



Good News

Together, we seek to know Christ and make him known.

From the Rector

Each Advent, especially this one, many of us enter a period of particular anxiety. If we are blessed with friends and family we wonder how we can celebrate together safely and worry that whatever we do will not be enough. If we are alone by fate or choice we wonder how we are going to survive all those picture-perfect Hallmark greeting card-moments that do not include us. This year, I expect all of us, at one time or another, will search our hearts and social media outlets for ways to inhabit the holiday that do not presuppose a traditional intergenerational family gathering.

If we are poor the fact is that, whether we are surrounded by family or alone, we feel the acute and gnawing anxiety of the hungry and wonder whether we'll have food and shelter for the night let alone a piece of pumpkin pie and a seat at the table.

Whoever we are, whatever our circumstances, one thing is sure – we are slaves to Maslow's famous hierarchy; we're all needy in one way or another this time of year and we're all looking for someone or something to meet our needs, fill us up, and make us whole.

In Advent, we followers of the Way are charged to wait patiently, to stay alert, and to discipline ourselves to resist the cultural pull to begin our Christmas celebration the day after Thanksgiving, if not before. We know that there is grace waiting for Jesus, for reflecting upon what God's audacious act of revealing God's self to us as a vulnerable human baby means to us, personally and collectively –and what his divinely human birth tells us about the Kingdom of God.

As we negotiate our lives through Advent, trying to wait and reflect, look, listen, and stay awake, may we not forget that the miracle we await is already here. As we anxiously anticipate the new hope that each Christmas brings, remember that our Lord Christ is with us now – that we can experience him at this very moment in the face of our best friend, biggest enemy, or total stranger. Jesus, the Lamb of God is, as ever, here and not yet. Here in us, in our shared love, and yet to be

Christmas Giving Tree



We've all heard the phrase "This is our new normal." For some, it means more than having to wear a face mask or limiting contact with others. For our Food Pantry neighbors it means lost jobs, the inability to pay the mortgage or rent or simply not having enough to eat. In fact because of the lack of federal relief, unemployment and furloughs many more Lake and Geauga County residents are faced with this "new normal" and are food insecure.

Thanks to all our St. Andrew volunteers, the folks at Advent Lutheran and your monetary support, we've been able to continue to provide four food pantry distributions per month. Most of the food we distribute is purchased (or donated) from the Cleveland Food Bank. While we usually are able to keep non-perishables and frozen meat stocked, we do not have personal items like soap, shampoo, hand lotion, toothpaste and deodorant.

Imagine not having soap or shampoo to keep yourself clean. It's a struggle that our Food Pantry neighbors face all the time. These are items that cannot be purchased with food stamps. Share the love this season by donating personal care products that will benefit our Food Pantry neighbors. We need items like kleenex, shampoo, hand soap, body wash, toilet paper, deodorant and laundry detergent. The St. Andrew giving tree will be in the Narthex through December 25th. Place your donation under the tree.

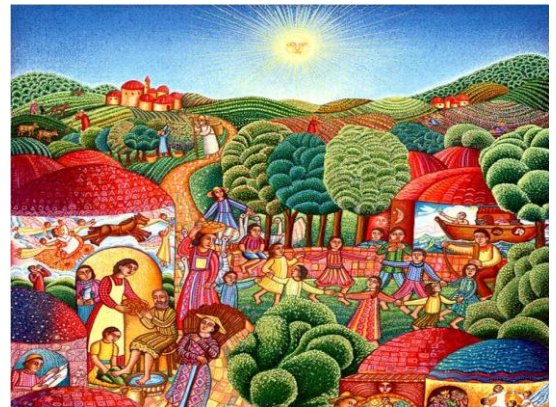


Dates to Remember:

December

- 6 - Food Pantry Distribution, 1 PM
- 6 - Porch Eucharist, Noon
- 8 - Food Pantry Distribution, 1 PM
- 9 - Compline (online), 7 PM
- 16 - Compline (online), 7 PM
- 18 - Vestry Meeting (Zoom), 6:30 PM
- 18 - Food Pantry Distribution, 6:30 PM
- 23 - Food Pantry Distribution, 6:30 PM
- 23 - Compline (online), 7 PM
- 24 - Christmas Eve Carol Sing (online), 6 PM
- 24 - Christmas Eve Eucharist (online), 7 PM

Virtual Services continue Sundays on St. Andrew Facebook (10:30 AM) and YouTube (10:45 AM). Links are posted each week on our website: www.standrew-mentor.com.



Advent Art and Prayers

Christ will come again!

This Advent season, St. Andrew will be sharing selections from the *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers for the Advent Season*, with accompanying artwork that will help you focus on the promise that Christ will come again! Watch for the Flocknote emails as we celebrate the Advent season. Prayers and artwork are provided by the Vanderbilt University Revised Common Lectionary.

Celebrate the Birth of Jesus!



