

# The Beacon

*In thy light shall we see light.*  
*Psalm 36:9*

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## December 2024

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### It Is Advent

*by the Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt*

It feels nearly impossible to slow down this time of year, which might be why friends tease me about the Advent phrase, borrowed from a *Forward Movement* publication, that I tend to overuse every December: “Slow Down. Quiet. It’s Advent.” Still, in the midst of all your busyness, I do encourage you to create time each day to be mindful of the season. Christmas-related commitments cause us to rush around, I know. Also, I believe we are eager to move through this period of waiting and get to that which we expectantly hope for rather than dwelling in the in-between. In that way, Advent is a liminal season, a little uncomfortable yet full of potential.

The term “liminality” was coined by Arnold van Gennap in 1909 to describe a transition stage in life when a person is not quite where they once were, but has not quite reached the place they are going. Later, others expanded on this idea and identified liminal times as opportunities for transformation. Celtic culture speaks of “thin places” where the boundary between the material world and the divine feels particularly thin. The ordinary and sacred so close that we might pass from one to the other. The spiritual presence so deep that we feel unmistakably in the presence of God—awestruck or even disquieted.

The word “advent” is derived from a Latin word that means “coming,” and we understand it to be the time during which we prepare for Christmas, the birth or coming of Jesus. Also, we are preparing for Jesus’ coming again. In the resource “Daily Prayer for all Seasons,” the introduction to the section about Advent notes, “It is important to remember that Advent is not just a season in which we recall an event of the past—Jesus’ birth—but also a time in which we look to the present and the future.... When will we see the kingdom of God on earth, as it is in heaven? Of course no one knows. And so the more important questions are: What can we do as the Church, Christ’s body here on earth, to welcome God’s reign of justice and peace today? What can we do as individuals to reorder our lives in the light of God’s love?” Timely questions that might help direct our Advent journey. Our liminal longings.

The First Sunday of Advent is December 1. The liturgical color will change from green to blue. The lectionary year will shift from Year B to Year C, which means our gospel readings will be taken largely from

the Gospel According to Luke. The Advent wreath will be present in the barn and church, the Prayers of the People will take on new themes. Midweek programming will offer the opportunity to serve, contemplate, and celebrate. Our annual service of Advent Lessons and Carols will carry us through the stories of the season, told through music, scripture, and prayer. In the pages that follow you will find details about these things and all we are doing here at St. Peter's during Advent and into Christmas. Please read them with care as you discern ways in which you wish to be involved and how you might invite others to join you. May our preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth include equipping ourselves to be bearers of Christ's light into the lives and places where it is most needed.

## **Advent Agenda**

### **Advent Lessons and Carols**

**Sunday, December 8, 4:00 p.m., barn**

You will not want to miss this beautiful candlelit service, an adaptation of a medieval Christmas vigil service from the time of King Henry VII. Lessons & Carols in the Anglican tradition began in 1878 and were formalized as a Christmas service in 1880 by the Bishop of Truro, later Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward Benson. An Advent version of the service—normally carried out as a procession with lessons and carols—developed slightly later at King's College, Cambridge, and is now celebrated around the world.

During the service, Scriptural readings are interspersed with choral presentations and hymns, all of which recall humanity's longing for liberation from sin and death, and our hope and expectation for both the first and second comings of Christ the Lord. The service is intended as preparation for the Christmas season and seeks to nurture anticipation in each of us.

Join the combined choirs of St. Peter's in the barn on Sunday, December 8, at 4:00 p.m. for this peaceful and joy-filled service, featuring music of composers Bruckner, Howells, and Gjeilo.

Light refreshments will be served afterwards. This is a wonderful time to bring a friend. All are welcome, always.

### **Advent Weekday Evening Offerings**

#### **Service Project and Pizza Dinner**

**Wednesday, December 4, 6-7:30 p.m. parish hall, historic church**

Let's begin our Advent journey by doing something for others. Join our deacon, the Reverend Jeff Moretzsohn, in an act of kindness and share conversation over a pizza dinner. To assist with planning, please sign up using the link in "Keynotes" or a sign-up sheet in one of the gathering spaces.

**Comfort, Comfort Ye My People—Advent Contemplation**  
**Wednesday, December 11, 6-7:30 p.m., historic church**

In the midst of a bustling holiday season, it can be challenging to find the space to be still. This quiet evening will be an opportunity to slow down, breathe, and prepare your heart. The church will be lit with candles. We will begin with prayer, end with Compline, and exit in silence. Experience the sacredness of collective, quiet prayer. Light refreshments will be available. For more information, contact Abigail at 610-644-2261 or [abigail@stpetersgv.org](mailto:abigail@stpetersgv.org). If you plan to attend, please sign up using the link in “Keynotes” or a sign-up sheet in one of the gathering spaces.

