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## A Word from the Vicar

*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 for ever. Amen. (First Sunday of Advent, BCP p. 211)*

The armor of light—an oxymoron if I ever heard one. Armor is heavy, dense, and impenetrable. On the other hand light is, well, light! We see better in the light. We aren't as likely to stub our toe or run into a wall in the light. So in that way, perhaps light does protect us.

The light, of course, that is being referred to in the prayer above is the light of Christ. And while it may seem to be a no brainer to cast away the works of darkness (i.e. sin) if you read it carefully, the prayer is asking God for the *grace* to do so. It is not something that comes from sheer will power but rather is cultivated through a continual trust in God. Likewise, trusting the Lord to be one's light in the midst of dark times calls upon this same trust, this same capacity to turn to God.

Advent is a wonderful time to get into the habit of putting on the armor of light. There are lots of resources for meditation and quiet reading. Perhaps the most productive are those things that we can incorporate into our daily lives in ways that will continue long after the Advent and Christmas seasons. A good start would be to utilize the Advent Calendar included in this newsletter. It is based on *The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus Centered Life*, a program developed by the Episcopal Church. If you would like to learn more about it, go to: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/explore-way-love>

Blessings,



## Notes from the Bishop's Warden

One of the first things I do early in the morning, often before I have my first cup of coffee, is to turn my computer on and check my incoming box. This morning there was an email from the Episcopal Church Foundation. When I opened it I read an article about "Giving Tuesday". Now you can call me naïve if you like, or "not with the program" but it is a fact that I had never heard the Tuesday that follows "Black Friday" or "Cyber Monday" referred to as "Giving Tuesday". The article went on to describe it as a global day of giving. It is a day for us to share with others. The purpose is to encourage acts of generosity during a time of the year that can be difficult for those less fortunate. There are many ways we can be successful in our attempt to give to others. It doesn't matter how we donate. Whether it is by donating money to an organization or giving a few hours of our time, these acts of giving are appreciated and of most important to the many less fortunate who are in need of these services. By the time you receive the Dec. newsletter the official date of "Giving Tuesday" will be passed. However, we can extend the purpose of "Giving Tuesday" to any Tuesday of the year!

If you feel that you would like to donate time, but don't know what organization may be in need of your services, you can stay "close to home" by volunteering at the St. James Community Soup Kitchen. We are a welcoming group and are open almost every Tuesday of the year.

Love,

*Nani*



### Local Talent Performing at St. James on Christmas Eve

St. James is extremely pleased to welcome "Hometown Union", a local acoustic duo who have been performing together at a variety of venues over the past two to three years. Local Titusville natives, Jimmi Holmes, guitarist and Kristen Kerr, vocalist will be special musical guests for the Christmas Eve Service on Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup>.

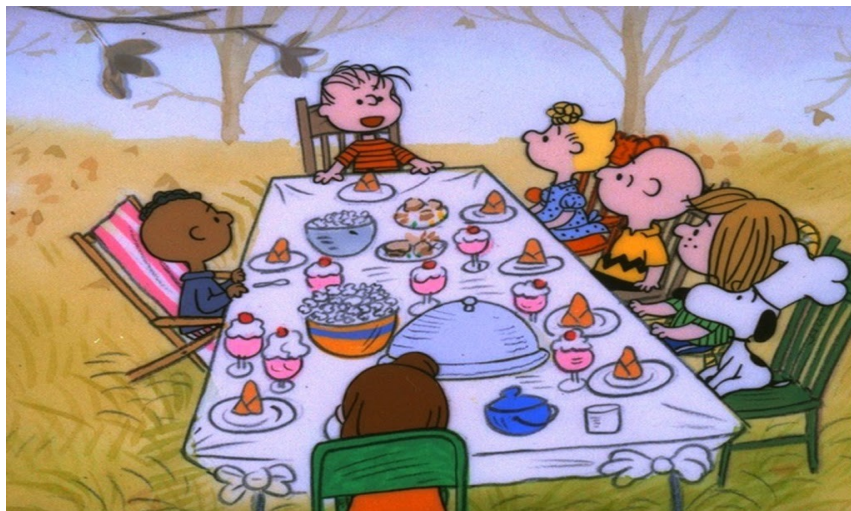
Jimmi and Kristen have focused on '90s rock, classic rock, country and folk genre receiving accolades for their style of music and have developed a following of people wanting to hear them perform.

