

ADVENT: A TIME FOR HOLY LISTENING??

Advent is, in my opinion, the most overlooked liturgical season. Competing with the Christmas rush, Advent never gets the credit it is due.

December is a self-contradictory month. For many, it's the beginning of colder, darker and shorter days. One might think it's the time to slow down, take stock and ready ourselves for an unfolding winter. However, even if we are trying our best to avoid it, it's often one of the busiest months of the year.

Truth be told, I struggle immensely with the holidays. The sudden and unavoidable monsoon of consumerism washes over every part of life. Family gatherings, though full of joy and cheer, are often too loud and over stimulating especially for sensitive introverts. The stress placed on those 'without' always finds its way to many parishes, looking for help. Thankfully, the generosity of Holy Spirit Parish help so many...known and unknown. Add to this the travel — for many there is always so much travel. It's a sad fact that due to work and visiting family many times out of province, for some spend more time sleeping away from home in December than at home.

When I am at home, however, I often find myself fighting the urge to lie on my couch with a good book under the light of the Christmas tree until the Christmas rush passes me by. I think that's why I appreciate Advent so much. Advent is like taking a deliberately slow walk surrounded by sprinters. One looks left and right only to find people passing by. All headed toward presumably the same finish line — Christmas.

Advent is an uncovering of what's been covered all year long. An intentional peeling apart in search of our centre. It's everything we wanted the time to do all year. A slowing down, a bringing forth, a time to prepare, a time to encounter, a time to embrace others and ourselves and a time to listen.

Advent passes us by because it's easier to fall into the rush of the holidays than slow down and take measure of our spiritual and emotional selves. It's easier to buy and plan frantically for a perfect holiday than inquire where our desire for a perfect holiday comes from. It's hard to consider a different way when we've covered over our hurts, brokenness and insecurities among those closest to us for so long. The truth is, our Messiah didn't come to earth like a king with a large feast waiting. He came as a baby. Wrapped in ripped cloth. Laid in a manger, not on a king's throne. Advent is to make us like the shepherds keeping watch, waiting with anticipation in the cold and lonely dark, or the three magi journeying toward Christ with their hearts set on more than what they could see with their eyes. It's to prepare our hearts to hear his voice, see his star, know his light and go running to him.

Feasting when we're not ready is not really a celebration at all. But when our hearts are ready, through prayer, fasting and giving what we can to whomever we can, we will be ready for Christmas with hope in our hearts and a deeper understanding of the peace this Christ-child brings. For Christmas peace is not perfect celebrations or perfect gifts. Christmas peace comes when we learn — through deliberate prayer and giving — how to walk in the light of the Lord.

My suggestion this Advent is to slow down as much as we can. Walk slower, don't talk as much, read the daily Mass readings or our reflection booklet, "[Advent, A Time For Holy Listening](#)," and listen! Manage our gatherings so that they can be celebrated, not overwhelmed. Rethink our "commitments" so we can be present to the peace of Christ awaiting us. Do as we would when entering the room of a newborn child — quietly adore the wonder of new life. Oh and be sure to listen... really listen. Have a Blessed Advent and Christmas everyone!

Fr. David

Daily Prayer This Week

Despite all of the distractions at this time of year, we really can focus on Advent during these weeks. We seem to get very busy, and at times have to go to a number of social events or wrestle with budgets and shopping, but the heart of this season is all about expectant hope. So, we begin our Advent journey by giving ourselves some time - just a few minutes each day - to reflect on how much God promises us.

Each morning this week, while we are first coming to consciousness, we can name a desire, name an emptiness or feeling of anxiety or worry that we can feel. It is into the raw places in our lives such as these, that our Lord came to be with us. So, this week, we can begin to invite our Lord to be Incarnate in our lives, in the places we need him the most.

Our goal this week is to let ourselves feel like those to whom the promises of our God are made. We want to get in touch with ourselves, especially those parts of ourselves that are in need of a Savior. We do this by keeping our focus on the places that feel like a desert, the places that feel like we've been through a war, the places that feel like a lifeless stump. When we have a hard time seeing, we ask for the grace to be able to believe the promise that we shall see. When we seem deaf, we place our trust in the One who assures us that we will hear. And when we feel beaten down and awfully lowly, we turn to the One who promises that we will "find joy in the Lord." And, who among us doesn't have days on which we are aware of various kinds of wounds? On the day of promise, "the Lord binds up the wounds of his people."

As we let these deep realities of our daily, busy lives come into focus and interact with the readings, something wonderful happens. We become more and more aware of our need for God. Very naturally and quite spontaneously, a prayer comes forth from deep within us, which we can say in the smallest moments of our busiest days. "Come, Lord." "Come and save me." "Come and be with me in all of these messy, empty, dry and disordered places in my life." "Come, Lord. I feel my longing for you grow. I feel my hope grow. And, as I place my hope in your promises, Advent begins to come alive in me."

