



Advent Advisor

January 2023

Journey with The Magi



The Feast of the Epiphany originated in the Eastern Church where it celebrated Jesus' baptism. In the Fourth Century it was introduced to Western Christianity which settled on a different focus. In the West the emphasis was on the

manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, specifically the Magi who were the first Gentiles to worship Christ. Their visitation to the infant Jesus is the concluding chapter of the Christmas narrative. Little is known about them except that they traveled from an unnamed place in the East to Bethlehem with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the Christ Child. Such offerings are believed to have portended the sacrificial offering of Christ. In the New Testament the Magi are identified as sages, but early Church theologians called them *peregrini*, a term that means "almost kings." Whoever they were, wherever they were from and whatever their actual number, the Magi made a pilgrimage in search of the newborn Christ so that they could pay him homage.

Typically, religious pilgrimages are embarked upon by persons who want to pay homage or be in the presence of the spirit of someone who has inspired them. Treks have been made to follow in the footsteps of the historical Jesus and to places visited by the Apostles and Evangelists, shrines of saints, and sites associated with mystics, martyrs and divine revelations. The arduous journeys and rituals of paying homage have certain sacrificial elements that the pilgrims hope may, in and of themselves, be transformative.

We are pilgrims on a journey of faith. We may set out with intention and commitment, but resolve may wane when we realize that sacrifice is part of the load we bear and the journey has twists and turns we'd just as soon avoid. We may have little clarity about the direction in which we are headed, much less the destination. Faith is mysterious even as it takes hold. Something nudges us on, and we begin to realize that we are being accompanied, perhaps by fellow travelers, but decidedly by an unrelenting impetus that we may come

to recognize as God's Spirit.

We, like the Magi, pay homage to Christ by gifts of heart and mind, in giving up ourselves to his service. The early understandings of epiphany may be joined. In honest and true celebration of the manifestation of Jesus Christ as the Incarnation of God's love for all the world, for us, such lively faith may propel us into purposeful pilgrimages. We may live more and more deeply into our own baptism where we are drawn into life with Christ so that his light shines in and through us.

Keep on keeping on.

Connie

In Case You Missed It

The Diocese of East Carolina has participated in the global Advent Calendar for the last few years. This year members of the diocese's numerous commissions, committees, and ministries shared daily reflections and images on each day's word, called AdventWord. Contributors were also requested to post images as well.

As president of the of the diocese's Episcopal Church Women, Lucia Peel submitted her reflection and image on the word "messenger" and the diocese posted it on December 10, Lucia's special birthday.



The gift is that Jesus is always there for us, waiting for us to come to Him. We receive messages from our priests about Christ's love but I also find reminders of the Messiah's promised presence in my life in unexpected places:

****the sun hitting a strand of trees at just the right moment to highlight the magnificent reds and golds on a late FALL afternoon*

****the wind blowing across the top of an ocean wave on a cold winter day creating a spray resembling lace over a blue-gray background, or*

****the first snowy morning of Advent.*

Twelfth Night Supports Blessings in a Backpack

Thank you to Cathy Skinner for hosting our Twelfth Night party, which traditionally helps us to raise funds for Blessings in a Backpack.

Just as the Wise Men brought gifts for the baby Jesus, we are asked to bring gifts for our own Martin County children.

The Church of the Advent is committed to supporting this weekend feeding program for school children during the month of April.

The program provides 5,040 weekend meals for 80 kids at five Martin County Schools at a cost of \$4.00 per child per weekend.

During April, Church of the Advent will be packing 320 meals multiplied by \$4.00 for a total cost of \$1,280.

We would like to make this our goal — to raise enough funds to cover our month of April.

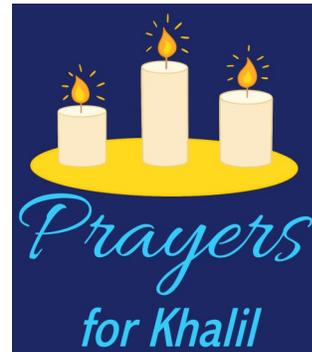
For \$16.00 you can feed one child for the month, for \$32.00 you can feed two children, for \$48.00 you can feed three children, for \$64.00 you can feed four children, for \$80.00 you can feed five children, and for \$96.00 you can feed six children.

Checks need to be made out to Blessings in a Backpack.

A collection basket will be available at the party.



