

**December 18, 2025**

Dear Ones,

It's been a weird Advent. I admitted when I returned from my short vacation that I don't know how I'm going to manage being away for a sabbatical when just two weeks away from church life has me itching to get back. And while I am deeply grateful for my clergy colleagues who have been part of our preaching rota, I am awfully glad I have Episcopal House Church in Bethel on Sunday, because I will have a chance to get in one last Advent sermon. I never suspected I would miss it this much!

One of my Advent disciplines has been to pray with my hands. I have done a lot of knitting, picked up a cross stitch project I had set aside a year ago, dabbled in the world of watercolor painting. I hope to make cookies this weekend to share at our pot luck coffee hour on Sunday. The thought and energy that would normally go into sermon writing has been redirected to other creative endeavors. (I even found a little Christmas spirit and will be doing some decorating this weekend!)

It's been a good reminder that Advent waiting doesn't mean being passive or inactive. We celebrate the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-Us, by participating in God's ongoing creative activity. God shows up in surprising ways, shaking up the narrative of the story we thought we knew, so that the Good News continues to be both Good and New.

Now here's a challenge for all of you: invite someone to join you for church on Christmas Eve. Or Breakfast Church on the 28th—they can feed their bodies while they are feeding their souls! Statistics show that the most effective way to grow a congregation is for members to invite a friend. We have a great family of faith here at Christ Church—now is a great time to share the love with others in the community. Doesn't hurt to ask. Sure, a lot of them will say "No thank you"—but there's often that one person who will hear that invitation and think, "Maybe that's exactly what I need right now."

In the meantime....*keep the faith*,  
Nancy+

#### **THIS SUNDAY'S READINGS**

Isaiah 7:10-16 \* Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 \* Romans 1:1-7 \* Matthew 1:18-25

#### **BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**

Christine Hebert 12/25; Paul & Cathy Bickford 12/27

#### **CREATION CARE TIPS**

AND NOW, FATHER, SEND US OUT TO DO THE WORK YOU HAVE GIVEN US TO DO...

– Book of Common Prayer p. 366

In the Eucharistic prayer we are using Wednesdays in Advent, the confession we use includes the admission that, "We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created." But in the post-communion prayer, we ask, "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."

I see these two sentences as a chance to say "We messed up -- more than once. Please guide us and let us try again. We're ready to work now." And as Advent is the beginning of the church year, and we are two weeks away from the start of a new calendar year, this is a great time to contemplate new beginnings. We might attempt some changes. Some people call these changes resolutions. Others just try to make new habits or break

old ones. Whatever your attitude toward New Year's Resolutions, you may be ready to recognize that we have injured God's Creation, and that it's time to set some things right. How you go about restoring a part this wonderful world God gave us to live in is up to you. I'd love to hear what you have decided is the work God has given to you do.

– Patty Watts, Christ Church Earth Keeper

**Hurt not the earth—neither the sea—nor the trees. Revelation 7:3**

### CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

SUN: 9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:15 AM Eucharist  
WED: 4:00 PM Hymn Sing  
4:15 PM Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist  
12/28 10:15 Breakfast Church (come at 9:45 to help set up)

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Greening of the Church for Christmas** will be Sunday, after the service. Coffee hour is pot luck treats. Join us as we change the ribbons to Christmas red, set up the creche, change the altar hangings. And something ALWAYS makes the rector laugh, so see what causes it this year!

**Christmas Flowers** If you would like to contribute toward the flowers for our Christmas Eve service, please use the envelope found on the table with the service leaflets. If you would like your donation to be in honor or memory of someone, please print the name on the envelope. Today is the last day for contributions for Christmas.

**Christmas Eve Worship, 4:15 PM** Carol sing begins at 4:00. Invite a friend!

**Pot Luck Breakfast Church 10:15 AM** December 28. Bring a breakfast-y dish to share (and keep in mind the definition of breakfast can be VERY broad). We'll meet downstairs. Volunteers to help set up, starting at 9:45 will be greatly appreciated.

For ongoing and up-to-date information about diocesan activities and news, as well as news from other congregations, sign up for **the DioLog**. <https://episcopalmaine.org/newsletter/>

### MINISTRIES LIST

|                 | <b><u>This week:</u></b> | <b><u>Next week:</u></b> |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Lector 1:       | Jill Cunningham          | Breakfast Church         |
| Psalmist:       | Peter Bickford           |                          |
| Lector 2:       | Allison Long             |                          |
| Acolyte:        | Peter Bickford           |                          |
| Euch. Minister: | Peter Bickford           |                          |
| Shepherd:       | Jason Long               |                          |
| Usher:          | Peter Hammond            |                          |
| Altar Guild:    | Mary B & Michelle C      |                          |
| Coffee Hour:    | Christmas Potluck        |                          |
| Counter:        | Marg Means               |                          |
| Closer:         | Peter Hammond            |                          |