

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2024



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

32 N. Front St.

Sunbury, PA 17801

570-286-7002

The Reverend Dina Carter Ishler, *Priest in Charge*

*"Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;  
tender to me the promise of his word;  
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice."  
-Hymn 437, The Hymnal 1982, vs. 1*

## *Advent*

The season of Advent invites us to live in 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. We turn our eyes toward the horizon, as we eagerly seek the Christ who is to come again; and we are also called to the present moment, 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 invited 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's 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, 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 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 just a little longer, to linger in the prophecy, the mystery and the quiet of this season, to take the time we need to be truly ready for what this holy birth will mean. We are almost there.

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

## FOURTH 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 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 respectful silence that settles our souls for this time of shared worship.*

#### THE WORD OF GOD

Prelude Music      “Once he came in blessing”      Michael Weisse

Processional Hymn      #437, The Hymnal 1982  
“Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!”

#### The Lighting of the Advent Candle

*Readers:* The season of Advent is a time of prayer and preparation as we await the coming of our Savior. Today we light the candles for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

*The readers continue:*

“And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.” *(from today's Gospel, Luke 1:40-44)*

*All say together:* O Come, O Come Emmanuel,  
You are the way, the truth, and the life.  
the Light that shines out against the darkness of this world.  
We see the signs that your kingdom draws ever closer.  
Help us to be alert at all times  
ready to stand before the Son of Man when he comes.

*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

**“Lord, have mercy upon us”**

**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.*

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**The Lessons** *The people sit.*

**A Reading from Micah: Micah 5:2-5a**

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;  
and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord.

*People* Thanks be to God.

Canticle 15, Page 91, BCP

The Song of Mary *Luke 1:46-55*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; \*  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed: \*  
the Almighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him \*  
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, \*  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, \*  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, \*  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, \*  
to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.

A Reading from Hebrews: Hebrews 10:5-10

When Christ came into the world, he said,  
"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;

in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

**Sequence Hymn** #56 (all verses) The Hymnal 1982  
**"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

**The Gospel: Luke 1:39-45(46-55)**

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

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

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

[And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."]

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

**The Homily**

Mother Dina

*A time of silence after the homily 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; remembering especially our President Joe Biden; our President-Elect Donald Trump, our Governor Josh Shapiro, our Mayor Josh Broscious, and our Senator Lynda Schlegel-Culver;

**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 ++Sean, 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. Matthew's, Sunbury. In our Diocesan/Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for Christ Episcopal Church, Williamsport, and The Church of the Province of Uganda.

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, Angela, Tanya, Weston, Mike, Richard, the Sterner family, Dawson, Ellen and family, Erika, Stan, Nancy, Frank, Tammy, Becky, Marley, Alexis, Tanner and family, Tyanne, Adam, Richard, Easton, Joan, Barry, Ariella, Ereda Garcia and Junior Jimenez, Bishop Scanlan as she recovers from her foot surgery, Mike and Crystal, Brandon, Pam, Randy, Mary, and for those whose needs are known to God alone. Please pray for all healthcare workers, especially Dan, Kara, Melissa, Janice, and their co-workers. Also, please pray for all serving in our military, including Logan, and law enforcement.  
*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 *Dawn*.  
*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.**



inaccessible from before time and forever. Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance. Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing:

**The Sanctus**

S-114, The Hymnal 1982

**“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts”**

*The Celebrant continues*

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he

loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

*Celebrant and People*

**We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you, and we pray to you, Lord our God.**

*The Celebrant continues*

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ.

Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

Remember all who minister in your Church.

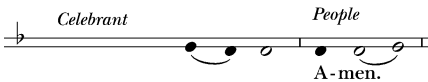
Remember all your people, and those who seek your truth.

Remember all who have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone; bring them into the place of

eternal joy and light.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with **St. Matthew** and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**



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### 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* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

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

### The Fraction Anthem

S-164, The Hymnal 1982

**“Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us”**

*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

#60, The Hymnal 1982

**“Creator of the stars at night”**

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion *All pray together*

Dearest Jesus, we believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament, and, since we all cannot receive communion in the consecrated bread and wine, we pray you to come into our hearts. We unite ourselves with you and embrace you with our hearts, souls, and minds. Let nothing separate us from you; let us serve you in this life until, by your grace, we come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.

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

#66, The Hymnal 1982

“Come, thou long expected Jesus”

**The Dismissal** *The Celebrant dismisses the People*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*People* Thanks be to God.

