

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

December 2020 Newsletter

The Carillon

Worship Schedule

Sunday Morning Zoom
Prayer will be held at
9:30am

When the CTL update on
Fridays indicates level or-
ange or below, in-person
Holy Eucharist will be of-
fered at 11 am on Sunday
in the church building .

[https://us02web.zoom.us/
j/7665988948](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7665988948)

Mtg_ID: 766 598 8948. Call
in number +1 646 558 8656
(This is the Zoom access
information for all services.)

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

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Rector's Message

Dear Church,

The Season of Advent is upon us and our theme for 2020 is "Those Who Dream." Based upon the opening verses of Psalm 126, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream," this theme invites us to consider God's dream and the way it is showing up in the world in these days. Children's Advent projects and Advent devotional material for adults have been mailed. This week begins the series of mid-week worship opportunities on Zoom, where contemplative worship can be woven into the fabric of the tumult and disorientation of these days. Later in Advent we will offer a "The Longest Night" worship experience on Zoom where we will intentionally make space for lament and grief . Each Sunday in Zoom worship we will look at what it means to be "those who dream."

These are tough times for many and the reminder that we can dream with God's dream is a timely message. The writers, artists and scholars who created the devotional resource are a diverse group, intentionally pushing beyond the white normative images and language we often encounter in Advent . This is fitting as we continue the work for racial justice that we began last Advent and hopefully will help us build some additional ways to imagine and dream.

Though we are not able to meet in person as a church in these days, it is my hope that worshipping, praying, reading, studying, journaling and dreaming together, while apart, will draw us together in rich ways. We will carry this theme through Christmas and into Epiphany as we observe those Holy Days with limitations and invitations like none before.

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Rector's Message *(Continued from previous page)*

It is likely that we will not be able to gather in person in the church building for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The Worship Task Group, Altar Guild, Joan Van Wormer, the Rev. Gregory Stark and I are making plans for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Watch for upcoming updates and information.

A recent manifestation for God's dream for St. Andrew's came in the achievement (and beyond) of the 2021 Financial Stewardship goal. To date the set goal has been surpassed and it is with great gratitude that this news is shared. Knowing that in spite of this being a financially challenging time for many, your generosity and trust in God's dream for St. Andrew's has promised financial provision for the coming year. So... even with a significantly reduced budget for 2021... we watch and wait and step out in faith, to step into God's dream.

May you experience clarity of God's love for you and the whole world in very real ways this season and may you join all of St. Andrew's as we experience this Advent as an act of hope, an act of resistance and an act of faith.

Blessed Advent,

Mother June

Advent Contemplative Prayer on Zoom

Dec.1 - 23

Noonday Prayers at Noon on Tuesdays (10 min.)

Morning Prayer at 8 am on Wednesday(30 min.)

Compline at 8:30 pm on Thursdays (15 min.)

Advent Formation and Outreach

Facebook Live—Tues. Dec. 8, 15 and 22 12:15 pm

"Those Who Dream" Devotional Guide

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Worship

Christmas Eve

5 pm Christmas Eve Worship with Virtual Christmas Pageant on Zoom

10 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship on Zoom *

(Please provide your own candles at home.)

(*Note: If the Covid Threat Level is Yellow or Orange on Dec. 18, the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held in person at 10 pm in the church building at 300 Third St. using the safety protocols we used in Sept. and Oct. when we met in person.)

In addition, Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland and Bishop Hollingsworth's staffs are preparing two Diocesan services, one for Christmas Eve and one for Christmas Day, to be available online to all congregations and communicants in the evening of December 24 and the morning of December 25, respectively. Both will include participants from around the Diocese for readings, intercessions, and music.

Christmas Day

St. Andrew's will join the Christmas Day service offered by the Diocese. To gather with our siblings around the Diocese will be a blessing and unique offering for this year. (Time and access into to be announced.)

The Longest Night Worship Service on Zoom

Dec. 21 – 7 pm

A sacred space for lament and grief on the longest night.

Giving Tree

On behalf of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Lorain County, thank you for your generosity and expediency with providing Giving Tree gifts.

Farewell and Gratitude to Two Members of St. Andrew's Staff

On Dec. 31, 2020 after 15 years at St. Andrew's, Joanne Pressnell is retiring and after 8 years at St. Andrew's, Diane Linch is concluding her employment due to the elimination of the Administrative Assistant Position. We will have a time to say farewell and to express our gratitude to Joanne and Diane in the Zoom worship on Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020.

(See further details in Advent mailing.)

