

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 3, 2023



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

32 N. Front St.

Sunbury, PA 17801

570-286-7002

The Reverend Dina Carter Ishler

Priest in Charge

All are welcome here, and we are so delighted that you are with us. Please do not hesitate to let us know what your spiritual needs are, so that we may be present to you and continue to welcome you into our community.

The season of Advent invites us to live within the tension of that 'both/and' way of being so dear to our Anglican tradition, where we hold space for the fullness of more than one truth or reality. These days invite us to turn our eyes toward the horizon, as we eagerly seek the Christ who is to come again; yet they also firmly draw our attention toward the present, where the kingdom of God is already stirring. Advent is a threshold season, a liminal place in the calendar, an in-between time of prayer and preparation, as the invitation for lighting our Advent wreath says. We are called to attend to past, present, and future, all at once- if we are open to the prophetic wisdom that teaches us how the God of the ages is at work, we will be able to recognize the Christ when he comes again in the fullness of time, even as we attend to the here and now work of the kingdom on earth.

Advent is a season whose beloved imagery and hymns and stories awaken in us memories of all who kept this watch before us, of expectation that our Advent journeys will prepare us for the birth of our infant Savior- Immanuel, God with us, who will live and die as we do so he might be joined with us forever in the fullness of our human experience- in sorrow and rejoicing, in grief and in hope. We light candles in the quiet of winter dusk to symbolize the Light which will be born among us and drive away darkness forever, we tell and retell the stories whose familiar characters have walked the road ahead of us, and we prepare our own souls to carry and birth this Light so that the world might know it more fully. We do this alongside a secular world who has raced ahead to the joy and wonder of the Child in the manger and the shepherds and the friendly beasts and all the heavenly host singing their Glorias- not to mention our children's joy at mall Santas right after Thanksgiving and our race to decorate and finish our gift-buying. I invite us all to stay present instead, to linger in the mystery and quiet of this season, to take the time we need to be truly ready for what this holy birth will mean. We have work to do while we wait, for each of us have been called to share in preparing the way.

With Advent hope, peace, joy and love- Mother Dina

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Holy Eucharist, Rite II
10:00 am

(Directions to stand, kneel, etc., in our services should always be considered an invitation. If you find any of these to be challenging, please worship in whatever pose may work for you, knowing you are always and already fully in God's presence.)

The Ringing of the Bells

We ring the sacristy bells five minutes before each service to invite us into the silence and reflection that helps to settle our souls for this time of shared and Spirit-filled worship.

THE WORD OF GOD

Prelude Music

Processional Hymn

#59, The Hymnal 1982

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

Reader: The season of Advent is a time of prayer and preparation as we await the coming of our Savior.

All say together: **Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”** (*Mark 13:35-37*)

Reader: O Come, O Come Emmanuel
You are the way, the truth, and the life.
You are the true vine and the bread of life.
Come, living Savior- our world waits in darkness
for the Light only you can bring.

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

The people and Celebrant say together

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Kyrie

S-91, The Hymnal 1982

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

The Celebrant says the Collect.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lessons *The people sit.*

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence~
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil~
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 *Qui regis Israel*

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.

3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

4 O Lord God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?

5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.

17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

18 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Church at Corinth:

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Sequence Hymn

#56, vs. 1-2, The Hymnal 1982

The Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, “In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon

Mother Dina

A time of silence after the sermon is held for reflection.

The Nicene Creed *all stand and say together*

BCP 358

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake

he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. *Amen.*

The Prayers of the People, Form VI

BCP 392

The Leader and People pray responsively.

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;

For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world;

For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop, and Audrey, our Bishop; and for all bishops and other ministers; for this gathering; and for all ministers and people. Today in our Susquehanna Convocation Cycle of Prayer we pray for St. Mark's, Northumberland. In our Diocesan/Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for Trinity Episcopal Church, Jersey Shore and The Church of North India (United).

For all who serve God in his Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation, including those names we now lift up before you, including:

Mother Dina and family, Father Fred and family, Frances (Fran), Angela, Tanya, Weston, Mike B., Noelle, Anita, Carole, Nancy S., Richard S., the Sterner family, Dawson, Gretchen Rehberg (Bishop at The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane, Washington), Ellen and family, Erika, Stan and Nancy R., Jim, Butch, Earl, Frank L., Chris R., Lisa and Mark W., Cheryn, Carlos K., Shirley, Ed, Frank S., Biagio, Lila M., Dot, Al, Donald, Kellie, Blakely, Petrina and Anne H., Wayne, and Mary Alice M. Please pray for all healthcare workers, especially Dan D., Kara, Melissa, Janice and their co-workers.

Silence, during which the People may add their own petitions.

Hear us, Lord;

For your mercy is great.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

Silence. The People may add their own thanksgivings.

