

Dear parishioners,

Advent is almost here - or perhaps, by the time you are reading this, we are already in Advent – the season that begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas, a time of waiting expectantly for the coming of the one who is the Prince of Peace, waiting for God’s in-breaking into the world, God’s coming to live among us, for a radical renewal of life and all of creation.

Many families, especially those with young children -mark time in Advent with an Advent calendar, a little door to open on a paper calendar with a picture or words that look forward to the joy of Christmas, or perhaps a suggestion for an activity to live into Advent, or perhaps a little treat that is a foretaste of the joys to come.

In many churches and many homes an Advent wreath has pride of place, with four candles for each of the Sundays of Advent and a white candle in the centre for represent Christ. On the first Sunday of Advent, the first candle is lit, on the second, the first and second are lit, and so on through the season, until of Christmas Eve, all of the candles are lit. Saying a prayer or reading a Bible passage when lighting the candles helps keep us focussed on the reason for our hope and joyful expectation – Jesus’ birth and his promise to return.

Throughout Advent in our churches we retell the story, beginning with the Prophets and John the Baptist, foretelling a time of peace and justice, and calling the world to a change of heart and a change of action. We look forward to welcoming Jesus among us.

There are many resources on line - Advent calendars, short daily Advent musings or meditations to help us and challenge us to live out our faith as we wait.

Busted Halo (a Catholic Site) has an Advent Calendar that looks intriguing - it can’t be previewed - you have to wait until Advent to see it <https://advent.bustedhalo.com/>

You can sign up for Daily Advent meditations for the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-resources/2019-advent-resource> to accompany you on your Advent journey.

Keeping Advent is not just private activity. Advent is a time when we reach out to others in our community, especially to those for whom Advent and Christmas are not seasons of hope or joy. Many people choose to help out at food banks, or to serve at community meals, or take time for other volunteer activities.

There is no right way or wrong way of keeping Advent, just as there is no right way or wrong way to prepare to welcome a beloved guest.

May you have a blessed Advent, in joyful anticipation of what lies ahead,

Tania