The duo will be performing "O Holy Night" prior to the beginning of the service. "O Holy Night" is a well-known Christmas carol composed by Adolphe Adam in 1847 to the French poem "Minuit, chrétiens" by a wine merchant and poet, Placide Cappeau. Jimmi and Kristen will then be joined by Terry Kerr in the performance of "Mary Did You Know?" during the service. "Mary, Did You Know?" is a Christmas song with lyrics and music written by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene.





Submitted by: Eda



The Soup Kitchen held its annual Thanksgiving dinner on November 13, serving 151 meals. The next day was the annual Second Harvest food drive. Volunteers met at the Family Video parking lot to receive donations from the public. A total of 620 pounds of food was gathered during the Soup Kitchen's shift. All of the food benefited the St. James Food Cupboard. Approximately \$300 was collected to benefit Second Harvest. Each dollar received allows Second Harvest to purchase \$17 worth of food, for a total of \$5100 equivalent during our shift. The TV crew from co-sponsor WICU arrived and provided great publicity for the Soup Kitchen in putting us on TV and bringing attention to an important cause. The Titusville Food Bank, also a partner with Second Harvest, participated as well. In all, the food needs of the Titusville community were well served.

With the major holidays landing on Tuesdays this year, the Soup Kitchen has made some schedule changes. Bag Days will be held the first two Tuesdays in December. Our Christmas Dinner will be held Dec. 18. This is always a very festive occasion. Once again, children from Hydetown School will visit that morning to help decorate the tables. Many thanks go to Pam Wig for coordinating and chaperoning the school group who always bring us much holiday cheer.

Soup Kitchen will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan.1. We appreciate the dedication of our volunteers and want them to have a well deserved break. Equally, we appreciate the good works of Titusville's churches and service groups who step up and provide holiday meals. Titusville is very blessed.

As winter presses on, please note that when Titusville Schools are closed due to bad weather, Soup Kitchen will also be closed. Everyone stay safe from the weather.

#### **Soup Kitchen Stats and Dates**

November meals served: 366

November food bags given out: 96

Next Bag Days: December 4 and December 11

Christmas Dinner: December 18 from noon to 1:00

**The Soup Kitchen will be closed December 25 and January 1**



THANKSGIVING AT ST. JAMES  
Church Sanctuary and Soup Kitchen



ST. JAMES at the FOOD DRIVE







## St. James Cookie Project

For the third year in a row, we are remembering a group of people who can't spend time with their families on Christmas Eve because they are working. We are doing this with our "cookie project".

We accept donations of home-made cookies for distribution to people who take care of us, such as the emergency room staff, the ambulance staff, the workers at the city barn, the police station and the fire station. We also remember employees at our local gas stations, Sheetz, and Get Go.

We ask that the cookies be delivered to St. James sometime on the 23<sup>rd</sup> or by 9:00 am on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers will be making up cookie trays. We have special Christmas cards from the members of St. James that will be delivered with the cookies. The best part is the reaction from the people to whom we deliver the cookies. It will boost your holiday spirit to see how this is appreciated. What a great holiday idea for the kids to participate in. If you would like to help, please talk to Lynn Gagnon or Barb Ives.





## December at St. James

December is a wonderful time at St. James. There is something for everyone and so much going on that you may want to invite your friends!

- December 2**—*First Sunday of Advent*: This service marks the first Sunday of the new church year. You will notice the vestments and hangings are blue. In addition, we will use the blue ceramic chalice and paten. It has special meaning because it was an ordination gift given to Canon Martha by her parents.
- December 9**—*Second Sunday of Advent*: We will enjoy a visit from St. Nicholas himself. As usual he will pass out treats to the children near the end of the service. Following the service we will **decorate gingerbread houses!** It's lots of fun for the kids and it's amazing to see some of their artistic creations. This is an excellent family event. If you don't have any kids or grandkids, borrow some!
- December 16**—*Third Sunday of Advent*: Otherwise known as Gaudete Sunday, you will notice that we light the rose colored candle and Canon Martha will be wearing rose vestments this year. The word gaudete is Latin for 'joy.' Following the service we will have our **annual Boar's Head Feast**. The church will be serving a pork roast and mashed potatoes. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to pass and their own table service. It's a great time of feasting and fellowship – something we at St. James really excel at. Come prepared to eat well and bring a friend.
- December 19**—Wednesday, **The Hanging of the Greens**: Greens and flowers abound as we get together to decorate the church for the coming of our Savior. The decorating begins at 5:00. After all the work, everyone will be rewarded with a pizza dinner. We share in fellowship and creativity, as we get ready for the most holy time of the year. Since many hands make light work, please join us; if nothing else, you can cheer us on!
- December 23**—*Fourth Sunday of Advent*. During the service our children will be putting on the traditional **Christmas pageant**. We can always use extra angels or shepherds or animals—no experience necessary. Again, invite a neighbor; there is always room in our inn.
- December 24**—**Christmas Eve**: Come and Worship! There will be beautiful hymns and special music to mark this holiest of nights. The service begins at 8 pm.
- December 25**—**Christmas Day**: Quiet service on Christmas Day. All are welcome.
- December 30**—*Christmas 1*: The service of **Lessons and Carols** is a great time to sing all the familiar Christmas carols one last time before ushering in the New Year.