Annual Meeting

January 17, 2021

10 am (on Zoom)

Ministry leaders please email your annual reports to office@standrewselyria.org by Jan. 6

Parish Office Closed

The Parish Office is currently closed and will reopen when the Covid Threat Level is lowered. The email, phone messages and mail are checked regularly. Clergy and staff check in throughout the week but remain in their own offices. To relay pastoral concerns please call or email the Rector directly at 804-370-2989 or revjunehd@gmail.com

December Birthdays

Jane McDonald 6

Phyllis DeMark 6

Jon Quisenberry 7

Lise Day 8

Cathy Heck 8

Russell Welsh 9

Shannon Von Gunten 13

Jeff Hahn 16

Claire Skladan 18

Jerry Welsh 20

Roja Schuster-Little 25

Chris Todd 25 Kaitlyn Heck 26

Michael Shaffer 28

Nick Shaffer 28

Hannah Skladan 28

Eric Barns 30

Nancy Lee Flynt 31

Happy Anniversary December

Sarah Schuster & Greg Little 17

Greg & Carrie Hebble 30

Prayer List Additions:

For those who have died

Braxton Joseph Dutton (child) Retta Reynolds' great grandson

Those for whom we pray

Katie Dutton (mother) Retta Reynolds' granddaughter

Hannah Skladan

Jacob Hebble

Take part in St. Andrew's Christmas Decorating Contest. Share your Christmas spirit and Christmas decorations.

How to Participate:

1. Submit a photo of your 2020 Christmas decorations at your home now. You may submit one photo for each category; inside and/or outside. One photo per category only. (Photos will not include the name of who submitted the photo. If you know of family, friends and neighbors who would like to participate, they must submit the photo for themselves.)
2. Send a high-resolution photo to contact@standrewselyria.org and include your name, phone and physical address. (We will use this information to contact winners and send them their prize.)
3. Deadline is noon on Saturday, December 19, 2020
4. Contest is open to all members, family & friends of St. Andrew's and Christ Church (all entries must be made by the home occupant)
5. There will be one winner from each category. Prizes are as follows:
 - 1st place in each category = \$25 Target gift card
 - 2nd place in each category = \$15 Target gift card
 - 3rd place in each category = \$10 Target gift card

(Winners will be decided by vote. If there is a tie, the committee will randomly choose a winner.)

How to Vote:

1. Go to the Christmas Photo Contest 2020 on the St. Andrew's web site.
2. Begin voting on Sunday, December 20.
3. You can vote for one indoor and one outdoor photo daily. (one email address vote a day)
4. Send your vote to contact@standrewselyria.org no later than Midnight Christmas Day, Friday, December 25.
5. Voting is open to anyone. Please include your full name and your city of residence for your vote to be counted. Votes will only be seen by the committee.
6. Example text for voting: My name is Mary Smith from Elyria. I vote for indoor photo #2 and outdoor photo #5.
7. Winners will be announced on Sunday December 27, at our services and then posted to Christmas Photo Contest 2020.

Notes from the Associate Rector

December 2020

*it was telling me
in no uncertain terms
to bellow forth the tubas and sousaphones,
the whole rusty brass band of gratitude
not quite dormant in my belly*

From "catalog of unabashed gratitude," by Ross Gay

What gratitude do you feel you need to bellow forth from your belly? I like the way the poet Ross Gay describes this kind of gratitude coming from deep within the body. Sometimes we know and feel thanks and thankfulness in much more profound ways than a simple "thank you," but it is hard to express that. For whom and what are you thankful? What is giving you strength and sustenance as we go into the thick darkness of winter in Northeast Ohio? All the traditional themes of Advent and Christmas—expectation, waiting, longing, hope, incarnation, God-with-us—seem so much more important this year. How can we dream bigger, despite all the "Nos" of the present moment? Can we imagine borders crossed, barriers broken, and new ways that God will proclaim God's "Yes" in our lives and in our time? Advent and Christmas are seasons that invite us to reflect on overturned expectations and transformed hopes.

This Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, may we support each other and respond with that bellyful of gratitude, trusting that the God who invited Mary to be part of the salvation of the world, invites us to make God's love and grace known today.

P.S. – Mark your calendars for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20th, at 5pm where we will join together on Zoom for a rehearsal of our Virtual Christmas Pageant. We are excited to have families and folks of all ages join us this year to tell the story of God's Incarnation in Bethlehem!

Dear Santa

What I want for Christmas is understanding. I am trying to understand why we treat each other the way we do.

As you know the world is facing trying times. This is nothing new but it feels this time the ability to come together is farther away than ever before. We talk about coming together but all you hear is fear, hatred and disdain. I do not understand why people have chosen hate. Doesn't common sense tell us that hatred begets hatred. When did hatred become the way we speak? The light of love is brighter than the Northern Star as it is lit by all that believe. When did people stop believing?

