



# Partners in Faith & Action

December 2017

## ADVENT CELEBRATIONS

Advent begins on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The word Advent means “coming.” We are not only celebrating the anniversary of Jesus’ birth but also the promise of His second coming at the end of time. It is therefore a time of preparation.

Advent is a time for prayer, reading the Bible, penance, and sharing. The NDV faith community offers several opportunities to deepen our faith as a family and community.

--Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, Fourth grade will be the readers and gift bearers for the 8:45 a.m. Mass celebrating the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day of obligation. Please wear full dress uniform.

--Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, Kindergarteners will be readers, gift bearers, and provide a reception after the Family Mass at 9:00 a.m. in the Church.

--Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, A Prayer Service for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be held in the NDV Church at 8:30 a.m.

--Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, Eighth grade will present the Christmas Pageant at our 8:45 a.m. Mass. Please wear full dress uniform.

## RECONCILIATION DURING ADVENT

The students in grades six through eight will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Wednesday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and grades three through five on Thursday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. in the Church.



## FAMILIES GROWING IN FAITH

There will be no Families Growing in Faith during December.

## THE ADVENT WREATH

Today we celebrated the Blessing of the Advent Wreaths in anticipation of Advent. The Advent Wreath is an old Advent



custom. It is made of a circle of evergreens, which symbolize eternity and God’s love which never ends. Inserted in the wreath are four candles. Three of the candles are purple and one is pink. The four candles remind us of the long wait the people in the Hebrew Scriptures had before the coming of Jesus, our Savior. Each week a candle is lit and prayers are said. The candles remind us of Christ, the Light of the World. Traditionally, the purple candles remind us of our longing for the coming of Jesus. The pink candle is lit on the third week of Advent to represent our joy because the celebration of Jesus’ birth is coming very soon.

## ADVENT: LITURGICAL COLORS

The color for Advent is purple. As we see with the Advent wreath, the first, second and fourth candles are purple. The priest will wear purple vestments on these Sundays. The third Sunday is Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete means “rejoice” in Latin. We rejoice in the promise of redemption through Jesus’ sacrifice. We light the pink candle and the priest wears pink vestments as a sign of our joy. It is a reminder that the true joy of Christmas is welcoming God’s only Son into our world.

The priest will wear white vestments on Christmas Day and all Masses through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord as a sign of the purity of Christ. (from *Creative Communications*)

## FAMILY ACTIVITIES

--Make an Advent wreath.

--Create an Advent calendar by gluing numbered paper “pockets” onto a poster board. Write Bible verses on slips of paper or cut pictures from old Christmas cards to hide in the pockets.

<http://www.thecraftycrow.net/2010/11/24-advent-calendars-to-make.html>

--Create an Advent calendar with things you can do during Advent, such as trying not to complain, giving someone a treat in honor of St.

Nicholas, going to Mass, going to Reconciliation, doing chores without asking, etc.  
 --Make a countdown chain (see <http://www.pbs.org/parents/adventures-in-learning/2013/11/christmas-countdown-chain-activities/>) or make a chain as you do things to prepare for Christmas.

--Make a Jesse Tree to learn about Jesus' family tree. Put symbols for each person on the Tree. [http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgical\\_year/activities/view.cfm?id=545](http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgical_year/activities/view.cfm?id=545)

--Read in Scripture the events leading up to Christ's birth. This could be done as part of your dinner prayer with the Advent Wreath.  
 --Set up a nativity scene (crèche). Add a new figure each day. Save the Christ Child until Christmas Eve or Christmas morning.

--Learn more about the Advent Feast Days  
*Feast of St. Nicholas*—Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>  
*Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe*—Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>  
*Feast of Santa Lucia*—Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>

Some additional sites with Advent and Christmas activities:

<http://dltk-holiday.com/xmas/advent.html>  
<http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/home/>  
<https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/> -- Christmas traditions around the world

December 25: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)

December 31: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

January 1: Mary, the Holy Mother of God

January 7: The Epiphany of the Lord

January 8: The Baptism of the Lord

## LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Catholic Church has five liturgical seasons – Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent and Easter. The year begins with Advent and ends on the Saturday after the last Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Feast of Christ the King. The Church has a three-year cycle for the Sunday readings. The new Church Year is Year B. Most of the Gospel readings this year will be from the Gospel of Mark.



Mark was a Jew from Jerusalem, who became a follower of Jesus. He was probably wealthy, since his mother's house was large enough to host gatherings of early Christians.

Mark was mentored by St. Peter and St. Paul. He traveled with Paul on his first missionary journey. Later, he spent time in Rome, where he was an assistant and translator for Peter. People encouraged Mark to write down the words and deeds of Jesus which he had heard from Peter.

Mark's first readers were the Christians of Rome at a time when the Church was being persecuted. Being a Christian could mean suffering rejection, exclusion from positions of influence, persecution, torture or even death. One of Mark's themes is discipleship. To be a disciple is to take up one's cross and follow Jesus. He portrays the fears, flaws, and failures of Jesus' first disciples, encouraging his readers that, even when we fail, we too can be forgiven and restored. (from Dr. Mary Healy author of *The Gospel of Mark (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture)*)

## GOD'S GIFT

During this busy time of the year, as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth, let us remember: "A simple heart seeks to live in the present moment, and to receive each day as God's gift." (Brother Roger, *A Future of Peace*, from *Journeying with Colin*)

*HAPPY ADVENT & MERRY CHRISTMAS!*

## THE GIVING TREE

In this season of giving, we remember those in need in our community. We have the opportunity to share our blessings with young people from Bayview-Hunter's Point and Hamilton House. Students have chosen ornaments from the tree and will return their unwrapped gifts to the school office or Rectory by Friday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>. Encourage your child to help you shop for the gift and contribute to the gift from his/her allowance or by doing chores.



## CHRISTMAS SEASON

The Christmas season officially begins with the evening prayer (Vespers) of Christmas Eve and concludes with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (which is January 8<sup>th</sup> this year). The Church year celebrates several major feasts during the Christmas season, namely:

