

The Lamp

Volume 14, Issue 12

December 2008

Hanging of the Greens
Saturday , Dec 6th 9-12

Board meeting:
Tuesday Dec 9, 7:30 pm

Christmas Party and
Caroling Saturday,
Dec 13th 6:30pm

Candlelight Service ,
Wednesday, Dec 24th
7:30 PM

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ADVENT: A Time of Renewal (first published Dec 2002)

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

These are words for us to hear and seriously consider at this time of year. There is too much noise polluting the air, and too much clutter obscuring our vision. The world has become a frantic melee of merchandisers and media clowns. It’s hard to hear the angels singing or see the shining star of Bethlehem. Certainly, neither the merchants nor the media will remind us of the true meaning of the coming of Christmas.

Advent is a special time of renewal and preparation for the coming of the Christ child. Otherwise, His coming will be lost in the chaos of our consumer buying and self-indulgences. We must take time to be still and open ourselves to God and His gift of Grace.

Taking time to be still and be aware of God’s presence requires an intentional effort on our part. The world does not encourage or provide an opportunity for this kind of reflection.

Pick a time during the day, turn off the electronic equipment, and light a candle. Sit in a darkened room and read an Advent Devotional with a text from the Bible. Consider what you have read, and discuss it quietly with your family. Say a prayer and let God come into your life.

Remember, we celebrate 2 Advents, the coming of the Christ Child and the coming of the Son of man in power and glory. The first is the promise fulfilled. The second, a promise of the future, the hope of the world

Annual Christmas Party, 12/13/2008

We hope you and your family and friends will make plans to attend Antioch’s Annual Christmas Party, December 13th. The party will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Tom and Terry Wigglesworth, 9527 Liberty Tree Lane in Vienna

There will be dinner, lots of music and caroling in the neighborhood. Meats and drinks will be provided, bring a covered side dish or desert. Please RSVP by calling 703-319-8742 no later than Wed. December 10th. See you then!.

A Prayer for Advent

By Susan Christerson Brown

God of life and promise,

In a season of waning days and deepening dark, we thank you for the gift of watchful anticipation, in which we wait the return of the sun.

We have known the despair of expecting nothing, when winter' bleak imaginings cannot envision Spring, and night blinds us to the promise of morning. Evenings descend without the blessing of rest, and weariness rises the dawn.

We long for Christ's birth to renew creation, yet scarcely trust the power of Go-with-us to transform the only life that is ours. We believe, Lord. Help our unbelief.

Help us to wait as Mary did, a vessel for the gestation light of the world. Help us to trust your Holy intention to bring forth fullness of life.

Strengthen our voice in the wilderness, that we may reach all your children, preparing the way in a trampled world for the greening gift of your Spirit

In the name of the Son for whom we wait,

Amen.

Advent Litanies

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9

Revealed to us in the vulnerability of a manger, Christ is the spark for our kindling, fire to set our lives to boil with compassion. We light the first advent Candle for this mediator, the one who will come close and invite us into an intimate relationship with our God.

Second Sunday of Advent

Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13

Today let us remember that God wants us to gather up as a shepherd takes a lamb in his arm, as Mary lovingly caressed the newborn child. As we wait impatiently for the coming of the Christ Child, we light the second Advent candle for the blessing of Home.

Third Sunday of Advent

1Thessalonians 5:16-24

Healing came by way of a manger so that spirits may grow strong and those who have been filled with tears may know deep joy. This third candle is lit in honor of the One who teaches and equips us to bring restoration and hope.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Luke 1: 26-38

Through a Child God's Wisdom came close to guide and inspire that first Christmas morning. God is our companion, leading and empowering us for the good of the universe. We light the fourth candle to acknowledge steadfast Holy Wisdom in our midst.

Christmas Eve

Luke 2: 1-14(15-20)

Christ's light shines in every dark heart, in every dimly lit corner of the earth. We give thanks to the Prince of peace, for the Counselor who guides us in the right relationship with God. We light the Christ candle as a sign of hope and redemption for all people.

