

ST. PETER'S NET

St. Peter's by-the-Sea Newsletter



One of the catchy phrases I learned in seminary is "now and not yet." It refers to the way the Kingdom of God is both among us, and also waiting for its fulfillment at the end of days when Christ returns. As the people of God, we believe that we live in the "now and not yet." Get it?

Do you ever get the sense that it is not an even balance, the "now" and the "not yet"? That is, do you ever feel like we are personally experiencing the radical inbreaking of God's Kingdom much less than still anticipating it? I know I do. I continue to be haunted by a tragedy that made the news last year around this time, about a man killed by a stampeding mob at a Wal-Mart. They were so desperate to get at the bargains on the day after Thanksgiving that they knocked down the sliding glass doors and trampled a man to death. Some even had the audacity to complain afterward when police ordered the store emptied.

And if not this ridiculous, pointless tragedy, then perhaps one of the many others that fill newscasts every night, or greet us each morning in the paper. Ours is a

confused, broken world, filled with confused, broken people. Now, I firmly believe Jesus when he says over and over in the gospels that the Kingdom of God is among us. Here, now. He spent his life trying to show it to us, and there are times when I see it and hear it and feel it.

But I can't help but believe that we have a long way to go before experiencing the *fullness* of God's restored creation. My life has been blessedly devoid of hardship or struggle, and yet I still know the "not yet" all too well. How about you?

Perhaps that is why the season of Advent speaks to me. In many ways, it is the season I feel like I am living. I am *living* Advent. Palestinians in the occupied West Bank often claim to be "living" Good Friday or Holy Saturday. Sudanese people have recently begun to "live" the resurrection of Easter, after decades of civil war. But for me, as I look around at a world that seems so desperately in need of the salvation of God, sometimes I feel like I'm living Advent: watching, waiting, and preparing.

When you arrive at St. Peter's during Advent, the signs that greet you at all three entrances will be changed slightly. Printed in large letters is a simple message: *Slow down. Quiet. It's Advent.*

We may be living Advent, experiencing everyday the "now and not yet" of the world, but still we need this reminder. So slow down. Be quiet. Calm yourself. You are about to feel the not-so-subtle urge of society to speed up. In countless different ways, the world will preach its noisy message of consumption, stimulation, and gratification.

But now is the time when God asks us to slow down and start asking ourselves tough questions: Is my life reflective of God's love and mercy? Am I following the way of Jesus in word and action? Do I put the eternal things ahead of the instantly satisfying ones?

As we grapple with the "not yet" of the world, may each of us set our hope on Christ, and boldly make our song: "Come, thou long expected Jesus."

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December 2009

	ADVENT CALENDAR	
	December 5	ST. PETER'S BAZAAR <i>Support this wonderful tradition</i>
	December 13	RI PHILHARMONIC COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA <i>A beautiful concert to lift your spirit</i>
	December 18	LAPLANTE CENTER CONCERT <i>Bask in the joy of these spirited singers</i>
	December 20	PARISH CAROLING AND TREE DECORATION <i>Spread some cheer and love to the sick and shut-ins</i>

Our St. Peter's Family

We celebrate with

- ☞ Ryan Cournoyer and Alyssa Jeschke, who were married on October 11.
- ☞ the families of Addison Rose DeVoe, Penelope Lane Duquette, Myles Harding, Jacqueline Danielle Lennon, Emma Rose McNamee, and Collin Robert Shadeck, who were all baptized on November 1.

We mourn with

- ☞ the family of Samuel Hoxsie, who died on September 23. Mr. Hoxsie is survived by his wife, Anne.

Christmas Decor

The church always looks its most beautiful at Christmas. Poinsettias, garland and wreaths seem to heighten the joy of the season. It is always appropriate to make a contribution toward the cost of these decorations in memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving for a blessing. Simply call the Church Office by Monday, December 14 to learn the suggested donations for the various adornments and provide the information about your gift. These thanksgivings and memorials will be printed in the Christmas bulletins.

The Season of Advent *Prepare Ye the Way*



The word "advent" comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming." Despite everything the world (and especially the mall) will try to tell you over the next few weeks, Christmas is not here. It is *coming*. Now,

of course God already came into the world a long time ago in the person of Jesus Christ, so in that sense, Christmas already happened. But each year we recall that miracle, the Incarnation, and we prepare for it with fresh hope.

This year you are invited to the observance of a holy Advent: slow down, take more time for quiet and contemplation, reflect upon your life, and prepare for the inbreaking of God's grace in your life. If you are looking for some events that may help draw you into the season, here are three:

Rhode Island Philharmonic Community Orchestra—A concert of gorgeous music by a gifted regional orchestra, including our own Jim Morgan, Katy Tetreault and Becky Johnson. Sunday, December 13 at 3:00 p.m.

Pre-School Christmas Service—This annual celebration by the children and families of our Pre-School happens on December 17 at 10:00 a.m. in the church.

LaPlante Center Concert—This is an annual tradition at St. Peter's, and one well worth an evening, as you have never heard Christmas carols and festive holiday music sung with such joy and heart. You will certainly walk away from the concert with a fresh spirit, renewed by the beautiful singing of these wonderful performers. Friday, December 18 at 7:00 p.m.

