



Christmas 2011



An Advent Reflection

There is a lovely collect from the fourth Sunday of Advent from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer: "Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever."

In our world, the weeks before Christmas are brimming with activities and the cheer of the season. It is full of music, parties (and the special holiday treats to make and eat!), holiday and Christmas story images and the bustle of shopping for gifts. The fullness of the season arrives all at once and surrounds us. It is a wonderful and magical time in many ways. The Church, however, keeps to a different rhythm. We have a season of quiet and reflection, preparation and ready-ing, before Christmas. Christmas begins on Christmas Eve and last until January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany—the 12 days of Christmas. We live in counterpoint to the world, walking in a space of hope, anticipation and waiting...looking forward to all the joy of the Christmas season. There is a power spiritual experience in taking time to honour the reality of waiting, of expectation, of hoping for what is to come but is not yet here, and for gestation and birth of the new. It allows us time to live in the "in-between" and places of trusting in what is to arrive, but not yet ready. It lets us clear out the closets of our soul, purifying us so that our inner life is fertile and responsive ground for God's continued coming-into-being within each of us.

In the midst of all the wonderful events of the season, I encourage all of us to take time for quiet and reflection in preparation for the coming gift of Jesus the Christ, not just on Sundays, but at other points in

the week. There are Advent devotionals available at St. Martin's and others on-line or in bookstores. Taking time to light the Advent wreath each night and say simple prayers or opening each new day on an Advent calendar can create that space. Perhaps we might put the tree and decorations up a bit closer to Christmas to visually symbolize the time of expectation. These are just a few ideas of many possibilities!

May this Advent and Christmas time be one full of joy and hope and love for all of us!

"God of power and mercy, you call us once again to celebrate the coming of your Son. Remove those things which hinder love of you, that when he comes, he may find us waiting in awe and wonder for him who lies and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever." BAS, Collect for Advent 3.

Rev. Natasha+



Holiday Office Hours

The office will close at noon on Friday, Dec. 23. During the following two weeks Kate will check messages regularly and any pastoral concerns will be forwarded to Rev. Natasha. The office will re-open on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

Poinsettias for Christmas

Consider ordering a poinsettia to decorate the altar on Christmas Eve. Poinsettias are \$15. You may call the office or add your name to the list on the Sundays of Advent.

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: Poinsettias on the altar throughout
: Advent & Christmas will be
: delivered to those unable to come
: to church. If you are available to
: make a flower delivery, please
: speak to Kate at the office or after
: the 10 am service.
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Christmas Greetings from the Wardens of St. Martin's

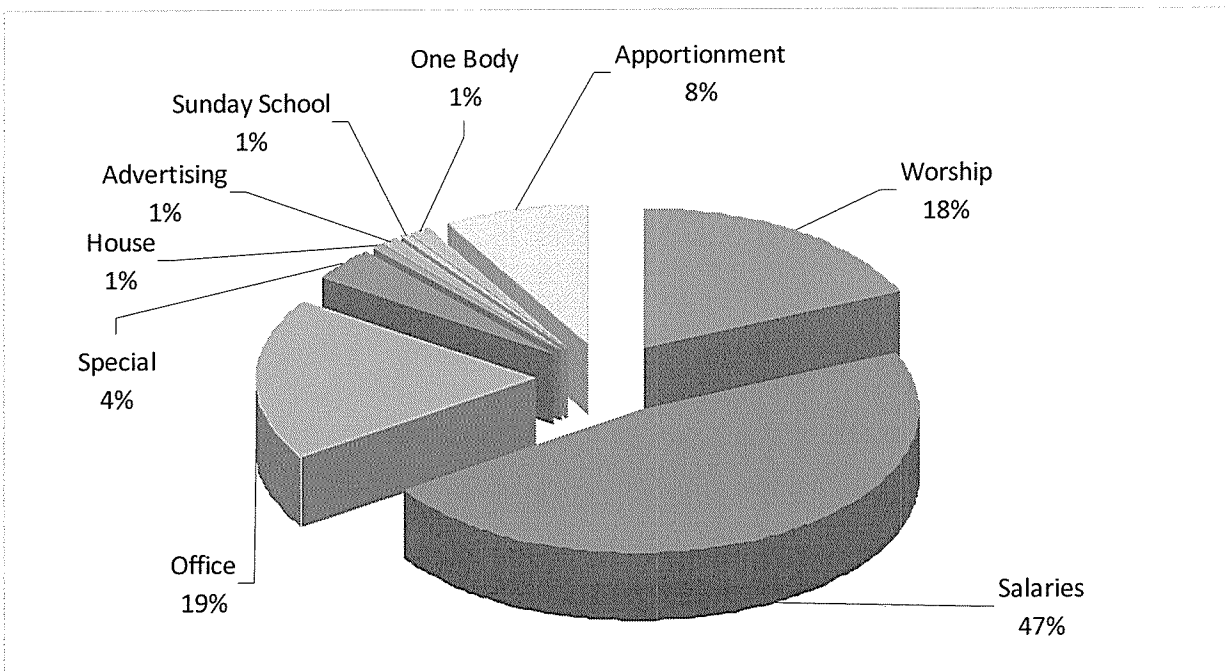
Advent is a season of hope and anticipation. As we enter the new Christian year, St. Martin's has much to be thankful for and hopeful about. We have taken great strides in the past year towards our goal of building our own church building. Exciting prospects lie before us. In addition, this is the first time in three years that we have an incumbent priest, Natasha, guiding us forward on our spiritual path.