## ADVENT CALENDAR

<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Worship</b> <b>Advent 1</b> Pay attention during worship. What part of the gathering fills your heart?</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Go</b> Take time to listen closely to someone you may not ordinarily take seriously, or who has a different perspective than you.</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Learn</b> Read Luke 1:26-38. What is God calling you to say "yes" to?</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Pray</b> Set a timer for five minutes. Silently repeat this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus."</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Bless</b> In the spirit of St. Nicholas, practice a random act of kindness today.</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>Turn</b> Reflect: Where have I fallen short this week? How can I make amends?</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>Rest</b> Do something that replenishes your spirit.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>Worship</b> <b>Advent 2</b> What word or words from worship today have found a home in your heart? Share these words with someone close to you.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>Go</b> Choose to take a different route to work, to school, or to play today. Who or what did you encounter differently?</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p><b>Learn</b> Read Luke 1:39-56. Tell a friend or family member about your practice of the Way of Love and invite them to join you.</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>Pray</b> Join a family member or friend for 10 minutes for prayer, either in person or by phone</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p><b>Bless</b> Call or write a family member with whom you desire a closer relationship. Tell them what they mean to you. Ask how you can pray for them.</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p><b>Turn</b> Turn away from the busyness of the week and turn toward someone who gives you life or to whom you give life. Give thanks.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>Rest</b> On this day of rest, pause and breathe deeply with a friend or family member. Give thanks for the restorative power of love.</p>
<p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>Worship</b> <b>Advent 3</b> Pray for each person as they receive communion. Imagine who you would like to see at church next week. Invite them to church today.</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p><b>Go</b> Read or watch your local news. Where is reconciliation needed? Pray for healing.</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p><b>Learn</b> Read Luke 1:57-80. Name three ways your faith community challenges you to practice the Way of Love. Share your list with a member of your community.</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p><b>Pray</b> Gather with your faith community for a short time of prayer today.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>Bless</b> Identify a blessing you have that you could give away. Then share this blessing with your church, a local ministry, or your community.</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p><b>Turn</b> Read the Confession (BCP 352) in an unfamiliar location - in the park, at work, at school, or on the bus. What does the prayer inspire you to turn from in that location? What does it inspire you to turn toward?</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>Rest</b> How can you or your community open yourselves to people in need of rest and relief from overwork? From oppression? From violence?</p>
<p><b>23</b></p> <p><b>Worship</b> <b>Advent 4</b> Linger before leaving worship today. Ask God to prepare and send you to go out into the world to witness to God's love.</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>Go</b> Notice and pray for all those who, like Mary and Joseph, are in need of shelter.</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p><b>Learn</b> <b>Christmas Day</b> Read Luke 1-2. Give thanks for the birth of the Christ-child. Pray that you may follow Christ Jesus on his Way of Love with your whole heart, mind, body and spirit.</p>				

## ***A Message from Bishop Sean***

Dear Friends,

As we approach the season of Advent and look to a new Church year, I want to take this opportunity to share some news with you about our future together with Western New York and a time of sabbatical for me. As you know, I completed four and a half years as Bishop provisional of the Diocese of Bethlehem in September. I am so grateful for the experience and for the gifts our diocese shared with our brothers and sisters in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Last week, our two dioceses approved an arrangement whereby I will serve as the Bishop provisional of the Diocese of Western New York and remain bishop in this diocese for five years beginning April 5, 2019. This move made history in The Episcopal Church as the first such experiment structured in this way. Leave it to the good people of our region to take a risk in leading the Church.