CANDLELIGHT VIGIL for Khalil Jefferson Monday, January 9th at 5:00 pm S. Tar River Greenway Beech Street Entrance Hosted by Find Khalil Jefferson Led by Rev. Connie Connelly



Posted by Bishop Rob Skirving on his Facebook on December 20

Friends, I invite your prayers for Sonora Jefferson and her family, as they continue the search for her son Khalil, missing since December 2nd. I remember confirming Khalil on a visit to The Church of the Advent in Williamston, North Carolina, just before he left home to report for service with the Air Force.

Missing in Action

When you come into church on January 8, you will see no brass altar accouterments.



They have been removed for special cleaning and lacquering.

John Price has secured the services of an artisan who does this work for St. Paul's in Edenton as well as other historic restoration in

Edenton.

The vestry is underwriting the costs.

The brass will return in time for Easter. Hopefully, the lacquering will eliminate polishing and extend the life of the accouterments.



Also, the organ will be out of commission after the service on January 8 for restoration. The work should take about two weeks.

On Wednesday, January 11, we will gather for Evening Prayer at 6 p. m.

After the service, worshippers are invited to adjourn to Mama's Pizza for dinner.



Live in the light

Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, "How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or 10 years from now?" There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step — what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day.



The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all our shadows away.

—Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*



Fresh Starts

I suppose when we wake on January 1 the world will look the same. But there is a reminder of the Resurrection at the start of each new year, each new decade. That's why I also like sunrises, Mondays and new seasons. God seems to be saying, "With me you can always start afresh."



—Ada Lum

God's Gift of Prayer... Sharing Some Thoughts

Years ago, when we lived in Plymouth, I discovered a valuable lesson about the importance of prayer and praying for others. From childhood, I was taught to pray for others. I had not thought much about how prayer could directly affect me.

At that time, our family attended the Methodist Church. I was working at the Weyerhaeuser paper mill and involved with a computer roll tracking computer system. There was a lot of automation used to move large rolls of paper away from the paper machines by conveyors over to the roll wrappers for weighing, wrapping and labelling. There were many electronic eyes and roll stops in place and signaling to control this roll movement. Occasionally, this movement was interrupted by an automation signal error and the operator would call me to come over and help analyze the stoppage.

It was on such an occasion that I received a call to come to the roll wrapper. The operators would stand many hours on concrete floors and when a stoppage would occur, it offered them an opportunity for a break and they would leave the station. Upon arriving at the scale, I stood near the conveyor to examine a barcode tag and inadvertently tripped a photo eye. To my surprise and danger, a roll moved toward me and against my shoulder. I hollered in surprise and the senior operator saw what had happened and immediately flipped the switch to stop the conveyor. I could have been severely injured or worse if not for his quick intervention. It left me shaken and feeling very blessed.

On the following Sunday, our entire Sunday school met as a group in the sanctuary. As Sunday School Superintendent, I related a story about a young minister whose wife and children were involved in a tragic car accident and that God brings healing after tragedy and the importance of prayer. I mentioned what had happened to me at work and how thankful I felt to avoid injury. The senior members then looked at each other and said that they were praying for me that week. You can imagine how I felt.

The Pastoral Care members have talked about the importance of our parish members praying for one another. Scripture tells us that Jesus, by example, encourages us to pray for one another (**Mark 1:35**) – “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” When we pray, we ask God to remember others and faithfully know that He will meet their needs. I would like to encourage prayers for one another as a gift of God's love for each other.

Blessings with thanks,
Jim Allen



Report on Annual Meeting

Elected to Vestry for 2023 to 2025

Jim Allen

Frankie Biggs

Kit Reddick

Elected as Convention Delegates

Lucia Peel

Bill Webb

The Report of the Priest in Charge At the November 11, 2022 Annual Parish Meeting

The Church of the Advent is a small parish, but our members are faithful in attendance and involvement with one another, the community and the Diocese of East Carolina. I envision our coming to fully understand and embrace our identity as the body of Christ and, as such, the reality that we are all ministers gifted, graced and called to serve.

The Vestry is comprised of committed, talented persons. Currently serving are Michael Biondi, Don Mills, Cathy Skinner, Tom Slade, Lowell Taylor and Chloe Tuttle, and Ginny Webb. Lucia Peel is Senior Warden and Doug Chesson is Junior Warden. Lowell is Treasurer and Ginny is Clerk. Chloe serves as Clerk when Ginny is absent. Staff members Joe Jernigan and Brandon Woody attend all meetings.