We will exalt you, O God our King;

And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom, remembering especially: Richard K., Terry S., and Harold H.

Silence. The People may add their own petitions

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;

Who put their trust in you.

We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

Silence.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have

mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. *Amen.*

Celebrant

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

People ***Amen.***

The Peace

BCP 360

The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

We greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Offertory Hymn

#615, The Hymnal 1982

The Presentation of the Offerings

#380, vs. 3, The Hymnal 1982

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Eucharistic Prayer 3

Enriching our Worship 1

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

All thanks and praise are yours at all times and in all places, our true and loving God; through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word, the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things. You laid the foundations of the world and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb; You brought forth all creatures of the earth and gave breath to humankind.

Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing,
all you create is a sign of hope for our journey;
And so as the morning stars sing your praises we join the heavenly
blessings and all creation as we shout with joy:

The Sanctus

S-114, The Hymnal 1982

The Celebrant continues

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all, your Word has never
been silent; you called a people to yourself, as a light to the nations,
you delivered them from bondage and led them to a land of
promise. Of your grace, you gave Jesus to be human, to share our
life, to proclaim the coming of your holy reign and give himself for
us, a fragrant offering.

Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, you have freed us from sin,
brought us into your life, reconciled us to you,
and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us Jesus took
bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, gave it to
his friends and said: "Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you. Do
this for the remembrance of me."

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to
his friends and said: "Drink this, all of you: this cup is the new
Covenant in my Blood, poured out for you and for all for the
forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so, remembering all that was done for us:
the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection and Ascension, longing for
Christ's coming in glory, and presenting to you these gifts your
earth has formed and human hands have made, we acclaim you, O
Christ:

Celebrant and People

Dying, you destroyed our death.

Rising, you restored our life. Christ Jesus, come in glory!

The Celebrant continues

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may be to us the Body and Blood of your Christ. Grant that we, burning with your Spirit's power, may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ, and in the fullness of time gather us with blessed **St. Matthew** and all your people into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
we worship you our God and Creator
in voices of unending praise.

Celebrant and People

Blessed are you now and forever. AMEN!

The Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say:
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast.**

The Fraction Anthem

S-169, The Hymnal 1982

The Celebrant says

These are the Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn

#68, The Hymnal 1982

Post Communion Prayer

BCP 366

The Celebrant says Let us pray.

Celebrant and People Almighty and ever living God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

The Priest blesses the people.

Recessional Hymn

#616, The Hymnal 1982

The Dismissal *The Celebrant dismisses the People*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Postlude Music

Serving today's liturgy

The Rev. Dina Carter Ishler, *Celebrant and Preacher*

Tina Schlegel, *Organist/ Choir Director* and St. Matthew's Choir

Anissa DeCapria-Sanduta, *Cantor*

Mary Ann Loftus, *Thurifer*

Roy Casey, *Eucharistic Minister*

Bill Bohner, *Lector*

Anissa and Olivia Sanduta, *Advent Candle Reader(s)*

Barry Treon, *Greeter and Usher*

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PARISH NOTES for December 3, 2023

**COLE ALLEN DIAPER PANTRY:** The next Diaper Pantry will be Saturday, January 6, 2024, from 10:00-11:30 a.m. We're in need of volunteers to distribute diapers, and monetary donations

(please indicate “diaper pantry”), and donations of diaper wipes and pullups are greatly appreciated. We covered 65 baby bottoms in November! Please contact Connie Kistler at [kistinpa@ptd.net](mailto:kistinpa@ptd.net).

**HIS DISCIPLES FOOD PANTRY:** The next Food Pantry will be Saturday, December 30, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. All donations are greatly appreciated, especially canned fruits and vegetables. We fed 36 families in November! Please contact John Blanchard at 570-286-5415 (leave a message).

**CHURCH SERVICE TIME is 10:00 AM.** Masks are now optional. Please follow any current COVID restrictions.

**CARLA’S OFFICE HOURS:** Office hours are Tuesday and Wednesday, 10AM to 2PM, and Thursday, 10AM to Noon.  
**MOTHER DINA’S OFFICE/PASTORAL CALLING HOURS:** Wednesdays, 11:30- 5:00pm (or text/call (717) 481-0708 to plan a time when we can be together. I love hearing from you!)

**YOUNG PEOPLE’S MINISTRY:** Please prayerfully consider participating in this vital ministry. If interested in guiding our young people in their faith, please contact Mother Dina or Anissa, 570-898-2275.

**ALTAR SERVERS:** St. Matthew’s is looking for altar servers of all ages for the ministries of: **Eucharistic Minister, Crucifer, Lector and Thurifer.** Please contact Anissa or Mother Dina if interested.

**OTHER LAY MINISTRIES:** Interested in participating in other Lay Ministries? Please contact any vestry member or speak with Mary Ann Loftus.

