

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 10, 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

#57, 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. We light this week's candle for Peace.

All say together: "As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Mark 1:2-3

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.

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; 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 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,

and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 *Benedixisti, Domine*

- 1 You have been gracious to your land, O LORD, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
- 2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.
- 8 I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.
- 9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
- 11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
- 12 The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.
- 13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

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

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Sequence Hymn

#56, vs. 3-4, The Hymnal 1982

The Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

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

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

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his

sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

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 All Saints, Selinsgrove. In our Diocesan/

Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for St. James Episcopal Church,

Lancaster and The Church of Pakistan (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 R., Nancy 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 G. and family, Mary Alice M.,

Bishop Michael Curry, Dean E., and Jim R. 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., Harold H., and Fred G.

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

#76, 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
beings 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

#324, 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

#65, 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*

Gabe Haines, *Lector*

Tina, Charles, Henry Schlegel and Gabe Haines,

Advent Candle Readers

Barry Treon, *Greeter and Usher*



PARISH NOTES for December 10, 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.

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. 10 th - Blanchards Dec. 17 th - Martha & Bill Dec. 24 th - Mitzie K. Dec. 31 st - Anissa
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.
A REMINDER: Please bring your filled Reverse Advent Calendar boxes to our 10am service on 12/24 (Advent 4) for a blessing. Please let us know if you need a box! You may also donate items to the boxes located in the sanctuary, choir area and the social hall. We are so grateful for your generosity and kindness as we love our neighbors in this way.
ADVENT TUESDAYS: Join us December 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.
BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE: I am offering a Blue Christmas Service on Thursday, Dec. 21 (the Winter Solstice!) at 5:30 pm. This service holds space for the reality that sometimes the joy of the holiday season can feel overwhelming to us if we have suffered losses of any kind, and offers a safe space to honor them before

turning with open hearts to all the hope and promise in the birth of the Christ Child. Please come and share in this quiet, beautiful service which offers candle lighting, placing memorial stars on a tree, healing prayers, and a simplified form of Holy Eucharist. Please invite family and friends to join us!

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

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: On Dec. 24th our Christmas Eve Service of Holy Eucharist will begin at 6:00PM with a carol sing and special music and will include our children's setting of the Creche. All children will be included. 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
Tues., Dec. 12th: Advent Tuesdays Potluck Supper/Service, 6:00PM
Sun., Dec. 17th: Adult Bible Study, 9:00AM
Sun., Dec. 17th: Hanging of the Greens (covered dish meal)
Tues., Dec. 19th: Advent Tuesdays Potluck Supper/Service, 6:00PM
Thurs., Dec. 21st: Blue Christmas Service, 5:30PM
Sat., Dec. 24th: Christmas Eve Service, 6:00PM
Mon., Dec. 25th: 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 (office email)

reverenddina@gmail.com (Mother Dina's email)

Please visit us at 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.