We would not be in this position, however, if not for the efforts of the Strategic and Implementation Teams. Much work has been done to determine whether we, as a congregation, could move forward and build a church. We have gained great insight into who we think we are as a Christian community, and have also learned more and continue to learn about community needs. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this effort.

Although the goal of building a church is always before us, St. Martin's is so much more. We have had a chance to connect as a community at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner, the Stampede breakfast and the youth picnic in June. The youth have been on youth trips to both Vancouver and Churchill. We have attended bible studies, discussed the Story of Stuff, reflected in the Prayer Place and "Listened to Scripture." Thank you also to those of you who were involved in these events.

Financial Update:

These events, however, cannot occur without financial assistance. As of October 2011, St. Martin's is running a \$36,000 deficit. It takes approximately \$23,000 per month for St. Martin's to operate. See below for a breakdown of these costs. It is expected that costs will rise a minimum of \$11,000 in 2012. Please consider if you can help to reduce this deficit during the Advent season. In addition, please consider whether you can increase your monthly giving to help keep St. Martin's viable and growing. Auto debit is an effective way to maintain a steady income for St. Martin's to work with. Please talk to Kate at the office if you would like to register for auto debit or increase your monthly donation.



May you be blessed with hope, anticipation, peace and joy during this Advent and Christmas season.

Laurie McIntosh

Jeff Davidson

Gill Innes

DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, December - 12pm – 2pm OneBody Clothing Swap at St. Laurence
Sunday, December 4 – 3pm St. Nicholas Service at the Church of the Good Shepherd
Tuesday, December 6 – 7:30pm Bundle Bag Evening at Leslie Goodale's home
Thursday, December 8 – 2pm Christmas Eucharist & Tea at Knox Presbyterian
Sunday, December 11 – Pageant Preparation at the Calgary Academy after the 10am service
Saturday, December 17 – 7-10pm OneBody Christmas Party at St. Laurence Church
Sunday, December 18 – Christmas Pageant during the 10am service at the Calgary Academy
Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Services at 4pm and 8pm at the Calgary Academy
Sunday, December 25 – Said Eucharist at 10am at the Calgary Academy only
Sunday, January 1 – 8:30 Eucharist at the Chapel, 10am Lessons & Carols Service at the Calgary Academy

CHRISTMAS EUCHARIST & TEA

Thursday, December 8, 2011 at 2 pm

Knox Presbyterian Church

3704 – 37th St. SW

R.S.V.P to the office: 403-249-3014

We are in need of baked goodies for the tea. If you are able to provide some, they can be dropped off at the office on Wed. Dec. 7.

*The Christian community
is to be the means by
which people around it
recognize the presence
and activity of God that
they may be drawn to the
Light of
God's life and love.*



Christmas Pageant 2011 - Mark your Calendars!

The St. Martin's Christmas Pageant will take on a different appearance this year! Everyone in the congregation (young and old!) is invited to stay after church on **Sunday, December 11th** to prepare for our pageant. The plan is to pair up children and youth with adults - each group will then have a few hours to prepare a piece of artwork that describes some part of the Christmas story. There will be a wide variety of supplies available to work with and the sky is the limit! The creations will then be turned into a slide show to be viewed by all the following Sunday, along with a narrative. This unique Pageant gives all an opportunity to participate - what an exciting, inter-generational event!

If you are interested in helping with our Pageant Prep day, please contact Danielle Wahl at dewahl@shaw.ca or 403-698-6987. If you have any art supplies that you would be prepared to donate, please contact Danielle as well!

Hope to see everyone there!