For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

St. Andrew Celebrations:

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24:

Online Spiritual Communion with Organ 7:00 PM

Christmas Day

Online Intergenerational worship at Trinity Cathedral with music

Time to be announced

The Diocese of Ohio will host online Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services. Watch your email for details.

Food Pantry Volunteers Needed

Lend a hand for a few hours each month (first Sunday and second Tuesday each month 1 - 3 PM). Masks required. Shoppers only come into contact with other volunteers. Pantry neighbors stay in their cars. If you can help please contact Barb Sopko at 440-354-2844

Our Sanctuary Family Could Use a Christmas Helping Hand

It's been almost two years since our Sanctuary family moved out of the church after receiving help to file an application for a U-visa.

On their own, Laura and the boys continue to face struggles due to their situation as they await action on the U-visa application. And while folks at St. Andrew have continued to offer help through the Food Pantry, (pre-pandemic) support of Laura's Candy sales, and giving as needs arise, this Christmas they are especially struggling.

Like many families, the pandemic and its effect on the economy, combined with some unexpected medical bills, have left little extra to provide a Christmas celebration.

While Laura and the family continue to work hard and be happy with what they have, we would like to show our love by providing some extras this holiday. If you would like to donate either money or gift cards, you may send them to the church marked "Laura's gift" or contact Rev. Lisa at 440-255-8842 to discuss how you can help.



In January 2019 we said goodbye to Laura, Jose and Joshua - but they remain in our hearts.





204th Convention

The 204th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Ohio was held on November 13-14 and may have been the most unusual convention held in the history of the Diocese of Ohio - due to the pandemic. This year delegates from the 84 parishes met virtually to approve the diocesan program and budget, elect persons to various groups which serve the diocese, adopt resolutions on various issues, and approve changes in the Constitution and Canons of the diocese. Delegates from St. Andrew included Vestry members Janna Penkowski, Brian Sandacz, St. Andrew Treasurer Barb Sopko, and our clergy Rev. Lisa O'Rear and Rev. Dawson Moorer.



Virtual Christmas Concert

One of the things we are missing most during the pandemic is music and singing. Since the virus is spread by respiratory droplets, singing has been prohibited to stop the spread of the disease. But that doesn't mean your family bubble can't sing at home! Our own Chris Peshek and John Spiesman will be recording both traditional and modern Christmas hymns and songs which you may watch and sing along with beginning Christmas Eve at 6 PM on Facebook and YouTube or anytime after. We are blessed to have such talented musicians. You won't want to miss this beautiful Christmas offering. Find links to the concert on our website www.standrew-mentor.com

December Celebrations

Anniversaries

Kevin & Erin Koehler 28

Birthdays

Samantha Heim 02
Deborah Dittebrand 03
Barbara Sopko 04
Carol Pengov 06
Bonnie Semenik 07
Betsy Lee 07
Shawn Dittebrand 11
Joe Papaleo 14
Barb Kovacs 15
Chris Peshek 16
Brian Sandacz 19
Beth Brown 22
Conrad Galayda 22
LilySitkowski 27

Don't see your Birthday or Anniversary? Contact the Office at 440-255-8842 and let us know!



Porch Eucharist Update

Our "Porch Eucharist" was a success and we will meet once more on December 6th at Noon. Due to the steady increase in COVID-19 cases, and many of our Northeast Ohio counties reaching the highest health threat alert, Bishop Hollingsworth has declared that all parishes will suspend in-person worship starting December 13th (including our "Porch Eucharist"). Please join us each week online either on Facebook (10:30 AM) or YouTube (10:45 AM). God bless you all!

From the Rector (continued from page 1)

born in the hope, peace, and joy that grounds our Christmas observances.

As the new hope of Christmas draws near, our Savior, paradoxically, stands with us to await its coming – he would never leave us to suffer our fears and shoulder our burdens alone.

Our Savior, the Lamb of God, Lord Jesus, stands with us, aching to be born anew in each of us, ready to transform us, baggage and all, into new life by his first baby cry which we will hear again this Christmas. We will hear it together, wherever we are, and our hearts will glow.

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Adoration of the Magi 1915

Grateful for the good words of Deitrich Bonhoeffer whose letter to his parents, written from Tengel Prison on December 17, 1942, sparked my heart and inspired this reflection.

Return Your Pledge Card

Thank you so much to those who have returned pledge cards, Despite the pandemic, the work at St. Andrew has continued full of faith.

Thus far, 31 pledge cards have been returned totaling \$94,000. While this is short of the necessary amount to cover expenses, we have faith that God will see us through. If you have not yet pledged, please do so! We're all in this together!

God blesses us with Time, Talent and Treasure, and expects us to share those blessings to expand his kingdom, help the poor, feed the hungry and love our neighbor. All three are in need at St. Andrew! The 2021 Pledge card is available to download at www.standrew-mentor.com.



We seek the mighty God in the most unlikely places as a child in a stable, and in an empty tomb. May God hear these prayers, which come from the unlikely corners of our lives.