I try and take solace in my friends and neighbors but cannot shake fears and doubt. I hear from all sides that if you are not with us you are the enemy. I do not understand how disagreement on any topic has turned to anger. I do not understand why speaking to each other has turned into screams and shouts. Can we not see that loud noise makes it hard to hear? When did think like me or else take over listening and understanding?

I believe in love. I believe in hope. But those beliefs are being challenge by all that I see and hear. That has me scared. For it is belief in love and hope that makes me who I am. It makes me the father, husband, friend, neighbor and smiling stranger that I am today. I do not understand why this simple truth is so hard; do unto others as you would have done unto you. I will do all that I can to fight off doubt and hold onto what I believe. I just do not understand why that is so hard.

So Santa, please grant me understanding. Help me understand all that I don't. Help me understand how we can get past the hate and back to the love. Help me understand how I can help others learn to listen once again and embrace those that do not think like us. Help me understand how we can soften the shout and instead open our hearts and minds. Help me understand how I can give the world the most precious gift this Christmas, love.

I still believe in the power of the human spirit. I still believe in the power of hope. I still believe in love.

I still believe in you.

I am just trying to understand.

With care and love, your friend,

JS

From Bishop Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.

November 19, 2020

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I write you with concern about the ever-increasing spread of COVID-19 and to suggest a few things we can do in response.

Almost every day, I receive reports of clergy, lay leaders, communicants in our diocese, and friends who have tested positive for this virus, are suffering from the symptoms of COVID-19, or, tragically, have died. Very likely, you are experiencing the same. This surge has exceeded the predictions of epidemiologists and physicians in its unbridled spread. It is reported that three million Americans have active coronavirus infections and are potentially contagious, whether symptomatic or not. Some of those are healthcare workers who have put themselves at risk to care for other COVID-19 victims. Their willingness to jeopardize their own health for the care and wellbeing of others is inspiring.

The great majority of cases reported to me involve victims who felt they were taking ample precautions. Nonetheless, exposure occurred, reflecting the pervasive and relentless nature of this virus. We must not relax disciplines of handwashing, mask wearing, keeping distance, and avoiding crowds. The recent news of vaccines with high rates of effectiveness provides comfort and encouragement, and is something for which we can give abundant thanks. At the same time, distribution and vaccination will take an equally heroic effort and considerable time, during which we must increase our vigilance to avoid unnecessary transmission, suffering, and death. We may have tired of the pandemic, but the virus does not tire of us.

In-person gathering

At this writing, Cuyahoga, Medina, and Lucas County Departments of Health have issued stay-at-home advisories, with Cuyahoga County specifically recommending that schools and churches close. We can only assume that other counties will follow, if they have not already. In light of this clear and urgent directive, I encourage the clergy and vestry of each congregation in the Diocese to take a serious and thorough look at the pandemic conditions in their communities, the age and health demographic of their communicants, and the physical practicalities of their buildings (size, layout, HVAC systems, etc.) in making responsible decisions about how to gather. I would prefer that the leadership of individual congregations continue to draw their own conclusions about whether to return to online gathering only. My own inclination would be to do so. Continued increases of infection in our parishes and the communities they serve, however, may soon necessitate that we, together as a diocesan body, suspend all in-person gatherings for worship, formation, and governance. We are watching this closely.

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Christmas

It is increasingly apparent that physical gathering in our church buildings for Christmas worship will be unlikely for most, if not all, congregations. To address that likely reality, the Cathedral and Bishop's staffs are preparing two Diocesan services, one for Christmas Eve and one for Christmas Day, to be available online to all congregations and communicants in the evening of December 24 and the morning of December 25, respectively. Both will include participants from around the Diocese for readings, intercessions, and music. The choir that was assembled virtually for our Convention was inspiring. My hope is that we will be able to replicate that with greater participation for these services. As you adjust your plans for celebrating the Nativity in your parish, please keep these offerings in mind. The possibility of worshiping as a diocesan-wide body may alleviate considerable challenges for individual congregations. Further notice will come out shortly.

Names of communicants for prayer

As we move through these fearful and, at times, dispiriting weeks, I would be grateful to know who among our communicants has been or is currently suffering from this virus – those who have contracted COVID-19 and recovered, those who are battling it currently, and those who have died. If you would allow me to keep you and those you love in my prayers by name, it will inform my intercessions and deepen my pastoral companionship with each of you, as well as help us more clearly understand the burden of this pandemic on our people, parishes, and clergy. You may do so by following this [link](#).

Please be careful and disciplined in your safety as we approach Thanksgiving and Advent, and know of my appreciation and admiration for all you are doing to protect one another and to assure all of God's love.

With gratitude and abundant prayers,

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.
Bishop of Ohio

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
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