**Supper and Caroling**  
**Thursday, December 19, 6-7:30 p.m., parish hall, historic church**

Enjoy a warming dinner of chili, cornbread, salad, and cookies. Our organist/choir director Steven Patchel will take to the piano and lead us in singing Christmas favorites. This is a perfect opportunity to bring a friend to St. Peter’s for holiday fun! To assist with planning, please sign up using the link in “Keynotes” or a sign-up sheet in one of the gathering spaces.

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**Christmas and Christmas Eve Services**

**Tuesday, December 24**

4:00 p.m.  
8:30 p.m.  
9:00 p.m.

*Christmas Eve*

Pageant and Family Christmas Eucharist, bank barn  
Choral Prelude, historic church  
Festal Eucharist, historic church

**Wednesday, December 25**

10:00 a.m.

*Christmas Day*

Holy Eucharist, historic church

**Sunday, December 29**

8:00 a.m.  
10:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist, Rite 1, historic church  
Holy Eucharist, Rite 2, historic church

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**Christmas Flowers**

Christmas memorials are a wonderful way to remember loved ones or to celebrate family milestones (weddings, births, anniversaries). Your gift “In thanksgiving for” or “In memory of” will be listed in the Christmas service leaflets. The minimum contribution suggested is \$30.00. Order forms are available in the Sunday leaflets or the parish office. Please make checks payable to St. Peter’s Church with “Christmas

Memorials” in the memo and send them in or place them in the offering plate by **Monday, December 16**. Please be sure to include the names of the people you wish to honor or remember. Thank you!

### The Gifting Tree

There is no better way to show we are “blessed to be blessed” than to support children who are not as fortunate as we are through St. Peter’s annual Gifting Tree! Your generosity will help children served by Darby Mission, the Community Youth and Women’s Alliance, and Church Housing residents to experience God’s love and a merrier Christmas. The trees have arrived in both gathering spaces, decorated with gift tags with specific wishes to guide your shopping. When you return your gifts to St. Peter’s, please include the gift tag ornament, which also shows the timing and delivery method for your gifts. **You have until December 8 to complete shopping!** If you have questions, please contact Brenda Grove.

### October Financial Snapshot

	Month of June	October Year to Date	Forecast (year-end)	Budget (2024)
Parishioner Contributions	40,461	397,542	495,035	494,526
*Other Income	3,723	95,518	128,175	137,615
Total Income	44,184	493,060	623,210	632,141
Total Expense	49,319	513,447	630,085	632,128
Surplus/(Deficit)	(-5,136)	(-20,387)	(-6,875)	13
<i>*Other Income: Interest, Rental, Endowment Distributions</i>				

### Thank You from the Vestry

- Adult Forum speakers: Seretha Curry for discussing themes of God’s power and God’s kingdom in the Book of Daniel; Abigail Nestlehutt, Jeff Moretzsohn, and the delegates to diocesan convention for describing what took place at the convention; Joe Herbst, Eric Lien, and Paige Infortuna for presenting information on the state of parish funding, pledges, and plans.
- Brenda Grove and Gail Guthridge for coordinating the coat/warm clothing drive, and to all parishioners who contributed coats, socks, gloves, etc. for kids and adults in Coatesville.
- The choir and Steven Patchel for Evensong, and Pattye Benson and Alison Utech for their support of food afterwards.
- All parishioners who decorated their cars for the Trunk or Treat celebration.
- Donna Fabius and Gail Guthridge for leading the St. Peter’s auxiliary 5K Husky Hustle for St. James School.
- Laurel Veitch for organizing the Painting with a Twist event for Women on the Hill.

- Tracey Patches for leading the work, and for all of the food ministry volunteers who helped to serve Thanksgiving feasts for residents of local Church Housing facilities.
  - Tim Hepp, Roger Tellefsen, and Heidi Fowler for representing St. Peter's at the Brandywine Deanery Convention and reporting what they learned there to the parish.
  - Tim Hepp, Melissa Shaner, Shannon Mannon, Heidi Fowler, Don Cheetham, and Abigail Nestlehutt for representing St. Peter's and affirming churches of the Brandywine Deanery at People's Light's "From Seed to Blossom: Supporting Queer and Trans Youth" event by attending, organizing, staffing the table, and making connections.
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## **Barn Kitchen Project Q&A**

By Becky Dempsey and Michael Smith, assisted by Paige Infortuna

### **What is the barn kitchen project?**

Glad you asked! The barn kitchen construction project will take the space in the barn designated for a kitchen when the building was raised and turn it into two rooms. One room will be a kitchen. The other room will be set aside for chair storage. The project includes enhancing HVAC, building a wall between the two rooms, installing a door from the chair storage room into the sanctuary, wiring, and installing of drains. The project does include all the appliances and equipment needed to operate the kitchen; however, it was priced in two phases (phase 1 – everything required to be certified and operational, phase 2 – cold storage and dishwashing).

