

The Incarnation Word

December 2013

I love Advent... the anticipation, the reflection, the peaceful joy that builds through the month. I love it, but I'm not sure I'm good at it.



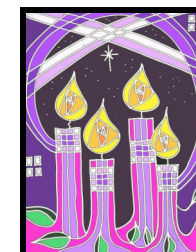
I don't like waiting. I don't like waiting in traffic. I don't like waiting in line. I don't like waiting for someone else to finish their job so I can do mine. Sometimes I don't even like waiting for someone else to finish a sentence! I like to get things done, check them off the list, and then move on to the next thing.

And I think that's why Advent is so meaningful to me. Advent challenges me to stop and wait. It challenges me to stop "doing" and take some time to just "be." Advent offers me a chance to light just one candle at a time and to reflect on each one before moving to the next.



It's hard to keep Advent. It's hard because there are cards to send and gifts to buy and halls to deck. It's hard because there's a barage of Christmas parties and family gatherings. It's hard because there are carols to sing and lights to enjoy and cookies to bake.

The trick is to find the Advent peace in the midst of all that. The trick is to decorate the house slowly and mindfully, reflecting on the beauty of each added element. The trick is to bake the cookies and address the cards as prayers, keeping in mind the people whose hearts will be warmed by them. The trick is to hold on to the to-do list lightly, choosing peace and reflection over getting it all done.



Even as I write these words, I'm struck by how simple that sounds. But I'm also struck by how unlikely it is that I'll be able to accomplish it. I guess that's why each December I need Advent to come again. Perhaps I can keep it just a tiny bit better this year than last. And, given enough years and enough candles, maybe I'll eventually be able to say that I have Advent in my heart.

God's Peace,
Jenny+

The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation
308 College Drive
Gaffney, SC 29340
864-489-6183
www.incarnation-gaffney.org

The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation



The Rt. Rev. W. Andrew Waldo Bishop of Upper S. C.
The Rev. Jenny Gettys Rector
The Rev. Pat Gotautas Deacon
Mrs. Ann Batchler Parish Sec. / Bookkeeper
Mr. Hal Tyson Choir Director and Organist

2013 Vestry

Bobby Love	Senior Warden, Buildings and Grounds	864-487-7256
Jamie Greene	Junior Warden, Evangelism and Outreach	864-488-3000
Ree Batten	Christian Education	864-590-2641
Michael Darnell	Hospitality	704-460-0301
Scott Glidden	Worship	704-473-7318
Sara Harding	Pastoral Care	864-463-7922
Lori Thompson	Stewardship	504-982-4576

<i>ex officio</i> , David Taylor	Treasurer	864-838-5602
<i>ex officio</i> , Renée McFalls,	Vestry Clerk	864-487-0049

Buildings & Grounds

Playground Installation

Friday and Saturday, Dec 13 and 14
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Our fabulous new playground is almost here! It will arrive Friday morning, December 13, along with a supervisor to guide us through the installation process. We'll need to dig holes for all the posts, fill them with concrete, and then set the equipment. We really need everyone to come together so we can complete this huge task for our children. If you don't feel up to the physical labor, we still need your help to provide



lunch for the workers each day. And we'll need child care on Saturday so parents can be outside working. Sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway to be part of the work crew, the lunch crew, or the baby-sitting crew. With all of us working together we can make an amazing place for our children to play for years to come.

Blessing of the Playground Sunday, December 15 at 11:45 am

After all our hard work, we'll ask God's blessing on our new playground. Bring pick-up food to share and plan to join us as we celebrate the many blessings of the season together as a church family.

Stewardship

Pledge Update

There are times when the world seems bleak, but then there are times when the people of God are so overwhelmingly good and kind and generous that the world is a wonderful place. This year's stewardship speakers issued a tough challenge to us. In these turbulent economic times, it's hard to imagine stepping out in faith the way they asked us to. But the people of Incarnation did. You put



your faith and trust in God and responded to his generosity with some of your own. In 2013, twenty-nine families pledged a total of \$89,000 to the work of God in this place. So far for 2014, thirty families have pledged \$104,000!! And we anticipate receiving a few more pledges still. The budget your vestry will present at the Annual Meeting on December 1 is the closest to balanced that we've seen in recent memory. So thank you. Thank you for your faith and bravery, for your generosity and love. And thanks be to God for continuing to bless us all so richly.