Sunday attendance averages 21-24. The most recent Parochial Report (2021) states that we have 90 communicants. I count 45 persons that attend somewhat regularly. We are reaching out to members who cannot attend and others who do not. We are unsure if COVID is a factor. We have welcomed several newcomers and gladly welcomed back some who have returned.

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The Sustainability Committee, headed by Lowell, is responsible for financial matters including investments. Revenues do not cover expenses. We are frugal stewards of the parish's resources; however, in order to balance the \$122,000 + operating budget we have to access some of the financial reserves endowed by generous benefactors years ago. Bill Webb handles cash from pledges and plate offerings and makes deposits. Lowell convenes a group of parishioners separate from the Sustainability Committee to conduct the annual audit. Our parish pledges the amount the diocese asks of us.

We began the year still observing strict COVID protocols for worship, but eventually relaxed those. Now we provide a cup for intinction rather than the small individual cups we had used earlier for distributing communion wine. Eucharistic Ministers are Chloe Tuttle, Don Beach, John Price, Bill Webb and Doug Chesson. All are trained and licensed as well to serve as Eucharistic Visitors, a new ministry initiated to visit and provide communion to persons unable to attend worship. Eucharistic Visiting is a cornerstone of Pastoral Ministry. Under the leadership of Jim Allen, a team is being formed to develop various ways to actively care for one another. Maria Allen sends birthday cards, and she and Jim have taken on the task of sending Christmas cards to current and former members of the parish and friends far and wide.

Brandon Woody and the choir under the direction of Brandon enhance worship with selections from the various riches of Anglican music, sometimes augmented by visiting musicians. The Altar Guild, headed by Lori Taylor, is comprised of persons dedicated to preparing the altar and chancel for worship, and John Price takes the lead in beautifully decorating the entire space on festive occasions. Lectors, Ushers, and Worship Leaders, who officiate at Morning and Evening Prayer, faithfully serve. We delight in the offerings of Kim Fay playing the trumpet and Bob Greene playing "Silent Night" on his ukulele at Christmas.

Kit Reddick keeps us involved in outreach. Other than giving financial and other types of support to various causes, we participate in the Backpack Program, provide Christmas gifts to children in foster care and toiletry items to be distributed by schools to children who may need them. There are preliminary discussions about joining a team that builds and installs beds for children. Michael Biondi and I are collaborating with Holy Trinity Catholic Church clergy in efforts to establish an English as a Second Language program at the Advent.

The old is new again. The Vestry has resurrected the Shepherd's List and distributed contact assignments to parishioners. Joe Jernigan is encouraging parishioners to identify persons in old photos so that we have a visible resource depicting the Advent's history. That may become the basis for a permanent archival collection that might include oral histories. Junior War-

den Doug Chesson has arranged for and provided oversight for extensive repair to church property including the Rectory. Supplies necessary for the anticipated organ repair and upgrade have been delayed, but the project will commence early next year. The Foundation of the Diocese of East Carolina made a substantial donation to the cause and counts on our raising a portion of the funds needed to complete the project.

We continue to investigate ways to improve communication including updated web and Facebook pages. Barney Conway has installed a new sound system in the church that we hope to learn to use effectively. The Parish Administrator, Joe Jernigan, keeps us organized and informed. Kit Reddick produces our monthly newsletter, "The Advent Advisor." Lucia Peel sends out weekly announcements in "Comings and Goings."

Lucia, our Senior Warden, tends to church business with dedication and boundless energy while also serving on the Diocese's Executive Council as ECW Chair and being in charge of our Parish Life Commission. The hard-working folks involved in Parish Life bring us together in various ways at the church and beyond for fellowship and fun, provide meals for meetings and events and stand ready to host receptions after funerals and on other occasions. Lucia is the catalyst for our getting to enjoy annual Parish Weekends at Trinity and filling up our calendars with special happenings. Among the favorites is the parish picnic at Don Beach's house, the ECW Christmas party, the Men's annual gathering at Sunnyside and the yearly service followed by lunch hosted by Bob and Janice Greene at Green Acres. Plans are in the works for the revival of Twelfth Night, a tradition that was suspended for few years because of COVID.

It is unusual for a small parish to have the representation of three persons in diocesan leadership at the same time. Along with Lucia are Bill Webb serving on the Standing Committee and Doug Chesson serving on the Foundation Board of Directors.