### **Why are we paying for HVAC if it already exists in the barn?**

The HVAC in the barn does not include the kitchen space at the back of the barn or the choir room below. Installation of HVAC for these areas will make it possible to cook and sing in comfort. It will also protect the substantial collection of sheet music stored in the choir room from mold and mildew damage. While not part of the original scope of the project, completing HVAC for the choir room makes sense while we are doing construction.

### **Are there funds available to pay for appliances and equipment needed for the new kitchen?**

We raised just enough to cover the cost of the barn kitchen construction contract in the fundraising campaign (yay!). There is a small contingency fund built into the scope of work. Parishioners will have the opportunity to contribute to the cost of smaller equipment to outfit the kitchen at a later point.

### **How will the kitchen be used when it is completed?**

The kitchen will open up new ministry possibilities and also will be used for parish events like the Barn Dance, a reimagined Colonial Festival, and fellowship offerings. Food for events can be prepared in the kitchen to serve dinner downstairs or at another location on the church grounds. We'll be able to cook/heat food, keep cold foods cold, and plate food before serving.

The kitchen will also be used to prepare food for our neighbors. We will be able to cook/freeze food for delivery to places like Alianzas and CYWA, which serve meals to local families in need. We will be able to come together to make cookies and breads for the Welcome Table at St. James School. We will be able to cook and serve meals in the barn for people nearby as well. We can work to expand our community by asking volunteers from outside St. Peter's to join us in our efforts.

We will be able to hold fundraisers like spaghetti dinners put on by the youth to support mission trips or a craft fair with food to raise money for outreach projects.

If you have other ideas, please let us know! The vestry would love to hear from you.

**Wouldn't it be easier to just keep making food at home and bringing it in or taking it to a food ministry site?**

People who have been making food at home for the food ministry have been doing God's work for years. The barn kitchen project will make these efforts even more fun and productive. Do you remember how much fun it is to make cookies with your family or prepare a meal together with your friends? The barn kitchen project will allow us to cook together, bringing us closer together and creating a sense of community with each other and those around us. The barn kitchen will allow us to cook and freeze food in greater quantities at one time. The barn kitchen will also be a certified kitchen, to ensure our efforts aren't shut down by the health department as they have been in other churches.

**Why does the barn kitchen project cost so much?**

Good question! When planning for this project began, we hoped to do it for less than half the current cost. It is certainly true this project would have cost less if it had been completed when the barn was originally built. The project committee and the vestry looked at various options with cost as a major consideration before a contract for the work was signed. The contract that was signed is the best deal that could be found.

**When will the project start and how long will it last?**

The project is scheduled to start in January 2025 and is estimated to take about two months. Given that it is a construction project, it is likely to take longer.

**Will we be able to use the barn for church services while the project is ongoing?**

Yes! The project will be confined to the kitchen area and the choir room below. The chairs will be moved into the sanctuary while the project is ongoing. The choir will move into the room closest to the youth room in the basement for the duration.

**Will all the chairs fit back into the space next to the kitchen when the project is over?**

Almost! The chairs regularly used for worship will fit back into the chair storage area. The extra chairs needed for the big services like Easter and Christmas won't. The vestry is looking at purchasing lighter, more stackable chairs, much like cathedrals such as Westminster Abbey and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine use. These chairs will be easier to set up and break down in our flexible space. None of the donation plaques will be discarded.

## What if I have more questions?

Just ask a member of the vestry or the kitchen committee and we'll be happy to answer any questions you may have. We will continue to update you as the project moves along.