The St. Peter's Bazaar *Fun and Funds*



The St. Peter's Bazaar this year takes place on Saturday, December 5. This annual event offers a delightful assortment of items for sale, from gift baskets to used collectibles to decorative greenery to the textiles of Kay Dee designs. Not to mention that the food just seems to get better every year, so you'll want to come hungry. Best of all, the funds generated from the Bazaar go to support the life of St. Peter's in two important ways. First, a portion of the proceeds will be used for necessary building improvements to the Boss Pre-School Building. Second, proceeds will also go to help our youth as they embark on a pilgrimage in 2010, an important part of their formation and growth as Christian adults. So mark down December 5 on your calendar and remember to come by between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to support this important fundraiser.



Adopt a Family *Gifts of Love*

If all the boys and girls in your family are pretty much assured an abundance of gifts, perhaps this Christmas you will consider giving presents to children who would otherwise go without. This year St. Peter's is participating in the Adopt-a-Family program sponsored by the Jonnycake Center in Peace Dale, which will offer clothes and toys to several hundred boys and girls this Christmas. On December 6 and 13, you are invited to visit a table in the Parish Hall to pick up information about a local child for whom you may shop. Then you can either bring the wrapped toys or clothes back to St. Peter's by December 14, or drop them off at St. Francis Church in Wakefield by December 15. For more information, please contact Ruth Toolan at 294-9774 or Jennifer Nerbonne at 789-7451.

Deck the Halls *Caroling and Tree Decorating*

There's nothing quite as wonderful as the traditions of Christmas: singing carols, decorating a tree, and sharing yummy holiday goodies. Join us on Sunday, December 20, as we celebrate these traditions together as a church family. We will gather at 3:30 p.m. in the parking lot before setting out to two local nursing and rehabilitation centers to sing carols for some of our beloved seniors. After visits to Scallop Shell and South Bay Manor, we'll return to the church to decorate the Christmas tree and share in a festive party. Contact Patti Risica to sign up and let us know you're coming: 788-9012.



Cleaning the Church *Saturday, December 12*

The interior of the church will receive its annual cleaning on Saturday, December 12, beginning at 9:00 a.m. You are invited to lend a little "elbow grease" as we polish the brass, dust all the nooks and crannies, and oil the reredos and altar. This cleaning helps our church sparkle in time for Christmas. The effort is coordinated by Steve Lague, along with the Altar Guild, so call and let us know if you'll be able to make it: 783-4623.

Adult Forum during Advent *Preparing for Jesus*

During Advent Adult Forum will take a closer look at the cast of characters in Jesus' lineage. Read the gospels of Matthew or Luke and the first thing you'll read are genealogies, so who are these people, and why should we care? Does it matter who his ancestors were? Come and explore the stories of the Old Testament as they relate to the coming of the messiah into the world. Sundays in December, 9:00-10:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall.

Joy to the World

Three distinct services offer you an opportunity to worship the newborn King on Christmas.

At 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve a service of Holy Eucharist with a Children's Christmas Pageant will incorporate the joy and enthusiasm of our children in a delightful retelling of the story of Jesus' birth. Families with children are especially encouraged to attend, as children and youth will act, read, and play musical instruments. Call Mary Ellen Caniglia to sign up your child for the show: 789-4298.

Or come at 9:30 p.m. for a musical prelude and stay for the 10 o'clock service of Holy Eucharist. This will be a more traditional service, including incense, and bolstered by the addition of numerous musical instruments to enhance the atmosphere.

Or perhaps you prefer to wake up and join the hearty band of worshipers for a **Service of Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Day.**

However and whenever you choose to worship, we invite you to make St. Peter's a part of your celebration of Immanuel, "God with us."



And All Ate and Were Filled 2010 Stewardship Campaign

Hopefully you have given prayerful consideration to how you will support God's kingdom through the work of St. Peter's by-the-Sea in 2010 and returned your pledge card. If you have not already mailed in your pledge, the season of Advent is a good time to consider the blessings in your life, and how God asks you to offer back a portion of that in thanksgiving. Then see what you might be called to contribute to this wonderful parish church. We have much to do; will you help us get there?

*If you celebrated your 70th birthday before July 1 this year, and you have money invested in traditional IRA or Roth IRA, you can donate **tax-free** from your government-mandated IRA distribution directly to St. Peter's. The process takes a few days to complete, so don't wait until December 30 to take advantage of this method of charitable giving. To learn more or get the process started please call Treasurer Ann Rheault at 783-6007.*

Mission and Outreach Council What You Told Us

Recently the Mission and Outreach Council asked for your help in setting priorities for our outreach efforts. The Council would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to our questionnaire. Here's what you told us:

- ❖ Outreach efforts should be local (38%), statewide (24%), and international (14%)
- ❖ Parishioners most want to volunteer for the St. Peter's Food Pantry and Habitat for Humanity
- ❖ Parishioners most want to support financially the St. Peter's Food Pantry (20%) and Animal Rescue League of South County (15%)
- ❖ 45% of respondents would be interested in participating in a church sponsored Intergenerational Mission Trip.

To all those who expressed interest in volunteering at a charitable agency, your name will be given to the person heading that particular effort at St. Peter's so they will know of your willingness to be involved. Also, please take a look at weekly volunteer opportunities that are highlighted on the Outreach bulletin board next to the kitchen.