



Discerning Hearts

Newsletter of The Episcopal Community

"We are marked as Christ's own for ever."

Volume: 2025 Issue 12

Advent Reflection

Bishop Diane Jardine Bruce



Friends in Christ Jesus,
Happy New Year!

On the first Sunday of Advent, we will begin celebrating the church's new liturgical year. Unlike our secular new year celebration, the church's new year is much more subdued. Indeed, the gospel readings for Advent are chock full of "beware" and "prepare" language and images, so unlike the "ring in the new" of our secular celebration.

For me, the importance of the church's new year is its focus on what is to come, not what is here right now. Yes, we are preparing to welcome anew the newborn Christ child into our hearts. And, at the same time, we continue to live in an "already/not yet" tension – the kingdom of God is here, but it is not yet fully rung-in. The preparation we do during Advent is a reminder of the ongoing preparation we are all involved in until the kingdom of God is fully here.

So, the question before us this Advent is this: How are we preparing ourselves not only for the coming anew of the Christ child, but for the promised, fully rung-in coming of the Kingdom of God? I would like to suggest that the best way for members of the Episcopal Community to do so is through one of your charisms: prayer. Coming together to pray as a community is a powerful way not only to hear scripture, pray for this world, and pray for each other, but to bear witness to God's love, praying the world into the kind of world God intends for us to live in.

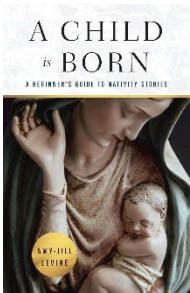
This Advent, please make every effort to come together to pray. If the times of the Community prayers are difficult for you, let the leadership know. There are members all over the United States – we can make this work. It is a beautiful way to start our new year!

I leave you with the collect for the First Sunday of Advent:

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Advent Book Study



Our 2025 Advent book study is, "A Child is Born, A Beginner's Guide to Nativity Stories", by Amy-Jill Levine. If you have read her works before, we know you will be excited to join us!! Chris has done several and so has Becky. Ms. Levine has a totally different view on things which even the most learned person can find new ideas in to discuss and grow in faith.

This year, because Thanksgiving is so late, we only have three weeks for our Advent Study. These dates are TUESDAYS December 2, 9 and 16 at 7:00 pm Eastern 6:00 pm Central, 5:00 pm Mountain, and 4:00 pm Pacific. We have chosen not to do December 23. We, however, are happy to continue in January to finish. The book contains four chapters and an Epilogue; we will read one chapter a week.

We hope you will all join us for an unforgettable Advent Study! As always, if you have any questions, please contact Chris Butterworth at <mailto:christina.s.butterworth@gmail.com> or 434/471-6110.



Compline

07-Dec	Cynthia Sand
14-Dec	Chris Butterworth
21-Dec	Carol Putnam & BB Vaughn
28-Dec	Bishop Diane

The office of Compline is the final office of the day. We see this as a time to check in and be together for just a little while. It is a joyful time and we hope you will join us! If you would like to lead compline, please contact Cynthia Sand at cynthiasand53@gmail.com



Event Calendar

Meetings are on Zoom. All times Central time.

2025

- Sunday Compline at 6:00 PM
- Book Study Tuesdays at 6:00 PM
- Healing Circle Wednesdays at 1:00PM
- Morning Prayer, Fridays 9:00 AM



Birthdays

Gayle Ahrens	Kay Jackson
Linda Klocker	Barbara Harris
	Betty Wyman



Poetry Corner

PattiJoy Posan



Pop with PattiJoy, her mom and brother

“I’ve got a nickel you’ve got a dime you got a haircut just like mine.”

Trezvant DeGraffenreid Feaster

Fridays were exciting days
Pop came to see us every weekend
I stood at the front door excited,
looking down towards LeJuene Rd.
Twirling and dancing
waiting for the bus from Miami to stop
Look, look there he is, I shouted.

A little man carrying a small satchel,
his parakeet in the birdcage
pipe in hand, skin as dark as a berry
Singing as he walked
“I’ve got a nickel you’ve got a dime
Johnny’s got a haircut just like mine” *
Laughing we joined in song with him
As he stooped down,
Gathering us in his arms
Giving us a million hugs and kisses
“I know because I always counted them.”
You always knew Pop was near.

Evenings when our parents went out
We gathered around Pop’s feet
(I was the youngest and sat in his lap)
Oh, the stories he would tell us
“Helped” build the railroad
From Jacksonville to Miami
And as the train went through Titusville
He would toss his paycheck
To his mother standing on the wooden platform.
He moved on to Kramer Island
In Lake Okeechobee
Where he and Nana were married
By an itinerant traveling minister
Where their avocado plantation thrived
Only to be destroyed by the 1928 Hurricane

Saturday morning, so special
First snuggles in bed
Listening to Jack and the Beanstalk
“Fee-fi-fo fum! I smell the blood of an
Englishman. Be he alive. Or be he
dead, I’ll grind his bones to
make my bread.”
Of course I was hiding under the covers.
Up and dressed we paraded with
Pop to the nearby pharmacy
And we would sit at the fountain
Eating “all the donuts” we wanted
I had great anticipation
Chocolate, cream filled, glazed
I must admit I could only eat one.
Afternoons outside climbing trees
Building sand castles

Balancing on the fence rail
Like a tightrope walker
Playing hide and seek
Or run it through
We were a tribe of friends

Under Pop’s ever watchful eye.
After supper and bathed
When mother and father went out “again”
And my brothers were asleep
I would sneak out and crawl into Pop’s lap
We’d watch the Saturday night fights on TV
And, always a miracle,
in the morning I was in my own bed

Pop left on Sunday
And as he walked away
I heard him singing
“I’ve got a nickel you’ve got a dime
Johnny’s got a haircut just like mine.”
I still hear him singing today.



Hello Dolly Bars

Rebecca Taylor

Ingredients

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1/3 cup melted salted butter
- 3 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate morsels
- 2/3 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk



Prepare oven and baking pan: Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 13- x 9-inch baking pan.

Make crust: Combine first 3 ingredients in a medium bowl. Press mixture onto bottom of prepare pan. Bake 8 minutes.

Add ingredients to crust: Sprinkle pecans, chocolate morsels, and coconut over hot crust. Pour condensed milk over top. (Do not stir.)

Finish baking bars: Bake at 350°F for 20 to 25 minutes or until lightly browned and edges are bubbly. Let cool 1 hour on a wire rack. Cut into bars.



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