December 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 1st Advent 8:30 HE I 9:30 Breakfast & Annual Meeting 10:30 HE II	2 	3 	4 6:00 Advent Supper and Service 7:00 Choir	5 6:30 EfM	6 Rector's Sabbath 6:30 Supper Clubs at Kelly's	7 9:30 DOK 6:00 Christmas Caroling
8 2nd Advent 8:30 HE I 9:30 Christian Ed. 10:30 HE II 11:45 Worship Committee Meeting	9 	10 	11 6:00 Advent Supper and Service 7:00 Choir	12 6:30 EfM	13 Rector's Sabbath	14 Playground Work Days
15 3rd Advent 8:30 HE I 9:30 Christian Ed. 10:30 HE II 11:45 Blessing of the Playground	16	17 	18 6:00 Advent Supper and Service 7:00 Choir	19 6:30 EfM	20 Rector's Sabbath	21
22 4th Advent 4th for food 8:30 HE I 9:30 Christian Ed. 10:30 HE II 11:45 Decorate the Church for Christmas!	23 	24 Christmas Eve 5:00 Christmas Service 11:00 Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day 	26	27 Rector's Sabbath	28
29 1st Christmas 8:30 HE I 9:30 Fellowship 10:30 HE II	30 	31 	1 New Year's Day	2 6:30 EfM	3 Rector's Sabbath	4

Date	Advent 3 Dec. 15 - 10:30	Advent 4 Dec. 22 - 10:30	Christmas Eve Dec. 24 - 5:00	Christmas Eve Dec. 24 - 11:00	1st Christmas Dec. 29 - 10:30
Acolyte	Lori Thompson	Michael Darnell	Ellis Greene	Tim Beaty	Arnold Tucker
OT Lector	Ann Torres	Cynthia Glidden	None	Lori Thompson	Martha Stacy
NT Lector	Cindy Love	Pam Bradburn	None	Frank Barnwell	David Taylor
Intercessor	Michael Darnell	John Gelok	None	Pam Bradburn	Danny Stacy
Euch Minister	Renée McFalls	Leslie Brown	Renée McFalls	Leslie Brown	Betty Tucker
Altar Guild	Dawn Bridges Jennie Hamrick	Sudie Gelok Cindy Love Lois Beam	All	All	Jackie Hoffman LaDonna White Carla Winter
Greeters	Beam Family	Gelok Family	Greene Family	Love Family	Taylor Family
Advent Candles	Torres Family	Harding Family	Gelok Family	Love Family	None
Torch	None	None	None	Arnold Tucker Leslie Brown	None
Thurifer	None	None	None	Michael Darnell	None
Nursery	Julie Taylor	Sara Harding	None	None	Ree Batten
Kids' Chapel	David Taylor	Luke Harding	None	None	None
Godly Play	Lois Beam Marty Marett	Julie Taylor Lori Thompson	None	None	None
Coffee Hour	Dawn Bridges Jennie Hamrick	Sudie Gelok	None	None	Cindy Love
Counters	Ann Torres Catherine Long	Bobby Love Cynthia Glidden	None	Scott Glidden Bobby Love	John Gelok David Taylor

Christian Education

Godly Play Sundays, 9:30-10:15



During Advent, the children will count down the weeks until Christ's birth. They'll hear about the words of the prophets and the journey of the Holy Family on December 8. On December 15 they'll follow the shepherds to the manger. And on December 22 they'll follow the wild star with the wise men all the way to the Christ child. Godly Play will not meet on December 29.