**CHOIR REHEARSAL:** Interested in singing with the Choir? All are welcome- reach out to Tina Schlegel for more information. Rehearsal is Wednesday evenings at 6pm.

**COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS:** Volunteers are needed each month to sign up for a weekly coffee hour session. Sign-up sheets are posted in the Choir Room. Any questions, please contact Carol Hixson. This month’s sign-ups are:

Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>- Lynda C.

Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>- Blanchards

Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>- Martha & Bill

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>- Mitzie K.

**YOGA CLASSES:** Yoga classes will be held in the Social Hall every Thursday at 7:00PM. \$5.00 per class.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:** Please notify Elaine Schlegel, or the Parish Administrator, Carla Treon, of anyone who needs prayers so they may be added for next upcoming Sunday.

**FROM OUR YOUTH:** "We invite you to take home a Reverse Advent Calendar and a box that we wrapped for a giving of gifts to our His Disciples food bank. The list is only a guide- it does include items we don't usually hand out. **Bring filled boxes to our 10am service on 12/24 (Advent 4) for a blessing.** The wrapped boxes for pickup are located in the library area. You may also donate items to the boxes located in the sanctuary and the social hall. We are so grateful for your generosity and kindness as we love our neighbors in this way."

**MONTHLY MORNING BREAKFAST:** The monthly morning breakfast will be held on Dec. 3rd at 9:00AM.

**CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY SUNDAYS:** Starts at 9:30AM, Dec. 3rd. Any questions, please contact Anissa DeCapria.

**ADVENT TUESDAYS:** Join us December 5, 12, and 19 for an evening of fellowship and prayer centered around our Advent journey. We'll begin at 6pm with a simple potluck supper (please bring a dish to share), then process into the church for an Advent-themed Stations of the Cross, then end with Compline. Join us for all or part of the evening- ask Nate Blanchard or Mother Dina if you have any questions.

**CUB/BOY SCOUTS BREAKFAST WITH SANTA:** Come have breakfast with the Scouts and Santa! 9AM-1PM, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. All you can eat pancakes, choice of sausage or bacon, fruit, and beverages. \$10 per ticket/13yrs and older; \$5 per ticket/4yrs up to 12yrs. Call Rose to get your ticket: 423-309-2706

**MEMORIAL SERVICE:** A memorial service for Terry Shipman will be held Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:00PM, food to follow.

**ADULT BIBLE STUDY:** Adult Bible Study starts at 9:00AM on Dec. 17th. Any questions, please contact Nathan Blanchard.

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:** Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> Service will begin at 6:00PM with the Children's setting of the Creche program and then will be immediately followed by the regular service for all. Come and worship with us!

**UP-COMING MONTHLY EVENTS:** Details to follow closer to the time of the events. Please visit our website for more information

Sun., Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Monthly Breakfast Hour, 9:00AM

Sun., Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Children's Activity Sunday, 9:30AM

Tues., Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>: Advent Tuesdays Potluck Supper/Service, 6:00PM

Sat., Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>: Cub/Boy Scouts Breakfast w/Santa, 9AM-1PM

Sun., Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>: Memorial Service for Terry Shipman, 3:00PM

Tues., Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>: Advent Tuesdays Potluck Supper/Service, 6:00PM

Sun., Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>: Adult Bible Study, 9:00AM

Sun., Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>: Hanging of the Greens (covered dish meal), after service

Tues., Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>: Advent Tuesdays Potluck Supper/Service, 6:00PM

Sat., Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Eve Service, 6:00PM

Mon., Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Day Holy Eucharist, 10:00AM

### VESTRY MEMBERS

Mary Ann Loftus *Senior Warden*; Roy Casey *Junior Warden*;  
Cyn Reid *Clerk of the Vestry*; Nathan Blanchard; Martha Bohner;  
Anissa DeCapria-Sanduta; Carol Lamparter; Pam Schlegel; Lynda  
Schlegel-Culver; Fran Zartman\*

Charlie Schlegel *Senior Warden Emeritus*

SEXTON Sharon Baney





## DONATIONS:

All tithes and offerings are most greatly appreciated, as we rely on your prayerful generosity to care lovingly for our physical space and to keep ourselves vital and active in our community through our worship, our witness, our outreach, and our presence.

You can now donate to Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church "online" at the link listed: <https://diocesecpa.org/stewardship>

Or you may continue to mail your contributions to:

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

32 N. Front St.

Sunbury, PA 17801

[stmatthewsunbury@gmail.com](mailto:stmatthewsunbury@gmail.com) (office email)

[reverenddina@gmail.com](mailto:reverenddina@gmail.com) (Mother Dina's email)

Please visit us at [stmatthew-episcopal.org](http://stmatthew-episcopal.org) and follow us on Facebook- St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

*St. Matthew's is a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania; The Rt. Rev. Audrey C. Scanlan, Bishop.*