Calling Artists of All Ages!

In the past, it has been our custom to use premade bulletin covers for our Christmas services, to help us express the beauty and joy of the season. Last year, however, we printed bulletin covers right here at church featuring artwork from our own parishioners, and we'd love to do so again!



The cost of printing on our copier (now able to print in color) on our own paper turns out to be roughly equivalent to purchasing premade covers, and is much more meaningful coming from within our community—another way we make church together.

Ideally we need at least three different covers: two on Christmas Eve and one for Christmas morning. The art needs to be reproducible with a color copier onto a half-legal sheet (roughly 8.5" tall by 7" wide, or able to be reduced to that size effectively) and to reflect your take on the joy and wonder of the Incarnation.



We welcome submissions from artists of all ages! If you're interested, please talk with Rev. Jane or call the office. We need submissions **no later than December 8th.**



Outreach Focus for December: Angel Tree

During December, Outreach will be asking for donations to the Angel Tree and parish Christmas Card. Angel Tree contributions are used to purchase holiday WinCo gift cards; donations of any amount are welcome, and for every \$50 raised, we will hang a star on the tree.



Grocery gift cards go to a variety of local ministries and families in need in our parish and surrounding community. WinCo gift cards allow the recipients to choose the food they like and need, and can be used when they need it.

You can also make a donation (\$5 minimum) to add your name to the Parish Christmas Card. Last year, Christmas card funds were sent to Mirror Ministries. Stay tuned for this year's charitable cause.

You can make your donations at church through Advent - look for the tree in the narthex! Outreach committee members will be available there between services and after the 10:15. You can also mail in a check with "Outreach: Angel Tree" in the memo line. Thank you for your gifts to Outreach!

Saints and Sinners

Saints and Sinners is an adult social group that has been meeting once a month for most of the last 50 years and is a fun way to get to know your fellow parishioners, especially some from that "other service!" Please join us!

The December Saints and Sinners will meet at different date and time than usual. It will be held at Linda Munson's on **Friday, Dec. 6 at 5pm** to take advantage of the Lighted Boat Parade. The 5:00 social hour (with wine and non-alcoholic alternatives provided) will allow us to eat at 6:00 and watch the boats at 7:00. You will be welcome

whenever you can make it and we never run out of food!

We used to ask for donations for wine but lately there has been a collection of wine from the previous Saints and Sinners that miraculously never seems to be diminished so find some other good cause for your donations.

Please bring your own table service and a dish to share. Singles, bring either an hors d'oeuvre, salad, side dish, dessert, or main course. Couples, bring a main course or two of the other items.

We will also have a container that you may use to donate to the "Blessing Bags" that the youth put together which we can take to give to those in need. Hats, gloves, socks are especially needed along with toiletries, snacks, etc. See the article on Blessing Bags on page 2 for a complete list of needed items.



Greening of the Church

This year, the Altar Guild will carry out the Greening of the Church on the **Fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 22**. We could use a few helping hands! Grab a bite to eat at coffee hour after the second service, and then join us upstairs as we hang the greenery for our beautiful Christmas services.

Pavilion Update

Many people have been wondering about the status of All Saints' planned pavilion project. Junior Warden Linda Munson has some answers!

"Unfortunately we are still in the permit stage with the City of Richland but we believe all issues are being resolved and we expect to have the Pavilion completed by spring. We expect a 34 foot x 34 foot

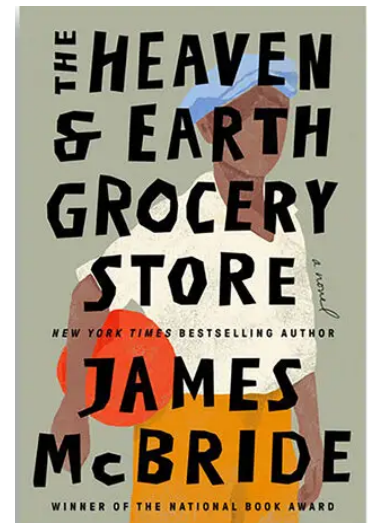
pavilion on a large concrete slab that will also have a 10 foot by 34 foot storage and sacristy building on it. It will replace our tent that ceased to be serviceable.

The pavilion will be available for social events, Vacation Bible School, outdoor movies when weather permits, parish picnics, special worship services, and use by the community. It can be constructed completely with funds that have been given to the church as memorials."

All Saints' Book Group

Our next book to read is *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, a 2023 novel by James McBride. This book sits on many "best book of the year" lists and has won numerous awards, including the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. The *New York Times Book Review* calls it a "murder mystery locked inside a Great American Novel."

In 1972, workers in Pottstown, PA, find a skeleton while digging a new foundation. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows. As the story continues, it becomes clear how much the people who live on the margins of white, Christian America struggle, and what they must do to survive. In dark times, it is love and community—heaven and earth—that sustain us.



We will be discussing this book on **TUESDAY, January 14**, beginning at 6 PM with a potluck dinner. All are welcome! (If the weather is bad on the 14th, we will switch to a Zoom discussion.)

