



## 15 December 2013: The Third Sunday of Advent

### HOLY RESTLESSNESS: AN ADVENT REFLECTION

Advent is a curious season in the Christian year. Perhaps before the identification of Christmas and consumerism, the Advent season inspired Christians to reflection, confession, and preparation. Beginning in the fourth century, Advent – like Lent – was seen as a time of fasting and penitence. Although Christmas parties keep many of us from fasting during Advent these days, the season is definitely a time of restlessness and reflection for those who take the season seriously.

Advent reveals the ambiguity of Christian hope and history. The Christ whose birthday we soon celebrate has died and risen, but how will Christ come again? How will Christ be revealed in the ongoing historical adventure? Advent calls us to look both at the coming of Jesus, the child in the manger inspired to be God's saving presence to humankind, and the Second Coming of Jesus, anticipated as the fulfillment of history...

Moving too quickly from Remembrancetide to Christmas, without committing ourselves to times of contemplation and reflection is a denial of the importance of spiritual restlessness in the life of faith. While we can sing a few Christmas carols during the Advent season to awaken us to the joy of Jesus' birth, denying the ambiguities of history and the incompleteness of our own lives leaves our spirituality ungrounded and unrelated to the concrete realities of day to day life in all of its wonder and challenge.

Healthy spirituality lives between radical acceptance of life as it is and a holy restlessness, inspired by what could be in God's realm of 'shalom'. Advent challenges us to live with the tension of "this is God's world, filled with wonder and beauty" and "why are we aren't we there yet? Why haven't we reached the promised land, the beloved community of wholeness and healing?" We have to start where we are in a God-filled, imperfect universe; but we cannot end our journey in accepting injustice, oppression, inequality, and

disease. Advent inspires a prophetic unrest that challenges our current achievements as well as our obvious failures in light of God's realm of possibility, beauty, and wonder.

How shall we practice Advent? We know that we neither can nor should ban Christmas carols, parties, and celebrations. But, we need not be so caught up in the merriment of the season that we fail to examine our own lives, congregational life, and political systems. Advent suggests a different type of spiritual practice in which feelings of peace do not lead to contentment with the way things are. The stillness of meditation inspires us to listen for the voice of possibility within our lives and communities. As an examination of conscience, we need to ask ourselves, "What is our deep restlessness? What unrealized dreams of community and spiritual growth still lure us forward? Where are we complicit in the injustice and suffering of the world?"

While we may not fast in the traditional sense of the word, Advent challenges us to a spiritual fast, a fast of holy mindfulness in which we attend to our values and behaviours. Can we celebrate Christmas with joy and generosity without being caught up in consumerism? Can we experience liberation from hurry and busyness during the "Christmas season" (that is, Advent)? Can we pause long enough to hear God's voice and attend to God's vision for our lives and our role as God's partners in healing the earth? Can we give joyful gifts to loved ones and children without spending beyond our means, encouraging violence and greed, and succumbing to the temptation of useless and ecologically destructive purchases? This is a tall order, but it is the fast that Advent calls us.

So, let us sing a few Christmas carols – even in church – for there is no need for liturgical fundamentalism. Let us rejoice in the wonders of a God-filled universe. Let us embrace the exuberance of incarnation. But, let us equally embrace the divine restlessness that calls us to expect more from ourselves as we seek to be fitting companions

of the one whose birth and future presence we await.

*Bruce Epperly is a theologian, writer, and spiritual guide.*

## COMING UP: AT A GLANCE...

back of the church if you think you may want to attend this concert so that we can let them know approximately how many we shall be. Tickets are 30 pounds in the rear nave. Further details are in the Christian Formation booklet.

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In December, as part of our commitment to the wider community, we join in partnership with a large number of charities to help to raise money for good causes. It means that life in St Paul's is challenging!

However, we also try to keep a good Advent. The church is open daily from 09:00 till lunchtime for quiet prayer; morning prayer is said daily at 09:00 and there is a Low Mass at noon.

On the Sundays of Advent the themes of the season expounded in Scripture are explored through music and preaching. Join us at 09:00 for the Family Mass or at 11:00 for the Solemn High Mass.

**SILENT MEDITATION ON TUESDAYS:** The Tuesday morning silent meditation group will meet for the next two weeks as usual. It will NOT meet on December 24 or 31; it will resume on January 7 at 7.30AM

**ADVANCE NOTICE .** We are planning a trip to hear the well known choral group The Sixteen perform at The Chapel at Greenwich as part of their "Choral Pilgrimage" on Wednesday 7 May 2014. The Sixteen are kindly setting aside a block of seats for our purchase ahead of general sales. Please could you let Fr. Andrew Sloane know or sign the sheet at the

# The Season of Advent



## DECEMBER 2013

**Daily in December, from Monday to Saturday: Morning Prayer at 09:00 and mass at noon**

In the afternoon and evening the church is in use for charity events, which with other extra events are noted below.