*Thank you to all who have made a commitment to this project. We are most grateful! If you would like to make a contribution, there is still time. You can do this by contacting [Paige.infortuna@msn.com](mailto:Paige.infortuna@msn.com) or through Realm.*

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## Christian Formation

### Setting Time Apart

By Seretha Curry

Every year, I think this will be the year I savor Advent, and time doesn't whiz by so fast that I blink and it's Christmas. I'm not sure things will be different this year, but I can hope. I was thinking about how I can make room for a deeper experience of preparation for Christmas and Jesus' birth, and I thought I would share some of my ideas:

- Listening to, watching, or reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. (This is a mega-Advent story: 100 years of winter with no Christmas in sight?);
- Using an Advent Calendar like these,
  - [Advent Calendar for Adults](#),
  - [Advent Calendar for Kids](#);
- Leaning into the spiritual discipline of simplicity,
  - Consider this article: [A Season of Simplicity](#)
  - Or take this deeper dive into the discipline: [Simplicity: A Practical Guide](#).

### Hope and Justice for an Unjust World

by Seretha Curry

In Luke's Gospel story of Jesus' presentation at the temple, readers encounter Anna the prophet, an elderly woman waiting all her life for a manifestation of the justice and salvation of God. Throughout her life, the Jewish people had been dominated and suppressed by an imperial foreign power that left them vulnerable to everyday violence, constant indignity, and economic oppression. In the child Jesus, she saw the salvation of God: "And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem."

As the body of Christ in the world, we are called to have the same hope as Anna and to proclaim this promise to the world—so all might find hope in the living God. How are we to do this? How do we grow in ways that challenge both the hopelessness and the injustice of today's world?

Some resources to consider that might help in your journey toward hope and justice:

- [November Adult Forum on Christian Nationalism](#)
- [November Adult Forum on Daniel and Empire](#)
- [The Crisis of Christian Nationalism](#) - Report from the House of Bishops Theology Committee
- [Faithful Resilience Collection](#)

In my experience, it is a combination of things—study, prayer, service, worship, self-examination, repentance, giving, and, most of all, courageous acts of love—that gives us the strength, clarity, and conviction to live and act as Jesus would have us live amidst the trials and even the evils of everyday life. We never know the future and rarely sense what will be required of us. But each day we can take a step to grow in love, faithful service, and compassion for the people among us with the greatest need. What is one thing you will do over the next month to strengthen yourself in God?

## Adult Forum

### Sunday Adult Formation Offerings for Advent

10:15 a.m. in downstairs barn classroom\*

Take a moment to slow down amidst the bustle of December and immerse yourself in the Christmas story. On three successive Sundays, we will spend time in silent contemplation of a work of art relevant to the season, then discuss what each representation of the event evokes. Everyone is welcome.

- December 8: The Annunciation
- December 15: The Nativity
- December 22: Epiphany

\*during Pageant rehearsals in the sanctuary.

## Youth and Children's Ministries

### It's Pageant Time!

The Christmas Pageant will be on December 24 at the 4 p.m. Family Eucharist. The pageant is a short production that takes the place of the Gospel reading in the worship service. Practices begin in early Advent. Please contact Seretha Curry ([slcurry@stpetersgv.org](mailto:slcurry@stpetersgv.org)) for more information.

Date and Time	Location	Activity
Sunday, December 8 after the 9 a.m. service	The barn worship space	Read over script and find costumes
Sunday, December 15 after the 9 a.m. service	The barn worship space	Practice!
Thursday, December 19 at 5 p.m.	The barn worship space	Final rehearsal (dress rehearsal without costumes)



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## December Events

### Christmas Concert

**Saturday, December 7, 3:00–6:00 p.m., Bank Barn**

A local event producer will be using our barn space to showcase four highly acclaimed, award-winning singer/songwriters and help welcome in the holiday season with an afternoon of festive, heartwarming music. A contribution will be made to St. Peter's outreach programs. There is no charge for tickets, but reservations are required, and there will be a free will offering to support programs in our community.

### Popcorn Theology: *The Sixth Sense* (1999)

Join us **Monday, December 9 at 6 p.m.** for the third film in our "Philly's Best Movies" film series. Starring Bruce Willis, Toni Collette, and Haley Joel Osment, *The Sixth Sense* is a timeless, terrifying, and touching film by Chester County resident M. Night Shyamalan, set and filmed in Philadelphia. Simply watch the film on your favorite streaming service or by DVD and then join the meeting via Zoom to discuss its moral, ethical, spiritual, and cinematic aspects. The Zoom link will be sent via "Keynotes" on Sunday, December 8. For more information, contact Mark Nestlehutt ([mark.nestlehutt@gmail.com](mailto:mark.nestlehutt@gmail.com)) or Steve Ockenden ([steveock@verizon.net](mailto:steveock@verizon.net)). All are welcome.

### Save the Date for the Chester Children's Chorus Winter Wonderland

Experience a Winter Wonderland like never before with the Chester Children's Chorus! More than 110 children will perform Stevie Wonder's greatest hits on December 14 at 7 p.m. and 15 at 4 p.m. at Swarthmore College's Lang Music Building.

