

Letters From St. Nicholas'



Advent at St. Nicholas'

The Rt. Rev. C. Wallis Ohl, Bishop of Northwest Texas
The Rev. J. Scott Mayer, Bishop-Elect
The Rev. James E. Liggett, Jr., Rector

St. Nicholas' Episcopal Church

4000 W. Loop 250 N.
Midland, Texas 79707
Voice (432) 694-8856
Fax (432) 697-1734
Mobile (432) 260-6666
stnicks@stnicksmt.org
<http://www.stnicksmt.org>

The Bishop of Northwest Texas
The Rt. Rev. C. Wallis Ohl, Bishop
The Rev. Scott Mayer, Bishop-Elect
Web: <http://www.nwt.org>

Rector

The Rev. James E. Liggett, Jr.

Vestry

Dr. Will Morris, Sr. Warden
Christian Ed Committee Liaison
Mr. Nathan Williams, Jr. Warden
Physical Plant Committee Liaison
Emergency Preparedness Liaison
Ms Mary Rogers, Clerk
Fellowship Committee Liaison
Ms Marilyn Bassinger
Worship Committee Liaison
Mr. Jim Brown
Finance Committee Liaison
Dr. Michael Jordan
Outreach Committee Liaison
Mr. Scot Marter
Fellowship Committee Liaison
Mr. Pool Webb
Publicity Committee Liaison

Deacon

Deacon Tom Burns

Parish Staff

The Rev. Dr. Bob Bonnington
The Rev. Dr. Malcolm Slayter
Pastoral Associates
Mr. Bob Poer
Parish Administrator
Mr. Darryl Knapp
Organist / Choirmaster
Lay Ministries Coordinator
Mr. Bobby J. Crues
Treasurer
Mr. Corby Considine
Chancellor
Ms Elvira Sebian
Sexton

Why Advent?

Why Advent? What is going on with us, anyway? The world out there is already deep into what it calls the Christmas season; and reminders that the big day are approaching are in front of us every day. I saw my first Christmas decorations in October, and by now there is no where to look without seeing the message that Christmas is upon us.

Except in Church. Here, while the world decks itself in red, green, and silver, we stand apart, strangely shrouded in Violet, hearing lessons about John the Baptist and the end of the world. Not a peep about Mary or Joseph until the 21st. As the world's 'Christmas Season' reaches its peak frenzy, we light candles on a simple wreath, and wait.

Behind all of this peculiarity lies a wisdom that is at least 1,600 years old. The Church has always known that real celebration requires careful preparation, and not just preparation that focuses on the details of the celebration (like our Christmas lists), but also preparation that focuses on the meaning of the celebration.

Remember, at Christmas we do not celebrate Jesus' birthday—we have no idea of when that is. Instead, we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation, the miracle of God becoming a human being and sharing, not just our circumstances, but the very reality of being a person. God comes to us. God makes us his own in a new, unique, and totally unexpected way. This is, in no small way, the decisive event in human history. Things will never be the same.

Advent is about trying to wrap our minds around this new reality; it is about how God has come to us in the past, how he is reaching out to us today, and about how he will continue to come to us until his will for all creation has been fulfilled. That takes some reflection, that takes some effort, and that takes some time. Advent gives us that time, and calls us to patient waiting for the gift that can change everything, if we will but let it.

So let's be different. Let's use these three weeks to wait, to pray, and to listen for the quiet gift that is always at our door, and that awaits only our response.

Have a blessed Advent,
Fr. Jim



Congratulations and welcome to our Bishop-Elect. The Rev. Scott Mayer was elected the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Northwest Texas on the second Ballot at the Special Electing Convention of the Diocese held Saturday, November 22, at St. Paul's Church in Lubbock.

In order for the election to be complete, a majority of the Standing Committees and Bishops with jurisdiction in the Church need to consent. Pending that consent, the Consecration of Fr. Mayer to the Episcopate will be March 21st, 2009 in Lubbock. Fr. Mayer will begin his time in the Diocesan offices in February, 2009. For more information about Fr. Mayer and the electing Convention, visit the diocesan web site at www.nwt.org.



Advent

As we begin Advent and our preparation for God's coming among us at Christmas time, things will change a bit. There will be some seasonal changes in our worship, as we focus our attention on this special season. Also, as we begin a new church year we also begin a new year with our lectionary. This year, the Gospel readings will be from St. Mark. Since Mark is the shortest of the Gospels, we will also be hearing from St. John's Gospel at different times throughout the year. The Gospel according to St. Mark is an easy read, and I recommend a trip through it as one way to prepare for the coming year.

Also, a simple Advent Wreath for families to use and a small book of Advent Meditations by Henri Nouwen are available at the Welcome Center. Please feel free to take these home to enrich this special season.



So, it's that time of year to think about giving a Christmas Poinsettia for St. Nicholas' Altar. If you are interested in giving a poinsettia this year, come by the church office for a poinsettia card or look in the church pews. Complete the information needed for your gift, include your payment and return the card to the office. The Poinsettias are \$10.00 each. All orders must be in by **December 19th**.



There are some interesting On-Line Advent Calendars out this year. If you would like to visit some, here are some internet addresses:

<http://www.WhyWeAreWaiting.com/>,

<http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/welcome/?advent08>,

<http://www.edow.org/spirituality/advent/2008.html>



On Saturday, December 6th from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM at Holy Trinity Church, (1411 W. Illinois St.) the Episcopal Church Women of the Permian Basin will sponsor Eternal Threads, a sale of truly lovely woven and other handmade goods made by third-world women. All proceeds go to the families that produce the goods.

This is a wonderful opportunity to find Christmas gifts that are not only of a very high quality, but that also will make a very real difference in the lives of the people who make them. Volunteers are needed to help with the sale. If you can spare a couple of hours on Dec. 6th, please call Kathleen Liggett at 699-1631 (leave a message if no one is at home.)



This year we are going to do something new. As you all know, the constant refrain on radio and television, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the Christmas Season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost or have never had. The loss of a dear family pet, the anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation, the gut wrenching loss of a child, the loneliness of no longer having a beloved spouse to share each day—all these can contribute to a feeling of being alone, of ‘feeling blue’ in the midst of the society around us which seems bent on ‘being happy’ and ‘celebrating’. There are years when we hurt at Christmas time and can’t get into the festivities others seem to be able to do.



It’s at such times that we need to make the space and take the time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. We need to know that we are not alone. For these reasons, St. Nicholas’ will be hosting our first “Blue Christmas” Service on December 11th, at 7:00 PM. This is a time for those who are hurting and their friends to come and join in sharing and hearing prayers, Scripture and music that acknowledge that God’s presence is for those who mourn, for those who struggle - and that God’s Word comes to shine light into our darkness.

The brief service will be followed by a time for light refreshments and fellowship. Everyone is invited to join us, and you may know some people who need a special invitation this year. It will be a time to move from feeling ‘blue’ to experiencing the wonder and hope of Christmas. The service is being organized by St. Nicholas’ Health Ministries.



Our Angel Tree party will be Sunday, December 7th at 2:00 PM in the Parish Hall. Please plan to join us as we share Christmas with these special children. Also, helpers are needed—please call the Parish Office if you help us out.