Epiphany Sunday

Matthew 2: 9b-11

A star guided the wise men to the Christ Child. They responded to the love and faith to the wonder of the miracle of God. We celebrate the gifts of the wise men to the baby Jesus and our gifts to each other at Christmas time

Different Sights, Different Lights

Karen Curtis

Have you ever thought what it would be like to live in complete darkness, as the blind do every day? Anyone have a great desire to live near the North Pole to experience months of darkness and then months of light all the time? Can you think of the many types of light that we are exposed to daily? Sun, moon, stars, electric light, candles, Christmas lights, luminaries, flashlights, headlight, street lights, camp fires, torches, laser light, florescent lights and oil lamps may be a few.

In Genesis, light was referenced immediately. One simple command from God. God continued to create light, separate light, placed lights in the sky for 3 days. Light is important to God, too. The symbol of light was also used in the Temple.

We celebrate the miracle that happened more than 2000 years ago, 165 B.C. In Syria, the Jews were ruled by a cruel King, Antiochus IV. He drove the Jews out of the Temple in 168 BC, defiled it, and forced the Jews and anyone else in his kingdom to worship the pagan god of Zeus. The Jews were led by a father and his 5 sons, the Maccabees, to fight the Syrians and they won the Temple back. They found the Temple had been filled

with different alters and Greek idols. They worked hard to prepare the Temple and when it was ready for services, they found they only had 1 day's worth of non-desecrated olive oil. The Rededication festivities of the Temple took 8 days and miraculously, the oil lasted that long. This minor holiday is still celebrated to this day as Hannukah.

Light makes light. By itself, light is invisible: and yet everything is invisible until light strikes it. So it is with God. We can't see Him, but "in His light" (and under His loving influence) we see and understand His love in all that surrounds us. God's overwhelming generosity occurred when He gave us the Light of the World, Jesus.

John 8:12, Christ said, "I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never be in darkness, but will have the light of the life" As Christians, we reflect the light from Jesus and the Father. Christ is our light within us, so we might shine amongst all people.

And finally, the sightings of light from the Advent stories reinforce the importance of light in our lives. In Luke, the angel Gabriel came to Mary in a bright light to tell her of God's plan for her to carry the Son of God. Though troubled, Mary said she was the Lord's servant, and would do His will.

Joseph had a more difficult time

accepting thing. A story depicted Joseph's shop was filled with golden light, But was now dark since he sent Mary away to protect her. Through dreams of blazing lights, Joseph received the message. That message was reinforced during morning prayers at the Temple. The sign was confirmed. He ran out of the Temple and found Mary. They recounted their Light miracles together.

The shepherds were told of the Good News as the angels of the Lord shone around them. In Matthew's account, the Magi followed the star in the sky for a very long time before they found the young Jesus to worship.

I am sure all of you have experienced a Christmas Eve service when the sanctuary is made dark, and the light symbolizing the Light of the World is standing by itself, along with the Advent wreath candles. It is difficult to see the words as we sing, *Silent Night*. But as that flame is passed to each of us, the light increases and miraculously the entire sanctuary is lit. Just as we share our Light, our Faith with others, we will be able to light up the world through Christ.

Please join us this Christmas Eve to experience the passing the Light of the World to another.

Reaching out to Those in Need

Matt. 25:34-37, 40 Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me, I was naked and clothed me, sick and you cared for me, I was in prison and you visited me.

Antioch has a long tradition of reaching out to those in need through out the years and especially at Christmas time. We have collected coats to warm others, donated clothes, food, toys, money, furniture, household items and over the counter medications. Unfortunately we don't have a special family to focus on this year. The food banks are in great need for perishable and nonperishable foods this time of year. Please give your cash donations in the offering plate, MEMO: Food Outreach, or to Karen Curtis. The Youth will purchase the food and deliver it to the Food Bank near Christmas.

...Truly I tell you, just as you did to the least of these, you did unto me.

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*Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service.*

Wednesday , December 24 th.
7:30 PM

Join us for an evening of
worship and song.

Elder & Deacon Service Schedule

DATE	ELDERS	DEACONS	READER
Dec 7	Donna Hunter Neil Romstedt	Kevin Curtis Rebecca Curtis	Bil D. Wilke
Dec 14	Kevin Wiggs Terry Wigglesworth	Karen Holley Mark Sherwood	Charles Donkor
Dec 21	Vivian Cruz Karen Curtis	Paul Puff Linda Puff	Tom Wigglesworth
Dec 24	Donna Hunter Bill D. Wilke	Rebecca Curtis Marjorie Blank	Neil Romstedt
Dec 28	Jon Holley Terry Wigglesworth	Jeanie Mella Joe Lewis	Ed Mella