

SAINTS ALIVE!

December 2025

AGO Christmas Choral Festival

On the first Sunday in December, join the All Saints' choir for the 43rd 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 **Dec. 7th 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.

Advent Bible Study

The Monday Bible study group will be using a daily devotional book for our group to discuss during Advent: *"Preparing for Christmas"* by Richard Rohr. References are given for the daily readings per the Revised Common Lectionary; there is a brief devotion, and then a question or two for each day.

You can purchase the book on Amazon or from other retailers, or by contacting the church office. (There is a handy clickable link in the Wednesday Word!) On December 1, the Godly Play story for Advent will be presented. We will start our book discussions on December 8, covering the readings for the first week of Advent.

All are welcome to attend, whether you are a regular member of the group or not! We will meet in the multipurpose room starting on **Monday, Dec. 1 at 1pm.**

Christmas at All Saints'

Happy New (church) Year! We're officially in Advent, when we prepare our hearts and minds for the Incarnation. Looking ahead, there are many opportunities at All Saints' during the Christmas season to worship and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Important dates and times include:

- **Candles and Carols:** Dec. 22, 5pm
- **Christmas Eve Family Service:** Dec. 24, 5pm
- **Christmas Eve Late Service:** Dec. 24, 8:30pm
- **Christmas Day:** Dec. 25, 10am
- **Office Closed:** Dec. 24 - Jan. 1



Candles and Carols is our parish's Christmas party; if you've never been, we hope you'll join us this year! We begin with a social hour of drinks and appetizers at 5pm, followed by a potluck dinner at 6pm. Afterward we all head upstairs to carol together in the sanctuary.

There are three opportunities to celebrate Holy Eucharist between Christmas Eve and Day. The family service will feature the annual No Practice Pageant (see more on pg. 3) - all kids are welcome to participate! Both Christmas Eve services will also be available live-streamed.

If you have any questions about any of the services or celebrations, please contact the church office or ask any of our clergy. We're happy to help!

Rector's Corner

The rhythm of our church life is organized around the story of Jesus. Throughout the year we follow along—birth, life, death, and resurrection. We hear teaching and learn of miracles: feeding and healing and walking on water. In this way we glimpse the fullness of God's deep desire for relationship with humanity.

And now, in Advent, once more we begin again. Our focus in this season is getting ready for the coming of our Savior and the profound truth our faith proclaims in the central Christian doctrine of the Incarnation: that God was perfectly united with human nature in Jesus, both fully God and fully human, who "lived as one of us, yet without sin."

This can be a hard concept to wrap our minds around, but it is one that influences so much of who we are. Our ideas of redemption and atonement are anchored at the core of the Christian belief in the Incarnation. Because of the fullness of both humanity and divinity in the person of Jesus, we are assured that God can identify with the whole human experience, including suffering and temptation, firsthand. This means we can acknowledge our sins and shortcomings honestly and without fear of judgment.

Oh, God does judge us, certainly. But remember, the God we know through Jesus is the fullness of love, perfectly just and perfectly merciful, the very best judge we could possibly desire. God sees us in all our complexities—every virtue, every fault, the whole untidy blend of saint and sinner in each and every soul—and offers healing, grace, and forgiveness.

As my friend Tripp says, "We are judged every day and found to be loved." Thanks be to God!

God's Peace,
Jane+



Adult Formation

We're moving into Advent! On two of the four Sundays in this season you will have options for ways to enrich and express your faith. On November 30, we will begin a 4-part series called "A Child Is Born: A Beginner's Guide to Nativity Stories." With New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine, we will delve into the fascinating connections between ancient birth stories (Isaac & Ishmael, Samson, and Samuel) and the Nativity of Jesus, to reveal how they foreshadow and enrich the timeless Christmas story in the final chapter.



In addition, on the first Sunday of Advent, we will continue our practice of offering the opportunity to make Advent Wreaths, for devotional use at home. Then on the last Sunday of Advent, people of all ages will be able to decorate Christmas cookies to share!

Nov 30: *"A Child is Born: Children of Abraham" & Advent Wreaths*

Dec 7: *"A Child is Born: Samson"*

Dec 14: *"A Child is Born: Samuel"*

Dec 21: *"A Child is Born: Jesus" & Christmas Cookies*

Dec 28: *No Class - Christmas Break*

Children and Youth Ministries—December 2025

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. 7 — Exile and Return

Dec. 14 — Story of Advent

Dec. 21 — Combined class: Christmas Cookies

Dec. 28 — No class

January 4 — Combined class: Epiphany

Youth Class. Youth will meet up in the loft from 9 to 10 AM on just two Sundays in December, **December 7 & 14**. These will be fun, Christmas-focused gatherings. Anyone in grades 6-12 is welcome to come join us. On Dec. 21, youth will be making Christmas cookies in the parish hall. There are no Sunday school classes on Dec. 28.

