



*It is safe to tell the pure in heart
that they shall see God, for only
the pure in heart want to.*

... C. S. Lewis

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THE PRESS

DECEMBER, 2003

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Anticipation and expectation precede any big event. Our hearts yearn for the arrival of the occasion perhaps because we know that afterwards we will never be the same as before. And so we make our song “O Come, O Come Emmanuel!” not only in celebration of our Lord’s first advent, but in hope of his second advent. As we make our way to the manger and behold God made manifest in the child, we remember that God humbled himself and dwelt among us. Since that time our lives, indeed the life of the whole of creation, has never been the same.

Gifts given, and gifts received are means by which we too hope to mirror God’s gracious gift given to us in the babe lying in a manger. Our gifts on Christmas are means by which we hope other’s lives will be marked and changed in some very real and material way—altering them in some very small way to be different than before. Through God’s gift of himself, redemption, sanctification, and adoption was given to all of humanity; changing us into eternal beings with God. What could we have done to merit such a gift? How could we have ever achieved such a place in God’s sight? The answer is quite simple—we have done nothing to earn God’s gift. Yet through God’s love of us, as the apple of his eye, we have been made daughters and sons of the most high through Christ our Lord.

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The X-Press is the monthly newsletter of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church

We live in the in between times. Through the gift given at Bethlehem and the gift of Calvary, we have been made new. Yet we wait for the second coming of Christ, when the completion of God's reign will be consummated. Until that time we make our song, "O come, O come, Emmanuel!"

I wish you a blessed Advent and joyous Christmastide.

Your servant in Christ,

Scott+

St. Andrew's Children's Chapel - A Big Success!

On Sunday November 16th the Children's Chapel of St. Andrew's began with a bang!

Thanks to the yeoman's efforts of a team of committed adults, our church is now able to meet the worship needs of our children in a unique and faithful manner. Children's Chapel is open to all children between the ages of 3 up through third grade.

This is how it works: Immediately following Sunday school, Chapel aged children remain in the parish hall for the first half of the Sunday liturgy (The Liturgy of the Word). While in Chapel, their service mimics the adult service yet in kid friendly ways and language. They too gather in song and pray to God. They too hear the Gospel appointed for the day in kid language and have time to engaged the Word of God in a delightfully uplifting way. Upon notification from the ushers (during the Nicene Creed) the kids join with their families at the Peace for Holy Communion.

We are so pleased to be able to offer this to all our families with young children. If you think your child would enjoy Children's Chapel, please make plans to attend any Sunday.

The Choir of St. Andrew's to go Caroling at the Littleton Life Center

Each Sunday we are afforded the blessing of the many talented voices of the St. Andrew's choir. Under the capable and talented leadership of Judy Adams, they give the gift of their time and talent. But their offering is not for us alone. This year the St. Andrew's Choir will go caroling at the Littleton Life Center. On Thursday December 11th the choir extends and offers it musical ministry to the residents of the Life Care Center. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful ministry please let Judy Adams or Fr. Scott know.

Vestry Nominees Needed

Are you hiding your light under a bushel? Do you have great ideas you want to share but don't know who to tell? Then consider the ministry of serving on the vestry the answer to your prayers. We are calling all those interested in the exciting field of Church leadership. This year St. Andrew's vestry will have six openings this year. If you would like to help out please let Fr. Scott know.

Editor's Note:

Next Issue: January 2004

Deadline: Saturday, December 20th

Send submissions to: acahill@hybricon.com

Or, drop off your submissions at the Church Office during office hours or in the Peabody Room on Sundays.

Questions? Please call me at:

H: (978) 448-4053

W: (978) 772-5422 x 323

*Be sure to include your name and telephone number on **all** submissions!*

Advent Wreath Making Party

On Sunday November 30th, the first Sunday of Advent, we will have a wreath making party in the parish hall. Due to this occasion we will not have Sunday School on this day. Everyone is invited to join in the festivities beginning at 9:30 on the first Sunday of Advent and the New Year of the church. Coffee, juice and other refreshments will be available as well as all the greenery and other paraphernalia needed for your home Advent wreath. Please make plans to join us in the Parish Hall at 9:30 on the first Sunday of Advent.

The Second Annual "In a Manger" Event

With the success of last years offering, this year promises to be even bigger. Under the wonderful leadership of Carolyn Smith, St. Andrew's will host once again "In a Manger." Everyone is invited to bring his or her Creche scene and contribute to the event.