Grapple Sundays, 9:30-10:15

Our pre-teens are having a blast discovering new things about themselves and about their Lord. Their topics for December will be:

December 8 - What would Jesus play on His iPod?



We'll talk about how to make good choices about the music we listen to.

December 15 - Is God a Party Pooper?

The great news is that God encourages us to have fun!

December 22 - Can Being a Christian ever be Fun?

We'll talk about what's really fun and what it's like to have a relationship with our wacky, fun-loving Lord.



December 29 - no class.

Adult Ed - The Book of Romans Sundays, 9:30-10:15

December 8 - Living as Christians
Paul has some very practical advice for how we as Christians ought to live within the church, in our homes, and in our communities. We'll discover it in Romans 12:1-13:14.

December 15 - Strong and Weak Faith

In Romans 14:1-15:13 Paul talks about those who are strong in their faith and those whose faith is new and weak. We'll explore his words about how the strong should behave toward the weak.



December 22 - Conclusion

We'll finish our study with a look at Paul's summary of Romans in 15:14-16:23. And we'll celebrate making it through the book!

December 29 - no class

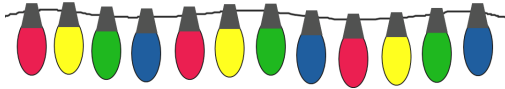
Confirmation

Confirmation is the sacrament through which adults from other denominations become members of the Episcopal Church. If you're interested in being confirmed on January 19, talk to Jenny+ today so we can set up a time to do some preparatory work together.

Hospitality

Advent Wednesday Suppers December 4, 11, and 18 at 6:00

We'll begin our Wednesday evenings in Advent with a simple supper together: soup and sandwiches. Sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway to volunteer to bring all or part of one of the meals. And plan to join us!



Supper Club Friday, December 6, 6:30 pm Kelly's Restaurant

All the supper clubs will celebrate Christmas together at Kelly's Restaurant. RSVP to Leslie Brown so she can get a count to Kelly's.

Playground Work Day Lunches Friday and Saturday, Dec. 13 and 14



Want to help with the playground installation but don't think you'll be much help outside? Volunteer to help fix lunch for the workers! Sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Incarnation Christmas Party Sunday, December 15 at 11:45

This year's Incarnation Christmas Party will be held on our brand-new playground. We'll bless the structures and have some fun together. Bring a covered dish to share and join the celebration.



Fill the Pantry

Our church pantry is starting to run low on paper products. You can help us by picking up an item or two for the church when you're at the store. We need:



- Paper plates
- Plastic bowls
- Plastic spoons
- Plastic cups
- Paper napkins
- Paper towels

Thanks for helping us fill our shelves!

Annual Parish Meeting Sunday, December 1, at 9:30

Come celebrate all God's done at Incarnation over the past year as we share breakfast together. We'll also elect new vestry members, elect new delegates to Diocesan Convention, and vote on the church budget for 2014. What a great way to kick off the new church year!

December Servers

Date	Advent 1 Dec. 1 - 10:30	Advent 2 Dec. 8 - 10:30
Acolyte	Tim Beaty	Ellis Greene
OT Lector	Bobbi Albert	Frank Barnwell
NT Lector	Danny Stacy	Catherine Long
Intercessor	David Taylor	Scott Glidden
Euch Minister	Cynthia Glidden	Lori Thompson
Altar Guild	Jackie H. LaDonna W. Carla W.	May Ella Blanton Charlotte Hartman Pam Bradburn Hope Greene Marty Marett
Greeters	Taylor Family	Brown Family
Advent Candles	Taylor Family	Greene Family
Nursery	Lois Beam	Marty Marett
Kids' Chapel	Ree Batten	Volunteer needed
Godly Play	None	Cindy Love Jessica Fowler
Coffee Hour	Breakfast	Ree Batten
Counters	Scott Glidden Bob Friedman	Ben Torres John Gelok