According to my neurosurgeon, it will take at least a year for me to recover from the spinal surgery I had in August. Physical therapy is helping me regain strength and proper function, and I am trying to be patient with the process. I appreciate the accommodations the parish made during the early weeks post-op. Brandon's recovery was not as long, but he was given similar accommodation during his absence.

We are small in number, but the people of the Advent have big hearts. We are a community constituted by love. Love is compelling. It makes us care about and care for one another. I believe that it also will become the basis of resolve and courage that will lead us out into the world.

Keep the faith.

Connie

The Prayer List is found in the notebook marked "Prayer Lists" on the usher's table in the narthex of the church. Names may be added at any time by writing them in the notebook or calling the church office after requesting permission of those for whom prayer is requested. The Prayer List is read aloud weekly at Sunday services. Contact the church office if you wish to have a name added, re-listed, or taken off the list.

Prayer List

*Janice Ford Nita Smith
Betty Jones Joanie Davis
Patti Malone Jessie Critcher
Cathy Buchanan Lucia Powe
Lucia Peel Lynanne Taylor
Rose Allard John Cowan*

*The Jefferson family and for the safe
return of Khalil Jefferson*

The families of Lori Thigpen and Jeannette Wood

Birthdays

*2 ~ Mark Richardson
5 ~ Ellen Richardson
6 ~ Lowell Taylor
12 ~ Adison Bosso
13 ~ Will Michel
15 ~ Joey Godard
18 ~ Maria Allen
19 ~ Carrie Mills
19 ~ Linda Favreau
19 ~ Laura Voorhis
22 ~ Don Mills
22 ~ Mary Anne Crowe
22 ~ Dell DiBello
25 ~ Sara Chesson*



Church of the Advent

Founded 1850

Rev. Connie Connelly, Priest in Charge

Office Hours:

Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Other hours by appointment

Office Phone #: 252.792.2244

Cell Phone #: 704-651-0244

Lucia Peel, Senior Warden

Doug Chesson, Junior Warden

Joe Jernigan, Parish Administrator

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Office Phone #: 252.792.2244

Brandon Woody, Organist/Choirmaster

124 West Church Street

P. O. Box 463

Williamston, NC 27892

Email: advent1850@gmail.com

www.williamstonepiscopalchurch.com

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

*****For pastoral emergencies,
contact in this order Connie, Lucia, Joe, Doug.**

*****For all problems or issues dealing with the
church and rectory buildings and grounds,
please contact Joe and then he and Doug will
determine how to proceed.**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Jan. 1 Morning Prayer 11:00 am
Jan. 8 Holy Eucharist 11:00 am
12th Night Party 6:00 pm
Jan. 11 Evening Service 6:00 pm
Jan. 15 Holy Eucharist 11:00 am
Jan. 22 Holy Eucharist 11:00 am
Vestry Meeting 6:00 pm
Jan. 29 Morning Prayer 11:00 am

Feb. 5 Holy Eucharist 11:00 am
Feb. 8 Evening Service 6:00 pm
Feb. 12 Morning Prayer 11:00 am
Feb. 19 Holy Eucharist 11:00 am
Feb. 22 Ash Wednesday 6:00 pm
Feb. 29 Holy Eucharist 11:00 am
Vestry Meeting Time TBD

The Church of the Advent is a nurturing, vibrant, and inclusive community inviting spiritual growth through liturgical worship, outreach, and fellowship.

Church of the Advent

January 2023

Lay Schedule

	<i>1</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>29</i>
	<i>MP II</i> <i>11:00 A.M.</i>	<i>HE II</i> <i>11:00 A.M.</i>	<i>HE II</i> <i>11:00 A.M.</i>	<i>HE II</i> <i>11:00 A.M.</i>	<i>MP II</i> <i>11:00 A.M.</i>
<i>Service Leader</i>	Jane Jernigan	Rev. Mollie Roberts			Kit Reddick
<i>Lector</i>	Kit Reddick	Chuck Cohen	Cathy Skinner	Michael Biondi	Jane Jernigan
<i>Intercessor</i>	Kit Reddick	Cathy Cohen	John Price	Lucia Peel	Bill Webb
<i>Eucharistic Minister</i>		Chloe Tuttle	John Price	Doug Chesson	
<i>Acolyte</i>		Exum Taylor			
<i>Altar Guild</i>	Brandon Woody Lori Taylor				
<i>Ushers</i>	Don Beach Lowell Taylor				

***** Notice There are some changes from the original January schedule.**