In a Manger is scheduled for Saturday December 13th. Last year we had Creche scenes from as far away as China and Africa and from as close by as Ayer, MA. Please join us for the wonderful event in the life and ministry of St. Andrew's.

If you would like to help please contact Carolyn Smith at 978-448-3264.

What would the dimensions of the manger have been?

The manger would have been three-dimensional.

It was God's packaging for God's gift to this world of space and time.

That manger is huge. It had to be a commodious crib because it was a crowded crib. It was crowded not only in the misread words of an unskillful reader of the Lucan text who would seem to infer that the manger held three occupants—Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in the manger.

It embraced much more. That three-dimensional feeding trough held (but never could contain) the true and triune God.

Its down-to-earth and clear symbolism gives us something to chew on. It tells us that Jesus is the nourishment of the world.

Therefore the manger is a potent expression of God's power, particularity, and potentiality.

The manger of Bethlehem cradles the King.



The Feast of the Nativity Service Times

Once again the Church prepares to celebrate The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord. St. Andrew's will offer three separate services beginning on Christmas Eve. Invite your friends and family and make plans to join us as we celebrate this very holy and festive Day.

Christmas Eve

5:00 pm—Festal Eucharist with the blessing of the Creche and Children's pageant

11:00 pm—Festal Choral Eucharist (with incense)

Christmas Day

10:30—Holy Eucharist Rite I

The First Sunday of Christmas

8:00—Holy Eucharist Rite I

10:30—Christmas Lessons and Carols with Holy Eucharist

Special Celebration of our Patron Saint

All are invited to join in the special celebration of St. Andrew's Day on Wednesday December 3rd. As most St. Andrew's parishioners know, St. Andrew's Day doesn't fall on December 3rd but rather, on November 30th. However, because November 30th is the first Sunday of Advent, we are permitted to transfer the feast to the next convenient day in the following week. Our Celebration will begin with a Pot Luck Supper at 6:00 pm followed by Festival Eucharist at 7:00 pm. We will have a special musical treat with our guest Organist Robin Dinda. If you can help with the service as a lector, acolyte or usher, or with bringing food, please contact the parish office to inform Judy or me.

Please make plans to join us at 6:00 on December 3rd for this joyous occasion.

Stewardship Update

As the year draws to a close the Stewardship Commission would like to share with you the current state of our "Estimate of Giving" for 2003.

As a Parish we have chosen to support the work of the Church with an estimated \$129,166 for the ten months to the end of October 2003. The actual amount of pledges received for that time was \$119,137, a difference of \$10,029 (or 7.7%). This shortfall has been reducing over the most recent months but is still a concern for the Parish. The \$26,000 deficit budget passed by the Parish for 2003 was based on the estimate of giving being fulfilled. If the current shortfall is carried to the end of 2003, the deficit will reach over \$35,000. This situation cannot be sustained into 2004.

On a very positive note, the pledges received for the month of October were above that estimated. If we continue to prayerfully consider the needs of the Parish as 2003 comes to an end we can stay on track for the year. As the Vestry considers the options for the long range vision of St. Andrews, a solid financial situation is the key to any plan.

As part of our efforts to reduce the deficit for 2003, the Stewardship commission has launched the "One Additional Week" campaign. Parishioners are being asked to go over and above the amount pledged by the amount of one additional week. Colored envelopes are available in the back of the church and can be put into the alms basin or mailed to the church office.

Thank you all for your continued prayerful support,
The Stewardship Commission

Christmas Acolyte Rehearsal and Pizza Party

In preparation for the High Holy Day of Christmas, all acolytes who will be serving at both the 5:00 Service and the 11:00 service are encouraged and invited to attend a rehearsal on Sunday December 21st at 5:00 pm. We will begin with a rehearsal in the Church and then gather in the Parish Hall for a pizza dinner. If you are scheduled to be an acolyte on Christmas Eve, please make plans to join us for the rehearsal on Sunday December 21st at 5:00.

Many Thanks!

Our 30th Annual Christmas Craft Fair Day was a great success! Thanks to each and everyone who contributed time, talent, treasure, and treasures, energy, and endurance. Over forty parishioners worked at various times, setting up tables and food preparation on Friday, tending various tables on Saturday, and staying through the day until clean-up was complete. Just about every member of St. Andrew's contributed in some way. The baked goods table was abundantly supplied. The kitchen was well stocked with sandwiches and stew. A room downstairs was filled with 'great stuff'. Our auction, crafts, and raffle tables received generous donations also! The Outreach Commission table was a new addition – selling beautiful wood carving by the Siwok Indians in Argentina – and had a complete sell-out! The impressive total realized for the Fair was close to \$4000!