Readings

	First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel
Dec. 1 Advent 1	Isaiah 2:1-5	Psalm 122	Romans 13:11-14	Matt. 24:36-44
Dec. 8 Advent 2	Isaiah 11:1-10	Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19,	Romans 15:4-13	Matthew 3:1-12
Dec. 15 Advent 3	Isaiah 35:1-10	Canticle 3	James 5:7-10	Matthew 11:2-11
Dec. 22 Advent 4	Isaiah 7:10-16	Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18,	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 1:18-25
Dec 24 Christmas Eve	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-20
Dec. 29 1st Christmas	Isaiah 61:10- 62:3	Psalm 147	Galatians 3:23-25 4:4-7	John 1:1-18

Prayer List

The Sick:

Beth Stacy Morgan

Those on the DOK prayer list

Those Expecting Children:

Brandy & Johnathan Barnwell

The Homebound and

Those with Long-Term Needs:

May Ella Blanton	Nancy Jude
Drew Brady	Jim Kennedy
Vince Caggiano	J. L. Peake
Butch Childers	Marcia Peake
Miller David	Bruce Risher
Peggy Fort	Suzanne Searson
Isaac Gelok	Keith Smith
Bill Glidden	Jim Spigner
Barbara Gupton	Mary Threadgill
Frances Higgins	Priscilla Throop
Frances Humphries	Bruce Tyson

Those Serving Overseas in the Military:

Hannah Green

The Deceased:

Billie Kajma, mother of Steve Bratt

Milestones

Bill Winter was laid to rest in the columbarium on November 2 in a private ceremony. May he rest in peace.

Asher Torres, son of Ann and Ben Torres, was baptized on All Saints Sunday, November 3. Welcome to the family!

Birthdays

Ashley Love	Dec. 2
Dawn Bridges	Dec. 9
Garrison Thompson	Dec. 13
Altony Pollard	Dec. 14
Sudie Gelok	Dec. 16
Taylor Mabry	Dec. 17
Kelly Lewis	Dec. 20

Anniversaries

David & Julie Taylor	Dec. 8
John & Marcia Peake	Dec. 24
Ray & Patty Walker	Dec. 30

Attendance

Wednesday, October 30	9
Sunday, November 3	67
Wednesday, November 6	10
Sunday, November 10	54
Wednesday, November 13	9
Sunday, November 17	54
Wednesday, November 20	9
Sunday, November 24	47

Marybeth Bledsoe and her sons **Eric and Connor Cothran** transferred to Church of the Redeemer, Greenville. We'll miss you but we're so glad you have a new church home.

Worship

Advent Worship

Our worship services will have a different feel to them for the season of Advent. As we prepare our hearts to receive Jesus anew, Pat+ will be available for prayer during Communion. We'll also have votive candles available which you may light as a long-lasting prayer.



Wednesday Advent Services

December 4, 11, and 18 at 6:00

We'll begin with a simple meal together at 6:00. Then we'll enjoy a casual, kid-friendly time of hands-on worship together as we actively wait for the coming of Christ.

Luminaries and Caroling

Saturday, December 7, at 6:00



We'll serenade those driving through the luminaries on College Drive as we share the joy of the season. Every year we're told how much our carols

do to usher in the peace of Christmas for so many people.

Poinsettias

Our Christmas altar will be surrounded by beautiful poinsettias. You may purchase

one (or more!) in memory of a loved one no longer with us or in honor of someone special. Plants are \$25 each, and they'll be yours to take home after the services. Sign up on the bulletin board in the hallway.



Deck the Halls

Sunday, December 22, at 11:45

We'll all work together to make our church into a fitting place for the baby Jesus. Bring greenery and holly from your home and plan to help!

Early Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, December 24, at 5:00



Bring the kids and join us for this fun, interactive service. The children will help tell the Christmas story and then we'll all share the Eucharist together.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, December 24, at 11:00

We'll begin in the quiet of candlelight and then crescendo with joy as we celebrate the birth of Christ. We'll celebrate the Eucharist as Christmas Day dawns.