Combined class, December 21, “Christmas cookies.” This is Advent 4 and cookie baking is back! The Sunday school classes (that includes the youth!) will be making Christmas cookies during the Education hour, and sharing them with our parish family during coffee hour. We will be in the parish hall making and decorating sugar cookies from 9 to 10 AM. Adult helpers and bakers are needed, as well as volunteers to bring in the cookie dough (and extra rolling pins). Recipes and sign ups are in the narthex.



Parents’ Night Out, December 21. 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 available during the evening with dinner at about 5 PM. Please sign up in the narthex so we have an idea of how many children are coming.

This is provided as a service by the youth and is 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. 22, 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.

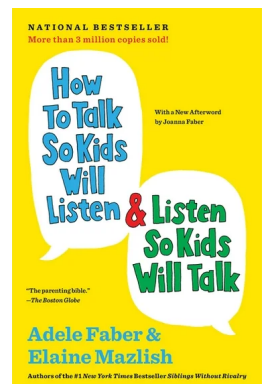
Blessing Bags in January. The Youth Group will be putting together Blessing Bags in January for parishioners to keep in their cars and hand out to people in need. Any donations of the following are welcome!: **warm socks, gloves**, hand warmer packs; toiletries of deodorant, bar soap, small shampoo and conditioner, toothbrushes and toothpaste, 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. Bring your donations to the church office by January 8, so we can purchase what else is needed; our goal is to pack between 50 and 70 bags.

WinterCross, February 13-15, 2026, is happening 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 at spokanediocese.org. Let Theresa know if you would like to carpool.

Parenting Workshop

The ongoing Parenting Workshop, led by Steve and Diane Goheen, met Nov. 2 for one hour to discuss various parenting techniques, issues, and tools. We will meet again on **Sunday, Dec. 7th** at noon in the church library.

We will be discussing Chapters 4-6 in the book: *“How to Talk with Children so they will Listen and Listen so Children will Talk.”* Please join us, even if you haven’t attended the previous sessions! We will try to keep our meeting to one hour and decide on our next steps.



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. The last few years, however, we printed bulletin covers right here at church featuring artwork from our own parishioners, and we'd love to do so again!

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 7th**.

Outreach Focus for December: Angel Tree

As we go through this exciting, music-filled season of sparkling lights, our Outreach Committee is focused on food for our community. We give WinCo gift cards to those in need so they are able to shop for what their families like and require.

Look for the Angel Tree in the narthex - every star means \$50 donated toward the holiday gift cards. After each service during Advent, you'll find the Outreach table there with smiling volunteers who can receive your Angel Tree donations (any amount).

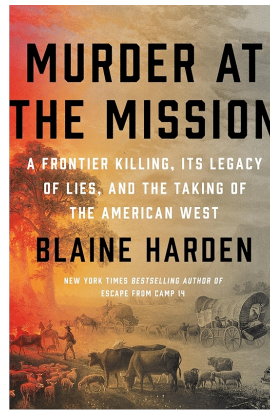
You can also sign up for the parish Christmas Card! For each donation (\$5 minimum), we'll add your name to the card. All donations to the Christmas Card will be matched by Outreach and sent to the Tri-Cities Food Bank.



We can accept cash or check - and this year we can even take your credit card if that's easier. You can also mail in a check made out to All Saints' with "Outreach: Angel Tree" in the memo line. Thank you for helping us spread Christmas blessings!

All Saints' Book Group

Our next book to read is *Murder at the Mission: A Frontier Killing, Its Legacy of Lies, and the Taking of the American West*, by Blaine Harden. This has been called "a riveting narrative that traces the truth behind—and impact of—a myth that tainted the history of the West." It's a bit of local history, too, as it exposes the lies around the Whitman Massacre and Western expansionism.



We will meet to discuss this book on **Thursday, Dec. 11**, beginning at 6pm with a potluck dinner. All are welcome!

If the weather is bad, we will set up a Zoom link for our discussion. If you want to Zoom in just because you don't want to drive over here, contact Theresa at school@allsaintsrichland.org and we will get that set up.

Saints and Sinners

Saints and Sinners is a Social Group open to all adults. We will be having our annual Christmas Party on **Friday, Dec. 19th**, in the parish hall at All Saints'. We will meet at 6pm for wine or non-alcoholic beverages, with dinner at 7pm.

If you've never tried it we would love to have you. If you have tried it we would love to have you back. We meet for a pot-luck supper and fellowship one Friday each month. We don't have hosts lined up beyond December so call Linda (509-521-8981) if you can help and also to make reservations.

Couples, please bring either a main dish or two of the following: starter, salad, side dish, or dessert. Singles, bring one of these. Also, please bring your own table services and a \$5 donation if you would like wine. You can sign up the Sunday before in the narthex or call or text Linda Munson (509-521-8981) for reservations. Reservations are appreciated but not required.