Thanks to the Fair Committee and chair people who, despite a late start, took on their responsibilities and carried through, and finished with a fun and successful day for St. Andrew's and our communities.

REQUEST: Please look through your Christmas ornaments and put the ones you no longer want aside. After the holidays, bring them to the Parish Hall marked "Fair '04"
Many thanks, The Fair Ones

Ecumenical Advent Lessons & Carols

Once again this year The Federated Church of Ayer is delighted to extend an invitation to all to join in their Advent Lessons and Carols service. The Federated Church, in conjunction with the Ayer Area Churches, will host this year's Ecumenical service. The service will be held Saturday December 13th at 7:00 pm. Please make plans to come and join in the Ecumenical service, supporting our common life of faith here in Ayer.



Readings for December

Sunday, December 7 – The Second Sunday of Advent

First Lesson: Baruch 5: 1-9

The first reading is from the book of Baruch, a book included in the Apocrypha by Anglicans. It comes from the century before Christ and reflects older prophetic writings concerning the coming of God to establish the kingdom.

Second Lesson: Philippians 1:1-11

The second reading is from Paul's letter to the Philippians. In greeting this congregation Paul speaks of his affection for them and of his imprisonment.

The Gospel: Luke 3: 1-6

Today is the first of the two Advent Sundays on which John the Baptist is the central figure. This dynamic prophet marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

Sunday, December 14 – The Third Sunday of Advent

First Lesson: Zephaniah 3: 14-20

This message is given first in Zephaniah's announcement of "the Day of the Lord," when God will come to draw all people into a saving and life-giving community.

Second Lesson: Philippians 4: 4-7, (8-9)

For Paul and the church in Philippi, the Lord has indeed come in Jesus' death and resurrection.

The Gospel: Luke 3: 7-18

In our reading, the major themes of biblical, prophetic religion come together, deepening the preparation of God's faithful people for the approaching

Christmas festival.

Sunday, December 21 – The Fourth Sunday of Advent

First Lesson: Micah 5: 2-4

The first reading deals with the Messiah's human origins. The importance of this prophecy from the book of Micah is that, with the Messiah, as with all people, greatness comes from God rather than from human sources.

Second Lesson: Hebrews 10: 5-10

It was as an obedient human being that Jesus made the willing offering of himself for our salvation, says the author of the Letter to the Hebrews.

The Gospel: Luke 1: 39-49, (50-56)

The theme of the Fourth Sunday of Advent is the role of the Virgin Mary in the events which brought about our salvation.

Sunday, December 28 – The First Sunday after Christmas Day

First Lesson: Isaiah 61: 10 – 62: 3

The first reading today promises the re-establishment of God's people in his kingdom.

Second Lesson: Galatians 3: 23-25, 4: 4-7

The reading from Paul's letter to the Galatians is a portion of Paul's proclamation that in the new covenant our relationship to God is based on faith rather than obedience to the Law.

The Gospel: John 1: 1-18

On this first Sunday after Christmas, our attention is directed by the

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Christian Formation Calendar for 2003-04

November

2nd – All Saints' Sunday with reception

7th-8th – Diocesan Convention

15th – Christmas Fair

Angel Tree

Loaves and Fishes

Thanksgiving Distribution

Thanksgiving Dinner at New Hope Baptist

Ecumenical Thanksgiving service

29th – Advent Quiet Day

30th – Advent Wreath making and 1st Sunday of Advent

December

Advent Evensong and potluck

Christmas pageant

13th – "In a Manger" crèche displays

24th – Christmas Eve services

25th – Christmas Day service

January

11th – The Epiphany

Annual reports due

February

1st – Annual Meeting

21st – Lenten Quiet Day

Vestry Retreat

24th – Shrove Tuesday

25th – Ash Wednesday

28th – Retreat for May 1st Confirmation

29th – Bishop Shaw's Visit and Baptism

March

3rd – first Lenten supper and program (also 3/10, 3/17, 3/24, 3/31)

Lenten Evensong and Potluck

7th – Acolyte Festival (4:00 p.m. at the Cathedral)