Free Preaching Courses for Laity

There is an exciting new educational opportunity for laity in the Spokane Diocese! Beginning in January of 2025, lay members of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane will be able to take online courses through the Iona Collaborative, a formation program from the Seminary of the Southwest.

The first term will run from Jan. 11th through June 1st, and will include The Bible (New Testament), and Preaching, taught by Rev. Katy Shedlock. Bible classes will be held once a month on Saturdays from 10am-12pm, and preaching classes meet weekly on Thursdays from 7-8:30pm. All classes are held on Zoom.

At the end of the second term, which will be held in the fall and will include Old Testament and Preaching, students may be licensed as a lay preacher in the diocese of Spokane.

There is no cost for the courses, but students should purchase a NRSV Bible that they are ok with writing in, and all students will need access to Zoom and Google Classroom.

If interested, please speak with Deacon Mark Sluss. Full dates and more information can be found at spokanediocese.org, under the “Events” tab.



AdventWord 2024

AdventWord, an offering of Forward Movement, is an online Advent calendar featuring a daily prompt word selected from the Sunday Lectionary readings. All are invited to share their own personal

reflections, art, poetry, photographs, or other creative expression.

If you’ve never participated before, it’s both inspirational and fun! You can share your own reflections on each word and follow along with other participants on social media.

Also, you can sign up online to receive a daily emailed meditation during the season of Advent. Subscribe here: <https://adventword.org/sign-up-adventword/>

AdventWord

DECEMBER 1-25 **2024**

1	HUMILITY	14	PROCLAIM
2	ABOUND	15	REJOICE
3	REDEMPTION	16	GENTLENESS
4	SPROUT	17	TRUST
5	EARNESTLY	18	GATHER
6	FAITHFULNESS	19	HOME
7	SAFETY	20	LOVE
8	SPLendor	21	MERCY
9	REFINE	22	LIFTED
10	JOY	23	SHINE
11	PREPARE	24	COME
12	RIGHTEOUSNESS	25	FRUIT
13	SALVATION		

adventword.org 

Note from the Bookkeeper

If you missed Ingathering Sunday, you can still turn in your pledges! Bring your pledge card to the church office or mail it in. For those technologically inclined, you can also make your 2025 pledge online: <https://bit.ly/all saints2025pledge>

Also, if you are ever curious about the status of your current year’s pledging, just ask Rachel in the office. Our new church management system, Realm, makes it very simple to print a giving statement at any time.

Thank you for your generous and faithful commitment to the work of All Saints’!

A Prayer for Discernment

Lord God,
Give us grace to discern and evaluate the power we
each have,
through the money we invest, the friends we make,
the shares we own,
the societies we join, the votes we cast, the shops we
visit,
the language we use, the letters we write, and the
promises we keep.
Have mercy on us for the times we have washed our
hands and said there was nothing we could do;
and renew us as your body, using your power as your
Spirit does,
to set people free for the abundant life you bring in
your Son, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

(by Samuel Wells, excerpt from prayer in *Power & Passion: Six Characters in Search of Resurrection*, 2007, p. 53)

We Give Thanks...

- to Marjie Mack and her friend Sandy Crouse for taking old archives to CI Shred. They did a wonderful job and even retrieved the boxes and folders for reuse.
- to David Goheen for mounting the last light fixture and thereby completing our electrical repairs.
- to Bruce Schmoetzer for taking on the project to re-key the church.
- to everyone who helped pack Advent Bags this year: Katy O'Callaghan, Diane Goheen, Marjie Mack, and Theresa Grate.
- to Todd Eller-Sluss for helping prepare the Pledge Packets.
- to all who pitched in to help make the annual book sale a success! It takes a small village: Steve, Diane, & David Goheen, Jan Griffin, Mike & Ann O'Neill, Carole McGraw, Rachel Loer, Ann Barry, Lisa Richmond, Rich Conley,

Liam Larsen, Richard Callahan, Chelee Ellis, Rachael Black, Jim Noyce, Marlo Wallace, Bill Powell, and Ruth Arisman.

- to Mike O'Neill and his crew who repaired and painted the exit stairs from the loft. The job turned out to be bigger than expected, and was done in a very professional manner. A huge thank you to: Mike O'Neill, Rich Conley, Al Wells, Steve Goheen, Bill Powell, Bruce Gillespie, Randy Milligan, David Goheen, George Carter, Tom Ham, and Linda Munson.
- to the Youth Group and leaders for hosting another amazing Youth-Senior Tea! Thanks to our youth hosts: Jack Spencer, Miriam Slonecker, Iris Slonecker, Avery Gilbert, Claire Gilbert, Chloe Kessler, Lilly Wallace, Calix Smith, Nigella O'Callaghan, and her friend Bella. Thanks to the helpers in the kitchen and beyond: Teri Bartol, Elizabeth Arnold, and Marlo Wallace. Thanks to our many guests! It was a wonderful afternoon of getting to know each other!
- to Jack Spencer, who wrote and shared a beautiful opening prayer at the Youth-Senior Tea.