15 Sun

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Family Mass at 09:00

High Mass at 11:00

16 Mon

19:30 St George's Kidney Patients Carol Event

17 Tue

**15:00 The Wedding of Della Green and Sheridan Swallow**

18 Wed

**19:00 St Paul's Parish Carol Service**

19 Thu

19:00 STOLL Carol Event

20 Fri

Parish Office Closed from lunchtime

21 Sat

22 Sun

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Family Mass at 09:00

High Mass at 11:00

23 Mon

24 Tue

### **CHRISTMAS EVE**

Crib Service at 17:00

Midnight Mass at 23:00

25 Wed

### **CHRISTMAS DAY**

Family Mass at 09:00

High Mass at 11:00

**Masses on the weekdays of Christmastide in December, daily at noon**

26 Thu

Mass at noon

27 Fri

Mass at noon

28 Sat

Mass at noon

29 Sun

### **CHRISTMAS 1**

Family Mass at 09:00

Sung Mass with Cantor at 11:00

## IN OUR DAILY PRAYERS

**O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee: grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.**

*COLLECT FOR ADVENT 3*

### We pray daily for:

- The keeping of a good Advent
- our Bishop, Richard
- our sister parish, St Paul's K-Street, Washington, USA
- the peoples of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon
- the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and for the unity and health of the Anglican Communion (*the daily cycle of prayer for the Anglican Communion is to be found at: [www.anglicancommunion.org/acp](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acp)*)

### Among the bereaved, the sick and those in any kind of need:

Lane Davenport; Nicky Lindsay; Tiffer Eames; Kathleen Hall; Janet Sturdy; John Soderquist; Jenny Cochrane; Pepper Clarita Pay; Sara Carroll-Parker; William Humbert; Maggie Millbourn; Christiane Dupont Nangle; Sal Allen; Peter Brook; Michael Cook; John King; Daphne Nugent; Katherine Davis; John Willmington; Andrew Westwood; Alexandra Holesh; John Millbourn; Diana Kemp Welch; Jean Marc Lehut; Marijo Bergé

### We pray for the bereaved, and all the faithful departed, among them especially:

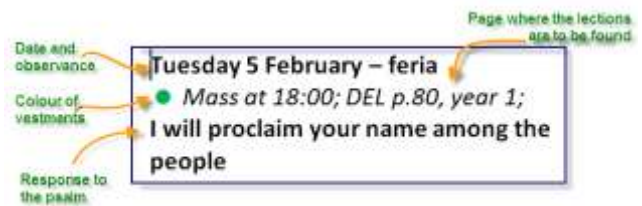
Jean Steers; Katie Maher; James Taylor;

### and those whose Year's Mind is at this time:

William King	13 December
Maud King	14 December
James Newton	15 December
James Elstub	20 December
Patricia Engel	24 December
Joan Easton	25 December

## MASSES & PSALM RESPONSES

There is a mass daily at St Paul's and all are welcome to attend. Service papers are available outside the Chapel or Chancel.



### Sunday 15 December – Advent 3

- Masses at 09:00 & 11:00

### Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December – feria

- Mass at noon DEL p. 50

***Let the peoples praise you, O God***

### Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December – feria

- Mass at noon DEL p. 52

***Righteousness and peace shall flourish***

### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December – feria

- Mass at noon DEL p. 54

***Righteousness and peace shall flourish.***

### Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December – feria

- Mass at noon DEL p. 55;

***Deliver me O Lord and set me free***

### Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December – feria

- Mass at noon DEL p. 57

***The Lord of hosts is the king of glory***

### Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December – feria

- Mass at noon DEL p. 58

***Rejoice in the Lord o ye righteous***

### Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December – Advent 4

- Masses at 09:00 & 11:00

## BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION

Anyone who is interested in or who may have any questions about being baptized and/or confirmed in the coming months is asked to please contact Fr. Andrew Sloane (**[AndrewSloane@spkb.org](mailto:AndrewSloane@spkb.org)** - or by phone: **0207201 9999**) at your earliest convenience so we can organize some appropriate and enjoyable preparation!

# PARISH CONTACTS



## THE PARISH OFFICE

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## THE PARISH CLERGY



### Vicar

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### Associate Vicar

Fr Andrew Sloane

AndrewSloane@spkb.org

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## Honorary Assistant Clergy



(l-r) Fr Nick Mercer; Fr Andrew Norwood;  
Fr Graham Palmer

A priest is available before or after the daily Eucharist for confession and spiritual guidance, and also by appointment. A member of the parish clergy is always available in pastoral emergencies and we will be glad to be contacted at whatever hour, seven days a week; however, as a general rule, Fr Alan is unavailable on Mondays and Fr Andrew Sloane on Fridays.

## THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT



### Director of Music

Stevie Farr

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### Organ Scholar

Georgina Sherriff

## LAY OFFICERS & OTHER STAFF



### Churchwarden

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### Churchwarden

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2013-14

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