Greening of the Church

This year the Altar Guild will carry out the Greening of the Church on the **Fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 21**. 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.



Jr. Warden's Update

The Pavilion including preliminary landscaping is essentially complete except for a few minor items. The parking lot is in the same condition, and the installation of new surveillance cameras in the back is nearly finished. A couple of the parking stops that are occasionally being driven over will be moved shortly.

We believe the leak that was depositing water in the Nursery has been corrected but we are waiting for a heavier rain before closing everything up (and scheduling the celebration).

A choir member had a serious fall in the altar area of the sanctuary in an area where falls have occurred before. Some temporary rails have been placed and more effective and permanent possible solutions are being evaluated.

A garbage disposal in the kitchen should be replaced by the time you receive this. Due to some temporary

problems one of the dishwashers was temporarily affected but both appliances should be back in service!

Rekeying of the church is essentially complete. Church keys are numbered "1" for most outside doors; "2" for inside doors such as sacristies, janitor's closet, and classrooms; and "3" for offices, electrical room and, furnace room. If you do not have the new keys you need, please see Rachel Loer in the office, Monday through Thursday, between 9 and 2:30 or make arrangements with her over the phone. If you have any keys (church or otherwise) for disposal please put them in the pink container in the work room and we will see that they are recycled.

A recent power outage in the area showed that we have some work to do on emergency lighting and exit signs. This will be scheduled shortly. If you know of other work we should have an electrician do please let Linda Munson know ASAP (509-521-8981).

Update from Rev. Mark Sluss

Dear members of All Saints',

I have now been in Seattle for over three weeks and have undergone numerous medical procedures, including examinations, scans, x-rays, biopsies, and spinal taps. I am pleased to report that all results have been very positive.

My most recent bone marrow assessment shows no evidence of leukemia, and the spinal tap revealed an absence of cancer cells in the spinal column. Additionally, genetic analysis of the marrow did not identify any cancerous markers. These findings are encouraging, and it appears that I am currently in remission.

The next stage involves hospital admission to commence another round of chemotherapy aimed at eliminating my existing bone marrow, allowing the donor marrow to successfully engraft.

If you are interested in offering support by spending time with me following my release from the hospital, please coordinate with Jane to sign up via “Sign Up Genius.” There remain available dates during which companionship would be greatly appreciated. We plan to arrange for respite care during periods when visitors are unavailable, and volunteers will help us reduce the cost of hiring caregivers.

With much love to you all,
Deacon Mark Sluss

A 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 2026 pledge online: <https://bit.ly/allsaints2026pledge>

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’!

We Give Thanks...

- to all the individuals who have generously contributed to the Rector’s Discretionary Fund both for the Sluss Fund and general needs in the community; including special thanks to the Saints and Sinners potluck group for their first ever group donation.
- to Paige Andrew for yard work and helping to clean out the paint closet, as well as preparing to paint one of the stairwells.
- to Mike O’Neill and Tom Smith for their work on the handrails.
- to Paul & Kathy Meyer and Candy Abbott for helping with Saints and Sinners.
- to Elizabeth Arnold, John Spencer, Rachael Black, and Kim Kremer for greeting trick-or-treaters at the church on Halloween, and to Calix

Smith and the Hanford Pep Band for providing live music! We had so many visitors - we’ve never run out of candy before!

- to John Spencer, Colin Berry, Caleb Thomas, and Katy O’Callaghan who helped evaluate the options to reduce the fall risk to choir members; special thanks to John Spencer for installing the new choir handrails.
- to Katy O’Callaghan for packing the Advent Bags, and to Katy, Rev. Jane, and Rachel Loer for making the candy cane reindeers that went in them.
- to Meg Milligan for helping prepare Pledge Packets, and to Jill Gilbert and Marjie Mack for filling in in the office when the admin was out sick for so long!
- to all the many hands who made the Annual Book Sale a success: Steve Goheen, Jan Griffin, Bill Powell, Marjie Mack, Kim Kremer, Ann Barry, Ruth Arisman, Lisa Richmond, Mike & Ann O’Neill, Annette Gordon, Kathy Meyer, Denise Gossman, Katie Maikis, Sue Havre, Rachael Black, Nancy Wittman, June Gillespie, Rachel Loer, and others.
- to the Youth Group and leaders for hosting another amazing Youth-Senior Tea! Thanks to our youth table hosts: Iris, Eva, EJ, Calix, Avery, Claire, Chloe, Ethan, Val, Kenzie, Leeland, and Bethany. Thanks to the helpers in the kitchen and beyond: Teri Bartol, Elizabeth Arnold, Marlo Wallace, and John Spencer. Thanks to our many guests who came and made this our largest Tea yet! We filled the parish hall with laughter and conversation. It was a wonderful afternoon getting to know each other.