— From the Bishop —

Advent 2013

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

O God, you have blessed us with minds to think and hearts to love: Grant us all the courage to seek you, the strength to endure, the wisdom to listen, and the grace to live fully into the gifts you have given us, that we may be transformed in our common life: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Even before I was consecrated as your bishop in May of 2010, I attended my first LARCUM gathering (Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and United Methodist). This ecumenical group, comprised of bishops and their ecumenical officers from each denomination, meets on a regular basis to discuss religious matters that are common to all of us. The five of us - Herman Yoos (ELCA), Charles vonRosenberg (The Episcopal Church in SC), me, Robert Guglielmo (RC) and Jonathan Holston (UM) - all began our ministries as bishops within a narrow time frame and have not only become dialogue partners, but friends. Since the spring of 2012, our dialogue has especially focused on the needs of children and youth in the state of South Carolina, especially with regard to public education.

This dialogue has galvanized and energized us over the past year and a half as we've worked to understand and discern the role of the church in addressing South Carolina's challenges in public education. In response to that work, the LARCUM

Bishops have agreed to, at least, a five-year commitment to work together in advocating and increasing the involvement of our local congregations in support of public education.

Some may fairly wonder if our involvement is about pushing religious agendas on an unsuspecting public. There can be no question about our commitment to the faith we hold dear. Indeed, all our judicatories have private religious schools in which our perspectives on faith have an explicit role in education. Some of our children attend these schools. But our collaborative effort with regard to public education is focused on a more basic and general human right - the right to learn - a right that many children across the state of South Carolina, especially those in extreme poverty, are struggling to realize.

Churches have played a powerful role in learning for centuries, and scripture gives us countless examples of the power and necessity of learning, and of the yearning to learn. Psalm 119 is almost a love song to learning. Jesus' slipping away from his parents at age twelve to sit and learn at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem tells of his love and passion for learning.

As persons of faith, we are constantly in discernment about how God would have us develop and use our particular gifts, not least among them, our minds. And we are called to bring out those gifts that others have. As bishops, our stake in education is a response to Christ's command that we love one another as he loved us. That we

give ourselves to one another as he gave himself for us.

Recently at the 91st Diocesan Convention, many of the congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina displayed exhibits of their ministries in support of public education. A survey of our congregations indicates that approximately half of our congregations are actively engaged in initiatives that provide after-school care, tutors, school supplies, weekend meals, summer enrichment programs, community gardens, Christmas gifts, and transportation. In addition, as many of our congregations work through a strategic visioning process of **Witness, Common Mission and Service to the World**, additional resources are being developed to address the needs of the children and youth in Upper South Carolina.

Our recent LARCUM Bishops' Dialogue, a public event, featured former South Carolina Governor and US Secretary of Education Dick Riley as its keynote speaker. Clergy, school board members, education advocates, teachers, principals, superintendents and interested citizens attended from across the state and across political lines. Governor Nikki Haley has called upon the churches to play a role in the education of all South Carolina children, and our LARCUM work is helping us to identify what the churches can do - there is much - and what only government can do.

In the coming year, we will continue to identify collaborative possibilities across ecumenical lines, especially those collabo-

rations that involve direct, relational connections in tutoring, enrichment and summer learning opportunities for preschool children. We will look for all our congregations to consider ways large and small to participate in these collaborations. We will also be looking for partners in the business community.

Episcopalians in Upper South Carolina already have a powerful witness in this ministry as we support the children that have been entrusted to us. It's worth remembering that as John the Baptist proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, his proclamation called the crowds to be just and to share what they had with others (Luke 3). These ministries are thus indicative of the Kingdom of God.

The needs of South Carolina's poorest children are before us. Advent tells us that the Kingdom of God is at hand and calls us to see and hear things we have missed and to turn around - repent is John's word - and to bring that kingdom into being. Here and now.

May God's word, made manifest to us in the person of Jesus Christ, bless and fill you with hope and believing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Christ,
The Rt. Rev. Andrew Waldo
Eighth Bishop
The Episcopal Diocese of
Upper South Carolina