

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2021

My Friends, Welcome to the season of Anticipation and Preparation:

Yes, December is a time of anticipation and preparation, a time for folks around the world to look forward to new beginnings, to look forward with hope and renewed vigor. It's no surprise that the darkest month of the year December, in many parts of the world, comes with an abundance of colorful lights and candles, vibrant wreaths, special songs and a calendar of festive events. Most of these celebrations are inspired by Christmas and Hanukkah, the two major religious holidays celebrated by Christians and Jewish believers, respectively, around the world. Another mid-winter celebration recently revived is Kwanzaa, a celebration of community, family, and culture, established as a means to help African Americans reconnect with their African roots and heritage. Although it is not a religious observance, Kwanzaa is a cultural one with an inherent deeply spiritual quality.



This year Advent begins on November 28. During the next four weeks, we prepare our hearts and minds and we prepare our lives. We look forward, this year especially, to a year of **HOPE, LOVE, JOY and PEACE**.

Of course, we all know Christmas...*Right?* Shopping for presents, decorating the tree, singing carols, making gingerbread houses, sending cards, enjoying holiday parties, making a list and checking it twice! Well, there's a little bit more to Advent than that...Advent is about preparing for Christmas **AND Christmas is...**

Christ entering our world and Advent is expectant waiting, hopeful anticipation and joyful preparation. God incarnate is coming into our lives and into our hearts reminding us to LOVE our Neighbour, to be kind to each other, no matter how challenging that may be. Jesus, God incarnate, God within us and around us...Past, Present & Future.

As we prepare our hearts and minds for the feast of the Incarnation, we invite you to attend the wonderful services to take you through the remainder of the seasons of Advent, Christmas and on to the 12 days of the Christmas season. Keep watch in the Beacon, on St. Peter's website <https://www.stpeterduncan.ca> and on our Facebook page (The Anglican Parish of St. Peter, Quamichan) for links and bulletins to the following services:

- **Advent I (November 28)** A reminder of the **Hope** of Advent. We will light the first Candle, tell the stories and sing wonderful hymns of hope and anticipation
- **Advent II (December 5)** we will light the second Candle and hear of the **Love** as we anticipate
- **Advent III (December 12)** we will light the third Candle and Celebrate the **Joy** and thanks for Mary
- **Advent IV (December 19)** – we will light the Candle for **Peace**. We welcome Bishop Anna on this day at both services.
- **The Longest Night Service (Tuesday December 21 at 7 p.m.)** – This is a special service of Comfort and Light in the Midst of Darkness. Many loving hands came together to bring this service to you during these uncertain days. May it bring you, your friends and neighbours, a sense of peace as the nights are long and remind you, you are not alone.

- **Christmas Eve Service (December 24 at 4 pm)** for those young at heart, and with a focus on young families as we spread the Joy that comes with the Christ Child
- **Christmas Eve Contemplative Service (December 24 at 7pm)** Once again, we will offer a traditional candlelight service of music and quiet reflection, for those who need to quiet their hearts, simplify the season, and take a moment to reflect on the birth of Jesus
- **Christmas Day (December 25 at 10 am)** We will be providing a service of the Word for Christmas Day! A day of joy and celebration that we can share together, from the comfort of our own homes.
- **The First Sunday of Christmas (December 26 at 10 am)** We will observe **Christmas 1** and the **Feast of St. Stephen**.

All of these services can be accessed online at any time once the links have been sent out. I invite you to watch and re-watch them, to spend time with them, to sing along and sit back and enjoy the season with us in this way.

With each of you, I extend our heartfelt thanks to each of our wardens, staff and clergy for their faithful ministry and all that they have accomplished with all of you to keep our beloved church property safe and vibrant. My thanks to Chris and Liz (wardens), Eileen (treasurer), Parish council members Trish, Mark, Jane and Roger, our staff, Monica and Barry and Mark and Jane Hird-Rutter! As well as our Clergy Chris, Jim, Norah, and Kirsten.

Once again, this year, I leave you with this reflection from Rachel Nyback:

### **Patient**

*Patience is that reminder that we are not in control, that our lives do not always happen according to our schedule. The experiences of the prophets, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and Magi remind us that we exist in God's time. Living in Kairos\* time requires our prayer, our attention and most certainly our patience as we recognize God's presence, as we allow the Holy Spirit to guide our lives.*

\* **Kairos** (Ancient Greek: καιρός) is an Ancient Greek word **meaning** the right, critical, or opportune **moment**

Grace and Peace and a whole lot of patience be with you all!

My love in Christ,



And always remember, the Turkey tastes better after you've been to church!