April

4th – Palm/Passion Sunday

5th – 10th – Holy Week

11th – Easter – the Sunday of the Resurrection

May

1st – Concord River Deanery Confirmation at St. Andrew's, Framingham

20th – Ascension Day

30th – Pentecost

June

6th – Trinity Sunday – last day of Sunday School

July

Parish Picnic

St. Andrew's Godly Play News—December 2003

December 2003 Schedule of Stories and Wondering Questions

<u>Date</u>	<u>Pre-school – K</u>	<u>1st—3rd</u>
Dec. 7	Advent II	Advent II
Dec. 14	Advent III	Advent III
Dec. 21	Advent IV; Christmas	Advent IV; Christmas
Dec. 28	Christmas— <i>No church school</i>	Christmas— <i>No church school</i>
Jan. 4	Parable of the Good Shepherd	Parable of the Good Shepherd
Jan. 11	Parable of the Great Pearl	Parable of the Great Pearl

Advent II and Advent III

These lessons help the children anticipate the mystery of Christmas. In Advent II, we focus on the Holy Family, and their journey to Bethlehem. In Advent III, we remember the shepherds keeping watch over their sheep, and the angels who said, "Peace on earth and good will to everyone. A Child is born. Go. Hurry. Run to Bethlehem to see the child who will change everything."

Advent IV and Christmas

Still preparing, we move toward Bethlehem, guided by the prophets, with the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi. In Advent IV we focus on the Magi, the wise men. And then, we finally come to the mystery of Christmas, the Christ Child, the one we have been waiting for!

Parable of the Good Shepherd (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:1-7; also Psalm 23 and John 10)

Sometimes it is hard to go inside a parable. We have to be ready. In this parable the good shepherd searches for the lost sheep. This parable is more of an identify statement of Jesus than a parable, and is connected to the "I am" statements in John's gospel.

I wonder if these sheep have names? I wonder if the sheep are happy inside this

place? I wonder where this place could really be? I wonder if you have ever come close to such a place? I wonder if you have ever found the good grass? I wonder if you have ever had the cool, clear, fresh water touch you? I wonder if you ever had to go through a place of danger? I wonder how you got through? I wonder if you have ever been lost? I wonder if you have ever been found? I wonder if the Good Shepherd has ever called your name?

Parable of the Great Pearl (Matthew 13:45)
Parables are like presents, presents that were given to you even before you were born. In this parable we remember Jesus' words "The kingdom of heaven is like when a person who buys and sells fine pearls, goes to search for the great pearl. And when he finds it, he exchanges everything he has for it."

I wonder if the person was happy with the great pearl? I wonder what the merchant is going to do now? I wonder why the seller was willing to give up something so precious? I wonder if the seller was happy with all his things? I wonder if the seller has a name? I wonder if the merchant has a name? I wonder what the great pearl could really be? I wonder what could be so precious that a person would exchange everything for it? I wonder where this whole place could really be?

Christmas Giving Tree

Each year we at St. Andrew's have had a Christmas Tree in the Peabody Room with names of people who need to be remembered. We are asked to pick a tag from the tree and on it we will find a name and suggested gift. The gifts are returned to the Peabody Room and then distributed in time for Christmas. The tree will be up by November 30 and the gifts should be wrapped and returned no later than December 14.

This year we will be giving gifts to children from a large Episcopal Church in inner-city Lawrence. The church has a well attended after school homework program for children of all faiths and backgrounds, and Father Ennis, the rector, is very grateful to have us support him in this way. The tags for this project will be RED.

We will also have names of people in Worcester who were formerly helped by the Crossroads Ministry run by Joe and Eartha Harris. Joe and Eartha have given us names of children from that area who still need any help they can receive. Their tags will be GREEN.

We hope that all the tags will disappear quickly, and that the tree will soon be piled high with gifts! This is such a great way to think about Christmas and to get into the real spirit of what Christ would have us do. Merry Christmas to All!

Advent Quiet Day to be Held November 29th

After the success of our Lenten Quiet Day, many asked about holding a quiet day in preparation of Advent. This year we will do just such a thing. The format will be very similar to our Lenten Quiet Day with meditations, a common meal, and of course, silence. A skeletal outline of the day is as follows: We will begin at 9:30 in the Church with Morning Prayer followed by interspersed meditations and silence, Noon Day Prayer and then lunch followed by meditations and more silence with the day culminating in Eucharist and closing at 4:30 PM. If you are interested in participating in the Advent Quiet Day please contact the Church Office to sign up. Also, if you would like to help with food for the day (please nothing elaborate—just a simple soup and some bread will suffice) please contact the church office. All are welcome and invited to participate as we prepare for our journey to the manger and await the advent of Christ.

December 2003

St. Andrew's Church

Tel: (978) 772-2615
 Office Hours: Monday 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
 Tu - Fri 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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