In preparation for this new season, I will take a time of sabbatical beginning December 3 and ending February 24. This will be a time of reflection, prayer, discernment, and continuing education. I plan to disconnect from the life of the diocese during this time and appreciate your understanding.

As you are aware, the diocesan administration is in good hands. The diocesan staff is prepared to address the day to day operations of the diocese and meet your needs.

These past 11 years as your bishop have been a joy-filled privilege. I look forward to the next season with great anticipation.

Warmest regards and prayers for each of you,

+Sean





## Random Acts of Christmas Kindness

- Give up your spot in line.
- Donate money to an organization you participate in.
- Pay for a stranger's coffee.
- Send cards to service men and women.
- Smile at everyone you see for a day. (or all year round!)
- Donate food to your food bank.
- Donate pet supplies to the shelter.
- Help someone do a chore or errands.
- Shovel for a neighbor.
- Donate books you no longer need.
- Pick up litter.
- Donate to a charity .
- Leave a popcorn surprise for strangers to find.
- Donate toys to a children's hospital.
- Donate a pair of new pajamas for foster kids.
- Put money in the Salvation Army bucket.
- Make get well cards for someone who needs them.
- Bring coffee to a teacher.
- Make holiday decorations for others.
- Donate a meal to a family in need.
- Make ornaments for your neighbors.
- Donate new toys to Toys for Tots.
- Give treats to the mail carrier.
- Leave a happy note for someone to find.

*{These suggestions were on a website for a random acts of kindness advent calendar. What a wonderful idea to do a kind act everyday leading up to Christmas! Be creative & make up your own!}*



**CHRISTIAN FORMATION CLASSES**

*December*

2, 9, 16, 23, 30	Christian Formation for Children	10:30 am
4, 11, 18	Christian Formation for Youth	3:30 pm
6, 13, 27, Jan.3	Christian Formation for Adults	2:00 pm

**NOTE:**

**THE YOUTH WILL NOT BE MEETING  
THE LAST 2 WEEKS OF THE MONTH**

**ALSO...**

**NO ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION CLASS ON DECEMBER 20th**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Richard Pichora	December 4th
Carol Amann	December 29th

**SEE THE ATTACHED CALENDAR FOR  
A FULL LIST OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS  
EVENTS AT ST. JAMES DURING DECEMBER!**



## What Does The Christmas Angel Look Like?

Angels come in all shapes and sizes; all ages and skin types.

For example, the little old lady who returned your purse last week.

They come disguised as enemies, teachers, students, even fools.

Like the taxi driver who told you that your eyes light up the world, when you smile.

They don't take life too seriously, they travel light.

Remember the small child who showed you the wonder in simple things.

An angel leaves no forwarding address, they ask nothing in return.

Like the poor man who offered to share his lunch with you.

Like the rich man who showed you that it really is all possible, if only you believe.

Remember the stranger who just happened to come along, when you had lost your way.

Think back to the friend who touched your heart, when you didn't think you had one.

Some cherubs have freckles, some have dimples, think of some with wrinkles, some without.

They are hard to find when your eyes are closed,

but when you choose to see,

angels are everywhere you look.

So, open your eyes and count all your Angels;

for you are truly blessed.







## Christmas Trivia

- \* "Wassail" comes from the Old Norse "ves heill" - to be of good health. This evolved into the tradition of visiting neighbors on Christmas Eve and drinking to their health.
- \* A traditional Christmas dinner in early England was the head of a pig prepared with mustard.
- \* According to a 1995 survey, 7 out of 10 British dogs get Christmas gifts from their doting owners.
- \* During the ancient 12-day Christmas celebration, the log burned was called the "Yule log". Sometimes a piece of the Yule log would be kept to kindle the fire the following winter, to ensure that the good luck carried on from year to year. The Yule log custom was handed down from the Druids.
- \* During the Christmas buying season, Visa cards alone are used an average of 5,340 times every minute in the United States.
- \* After "A Christmas Carol," Charles Dickens wrote several other Christmas stories, one each year, but none was as successful as the original.
- \* Although many believe the Friday after Thanksgiving is the busiest shopping day of the year, it is not. It is the fifth to tenth busiest day. The Friday and Saturday before Christmas are the two busiest shopping days of the year.
- \* Charles Dickens' initial choice for Scrooge's statement "Bah Humbug" was "Bah Christmas."

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