Admission is free. Seating is limited and on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Longwood Gardens Christmas Music

Steven Patchel will be playing Christmas music in the Ballroom at Longwood Gardens on the evenings of December 15 and 22, then again on January 3 and 11. These concerts are included with Gardens admission. Please speak with him if you are interested in more details.

## January Book Club

Join us to read the *Chronicles of a Radical Hag*, a reflection of 50 years of writing at a small town newspaper. We will meet for discussion on January 20 by Zoom.

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## Communications Corner

Do you have information that needs to be distributed to the St. Peter's community? Please see the information below to make sure your information goes to the right place. And remember, sending the information to one publication **does not constitute** sending it to all. You should be specific about where your information needs to go.

Publication / Platform	Deadline	Send to
"Keynotes"	End of Day, Tuesday prior	Parish Administrator (parishadministrator@stpetersgv.org)
Sunday Leaflet	End of Day, Tuesday prior	Parish Administrator (parishadministrator@stpetersgv.org)
<i>Beacon</i>	End of Day, 21 <sup>st</sup> of the previous month	<i>Beacon</i> general editor (beacon@stpetersgv.org)
Announcement*(during Sunday services)	With "Keynotes", see above	---

*\*All announcements for Sunday morning should be submitted to the Sunday Leaflet by the end of day on the Tuesday prior. To request your announcement be highlighted by the presider, include that request with the leaflet. Clergy will make the announcements during the services.*

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## December Dates

### **December 4**

Service Project and Pizza Dinner, 6-7:30 p.m.  
(parish hall)

### **December 7**

Needlework 10 a.m.  
Christmas Concert 3 p.m.

### **December 8**

Advent Lessons and Carols  
4 p.m. (barn)

### **December 9**

Popcorn Theology  
6 p.m. (Zoom)

### **December 11**

Advent Contemplation,  
6-7:30 p.m. (historic church)

### **December 14 and 15**

CCC Winter Wonderland  
December 14 at 7 p.m. and 15 at 4 p.m.

### **December 19**

Pageant Rehearsal, 5 p.m. (barn)  
Supper and Caroling, 6-7:30 p.m. (parish hall)

### **December 24**

#### **Christmas Eve**

Family Eucharist and Christmas Pageant  
4 p.m. (barn)  
Festal Christmas Eucharist with musical prelude  
9 p.m. (historic church); music begins at 8:30 p.m.

### **December 25**

#### **Christmas Day**

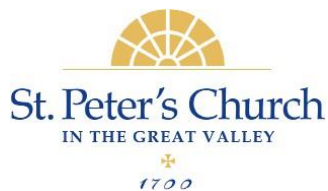
Christmas Eucharist  
10 a.m. (historic church)

### **December 29**

Services at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

### **January 5**

Combined service with King Cake, 10 a.m.;  
Epiphany Lessons and Carols, 4 p.m.



St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley  
2475 St. Peter's Road, Malvern, PA 19355  
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Web site: [www.stpetersgv.org](http://www.stpetersgv.org)

The Rev. Abigail Crozier Nestlehutt, Rector  
The Rev. Jeff Moretzsohn, Deacon  
Steven Patchel, Organist/Choirmaster  
Seretha Curry, Assistant for Christian Formation  
Rachel Martin Swartz, Parish Administrator  
Erinn White, Preschool Director  
Gail Malcolm, Event Coordinator  
Mario Delano, Weekend Facilities Manager

January  
Beacon will be  
abbreviated,  
more to come

***Our Mission:***

*by the power of the Holy Spirit, to nurture people of all ages in the knowledge and love of God in Jesus Christ, and to make Him known in the wider community*

***Weekly Offerings at St. Peter's***

***Sunday***

8:00 AM *Holy Eucharist, Rite I\**  
9:00 AM *Family Eucharist\*\**  
*Sunday School\*\**  
10:20 AM *Christian Formation\*\**  
11:15 AM *Holy Eucharist, Rite II\*\**

***First Sunday***

10:00 AM *Holy Eucharist, Rite II\*\**  
*Fellowship follows all services*

***Wednesday***

10:00 AM *Morning Prayer & Bible Study\*\*\**

***Thursday***

10:30 AM *Intercessory Prayer Group\*\*\**  
7:15 PM *Compline\*\*\**

***Friday***

8:00 AM *Gathering of Men\*\*\**

\* Church

\*\* Barn

\*\*\* Virtual

***Parish office hours: 9:00 to 4:30, Monday thru Thursday***