Postlude

“Our Savior’s Love”

Crawford Gates

Serving today’s liturgy

The Reverend Dina Carter Ishler, *Celebrant and Preacher*  
Patrick Ishler, *Music Minister*; and St. Matthew’s Choir  
Mary Ann Loftus, *Thurifer*; Roy Casey, *Eucharistic Minister*  
Dana Kelly, *Gospel Book Bearer*  
Carol Lamparter, *Lector*

Anissa and Olivia Sanduta and the Newton Family,  
*Advent Candle Readers*  
Barry Treon, *Greeter and Usher*

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PARISH NOTES for December 22, 2024

**COLE ALLEN DIAPER PANTRY:** The next Diaper Pantry will be Saturday, Jan. 4th, 2025 from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. We're in need of volunteers to distribute diapers. Please contact Connie Kistler at [kistinpa@ptd.net](mailto:kistinpa@ptd.net). Monetary donations are very much welcomed, please give in an envelope labeled "Diaper Pantry." **Donations of diaper wipes, pull-ups, and sizes 5 and 6 are so appreciated and urgently needed- We covered 110 baby bottoms in December!**

**HIS DISCIPLES FOOD PANTRY:** Is the last Saturday of each month. Please contact John Blanchard, 570-286-5415, leave message to volunteer. Donations of canned soups, cereals, and canned fruit are welcome. **We fed 45 families in November!** The next Food Pantry will be held Saturday, December 28<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00-11:00 a.m. **Any donations are greatly appreciated!**

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

**CARLA'S OFFICE HOURS:** Office will be closed Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>-Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> and reopen on Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> from 10:00AM-2:00PM.

**MOTHER DINA'S OFFICE/PASTORAL CALLING HOURS:** NO scheduled office hours between 12/26 and 1/2- I ask that you **PLEASE** text or call me immediately at (717) 481-0708 if you have a matter of pastoral urgency.

**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 DeCapria-Sanduta, 570-898-2275.

**ALTAR SERVERS:** St. Matthew's is looking for altar servers of all ages for the ministries of: **Eucharistic Minister, Crucifer, Torch Bearers, Lector, Thurifer, etc.** Please contact Mother Dina if interested in participating in these or ANY of our other ministries!

**CHOIR REHEARSAL:** Rehearsals will continue to be Thursday evenings at 5:30pm. All are welcome to join us - **NO MUSICAL EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!**

**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.

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

**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. 22 <sup>nd</sup> . Matt and David | Dec. 29 <sup>th</sup> . Lynda Culver |
| Jan. 5 <sup>th</sup> - Kistlers        | Jan. 12 <sup>th</sup> - Anissa       |

**JOIN US FOR COMPLINE:** Every Saturday evening at 7pm, either in the church or on Zoom. This quiet and lovely service settles our souls for a peaceful rest bathed in the love of Christ. Zoom link: Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/96682629349?pwd=f9ixnXJB198tYCs4q8k5xpDwBH8YsQ.1>  
Meeting ID: 966 8262 9349  
Passcode: 463167

**ARTHUR'S PET PANTRY:** is a community resource that helps families who are struggling financially with necessities for their pets, such as pet food, cat litter, etc. We have two bins- one in the Narthex and one in the Social Hall and Carol Lamparter will gladly collect them and get them to the pantry. Thanks for your energy around this, Carol!

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE:** 6:00 PM, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate the Feast of the Incarnation. Music will begin around 5:40PM- please come and enjoy the offerings of our choir and musicians. All children will be involved in telling the Christmas story. 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. 24<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Eve Service of Holy Eucharist,  
6:00PM, music begins around 5:40PM.

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

**VESTRY MEMBERS:** Fran Zartman, *Senior Warden*; Roy Casey, *Junior Warden*; Mary Ann Loftus, *Clerk of the Vestry*; Nathan Blanchard; Martha Bohner; Anissa DeCapria-Sanduta; Dana Kelly; Carol Lamparter; Pam Schlegel; Lynda Schlegel-Culver. 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 may 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](https://www.facebook.com/St.MatthewsEpiscopalChurch)

To connect with our livestreamed services, please go to our

YouTube channel: @St.MatthewsEpiscopalChurchSunB

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

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## ***The Cole Allen Diaper Pantry***

**We need volunteers to donate money, diapers,  
or to organize a diaper drive!**

**With your help we can make a difference.**

Organizations, churches, schools, groups, and clubs - we will gladly provide collection baskets to assist with your diaper drive to support this great outreach program.

