

Parish of the Good Shepherd

1671 Beacon Street
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The Advent Wreath

This has appeared before in the Good Shepherd newsletter but people seem to like it (probably because I appear ridiculous) so here it is again with my wishes for a blessed Advent.

My first parish was unworthy of me. The people were neither intelligent, politically engaged (except on the wrong side), nor sophisticated. This being the South, about all we had in common was a fondness for football. Among the many irritants was that their Advent wreath had plastic "greens". PLASTIC! Wouldn't you know it. A plastic wreath for plastic people. Well, I could do something about that, and I did. I went out and cut boughs of pine, heavy with resin and wonderfully scented, and I made a real Advent wreath. And even they liked it. And then on the Third Sunday of Advent, when the boughs had had a good chance to get nice and dry, and just after the third candle had been lit, my beautiful, resinous Advent wreath caught fire. I don't actually remember a fire extinguisher being brought out, but I do remember lots of smoke and how the Advent wreath looked after the fire had been stamped out. The next day members of the Altar Guild went out and gathered holly and made a new Advent wreath, not as grand as mine but not combustible either. The really amazing thing about all this is that no one, not one of all those stupid, unsophisticated people, ever mocked me or held me up to public ridicule. They laughed at the absurdity of the event, but they didn't laugh at my absurdity. They treated me with infinite indulgence and with, yes, love. I spent five years in that place and when I left I cried buckets of tears. They had become my family.

Love comes down at Christmas not as a know-it-all or a bully. God comes as a baby, among us as one of us, showing us that "love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude" (1 Corinthians 13:4). And so maybe Christ is born for the stupid, the unsophisticated, the poor in spirit, the humble. And maybe the rest of us have to learn how to be stupid and poor before love makes any sense to us. I think that is something I learned from that Advent wreath. I'm still trying to learn it. But God is patient and kind and it's never too late.

~ GTW

CHRISTMAS FLOWER OFFERING



The season of Advent begins December 2 and continues until Christmas Eve. During the four Sundays in Advent the tradition at Good Shepherd has been to have simple seasonal greens surrounding the Advent wreath rather than the traditional bouquet of flowers during the Sunday morning worship service. When the Christmas season begins the church will be decorated with wreaths, seasonal plants and flowers once again - a wonderful way to celebrate the birth of Christ. You are invited to help make this happen by using the enclosed Christmas Flowers envelope to make a donation in any amount in memory of or in thanksgiving for family members and/or friends who are special to you. **Please return envelopes to the church office by December 16 by mail or by putting them in the offering plate on Sunday.** All donations received by the 16th will be listed in the order-of-service Christmas Eve. Thank you.



Please return your pledge card

Everyone who attends Good Shepherd with some regularity is considered a member of the parish. Members of the parish are expected to make a yearly pledge of financial support, for we have no other sources of income other than what you give us. You may pick up a pledge card in the back of the church to fill out and return. You can also email your pledge for 2013 to office@goodshepherdnewton.org. Thank you.

PARISH NEWS – NOV. 28, 2012

"Refreshing" the Prayer List, Advent 1

Praying for the needs of the church, the world, and those commended to us has always been an important part of our Sunday worship. The names read out during the Prayers of the People are those who have acute needs. Those with more long-term needs can have their name added to the "long list," which is not read out in church, but prayed for by a group of Intercessors from the parish. These Intercessors have committed to praying for the people named on the "long list" every day.

However, the "long list" has been getting very, very long! We've decided that beginning Advent 1, we are going to start over with the "long list." If you have added a name to this list in the past and would like to continue to have that person prayed for by the intercessors each day, please re-submit their name to the parish office (and leave your name, so we have a contact to follow up with).

Or, perhaps you are just learning about this ministry and have a person whose name you would like to add.

The Intercessors always welcome new members who feel drawn to this ministry and to the commitment of daily prayer for others in need. We receive an updated list each week via email, pray daily in our homes, and then gather once a year in the spring for a pot luck dinner. Intercessors also read the Prayers of the People in church. Please contact Regina, or Ann Honeycutt if you would like more information, or to join us.

Advent Giving Opportunity

Once again Good Shepherd is partnering with Boston Healthcare for the Homeless for our Advent Giving Project. On Dec. 2 and 9, we will be collecting new WHITE SOCKS and GIFT CARDS. The socks help protect cold, wet feet from painful diseases, and the gift cards provide a treat -- and a warm spot -- for those on the streets. Gift cards requested are in \$5 amounts from: CVS, Dunkin' Donuts, and McDonalds. Homeless families enjoy gift cards in \$20 amounts from Stop & Shop and Target. Drop off all donations in the red-and-white striped box in the Loring Room. Thanks for helping!



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & PROGRAMS

for Children, Youth, & Families

December Dates

2 - ADVENT 1

8:45 AM

Level I Atrium

9:45 AM

Nursery

Level II Atrium

3rd-5th grade to Loring Room

6th & 7th grade to Youth Room

11:20 AM

Pageant rehearsal after church, in church – read through with scripts & block

9 - ADVENT 2

8:45 AM

Level I Atrium

9:45 AM

Nursery

Level II Atrium

3rd-5th grade to Loring Room

6th & 7th grade to Youth Room

11:20 AM

Pageant rehearsal after church, in church – read through with scripts

Youth Group - Babysitting Fundraiser, see details below

12 Wed. - 6:00 PM

Mid-week Pizza & Pageant Rehearsal

(6:00-6:30 Pizza; 6:30-7:30 Pageant Rehearsal in church)

16 - ADVENT 3

8:45 AM

Pageant Dress Rehearsal in costume, Loring Room

9:45 AM

Nursery

10:00 AM

Pageant offered during service,

No Atrium or Church School

11:30 AM

Youth Group - Babysitting Fundraiser, see details below

5:30 PM

Confirmation Class - Yankee Swap, details forthcoming

Parents... Think what you can accomplish with a Kid-Free afternoon! The Parish of the Good Shepherd high school youth group is having a *Babysitting Fundraiser!* Sunday, December 9 and 16, 2012. Leave your kids after church or pageant practice for a few hours or for the whole afternoon (11:30-5:00). \$10 per hour OR a family rate of \$15 per hour – cash accepted or checks made out to Parish of the Good Shepherd with “babysitting” in the memo area. This Youth Fundraiser will help fund the February 2013 high school youth mission to the 9th ward of New Orleans. Help us to make a difference!

This past Sunday we had a spirited group of children in both Atria! The combination of the Thanksgiving holiday, visiting friends and family, and the anticipation of Christmas, all contributed to their increased levels of excitement. So, it was with great energy that they set about doing their work. We finished a little early and I escorted the children into the hallway to put on shoes and gather their things in preparation for joining the congregation at the Peace.

Since we had a few minutes to spare, I engaged them in the Lesson of Silence: I asked the children to sit with their backs close to the long hall wall. I asked them to close their eyes and listen very carefully, to listen for different sounds they could hear. I said I would whisper their name and ask them to share what they heard.

A great silence and stillness enveloped the hallway as children focused on this work. After a minute or so of sustained silence, I whispered, one by one, the name of each child, asking them to quietly share what they had heard. Here are some of the responses:

“I hear children working in the classroom [Loring Room].”

“I hear people praying in church.”

“I hear God in my heart.”

May we all find time for a little silence this Advent.

Advent Blessings,

Mary Ann.



WEEKDAY EUCHARIST
WEDNESDAY 7:15 A.M.