All of this preparation can happen in the simplest way, before the first Christmas decoration goes up. And, for each moment of each day that we encounter a place that we desire, that we long for our Lord's coming, we can express our thanksgiving. Each night we might pray: *The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear? The LORD is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?* (Ps. 27)

[Creighton U Online Ministries](#)

DON'T FORGET TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY!!!!

Holy Spirit Parish along with other parishes in our diocese will be participating in a parish survey about discipleship conducted by the Catholic Leadership Institute! **Please help us by participating in a 10-15 minute survey online.** <https://portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/b000c5> . A paper copy is available in the entry way of both worship sites for those who do not have access to a computer. Please return the paper copy to the office in the **sealed envelope** provided and we will mail them from the office and cover the postage. **Another option...** you can contact the office and make an appointment to come in and use the office laptop to complete the survey.

The window to complete the survey is from **Nov 21, 2023 to Dec 18, 2023** and will ask you to reflect on your own spiritual growth and enable you to provide feedback on our parish's efforts to help us grow. All responses will be confidential and the parish will only receive information about the community as a whole.

We are trying to get the highest response rate possible. This information will be invaluable to our parish and the diocese as a whole. It will aid our various ministries as we plan for the future and strive to be the best disciples we can be. We will receive the results next spring/summer at which time we will share what we have learned with the entire parish.

Thank you for helping with this important project!

This weekend we welcomed into our 'Faith Community' through the Waters of Baptism....

Brayden Gill, Xavier Gracie, Michaela Gracie & Aliyah Gracie

The Saint John High School Concert Choir, directed by Patricia Gallagher, will present a concert at the Saint John High School Denis Knibb Auditorium on Thursday, December 14, 6:30pm. Free will offering.

MASS SCHEDULE 2023

Dec 05, 2023	Tue	St. Matthews Worship Site	7pm	Don Drew Delcia Brideau
Dec 07, 2023	Thur	St. Rose Worship Site	12:10pm	Parishioners
Dec 09, 2023	Sat	St. Rose Worship Site	4pm	Edward (Ned) Morrissey Hal Arbeau
Dec 10, 2023	Sun	St. Rose Worship Site	9am	Lloyd & Margaret Dickson
Dec 10, 2023	Sun	St. Matthews Worship Site	11am	Edith Parker Mary MacDougall

PLEASE NOTE – THE EVENING PRAYER IN THE CARMEL CHAPEL SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, DEC 3RD HAS BEEN CANCELLED!!!!

The Women’s Society is in need of turkeys or chickens to make soup for Avenue B. Turkeys are terribly expensive these days, so if anyone is going across the border & would be able to bring back turkeys, we would really appreciate it. We would reimburse you. As well, we would love to have your turkey & chicken carcasses if you don’t plan to use them. Please call Jill (639-0007) or Angie (639-6582) if you can help. Thanks!

Donations for Horizon Recovery Centre will run from Nov 25 to Dec 17, 2023. The Centre would greatly appreciate receiving: Bar soap, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, hair gel, hair brushes & combs, Toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, safety razors, shaving cream, nail clippers, Winter hats, scarves, gloves, socks, clothes hangers, Gift bags, candy, treats for stockings as well as snacks for the men's Christmas party, Playing cards, small games, board games, DVDs, art supplies, coffee mugs, kitchen dishes, cutlery
Please NO mouthwash, aftershave, cologne Thank you for your generosity

The Prayer Shawl Group - Join us Wednesday mornings from 10-12. Call Jill (639-0007) or Angie (639-6582) if you’re interested. New people always welcomed!! Yarn, needles, & patterns will be supplied, you can create from the comfort of your own home.

COLLECTIONS - THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!!!
 Nov 26, 2023 – Regular - \$2,418.00 Loose Collection - \$288.50 Missals - \$86.00
 eTransfers - \$60.00 Diocesan Priest’s Illness - \$90.00
 PAD Weekly Average - \$1,713.00 PAD BLDG - \$148.00
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

HOLY SPIRIT PARISH CALENDAR 2024 CALENDAR

Thanks to everyone that participated in the 2023 Photo Contest. Over 70 photos were submitted which made for a great selection of photos for our 2024 Calendar. The calendar will be ready for sale in early December for a cost of approximately \$20 each. The calendar will include the winning photos from the contest. Winners to be announced when calendar goes on sale.

Before we place our printing order, we need an estimate of how many calendars to produce. If you are interested in purchasing a calendar, please add your name to the list located in the church foyer. It will make a great Christmas Gift.

OFFICE HOURS 9 am to 4 pm
 SMWS – Tues & Thur – 506-738-2320 SRWS - Wed -506- 653-6850
 Mon & Fri: BOTH OFFICES CLOSED
 Mailing Address: 279 Nerepis Rd, Grand Bay-Westfield, NB E5K 2Z9

St. Matthew Worship Site (SMWS) (506)738-2320
 Civic Address: 45 Dollard Drive
 St. Rose of Lima Worship Site (SRWS) (506)653-6850
 Civic Address: 541 Milford Road
 WEBSITE: www.holyspiritparish.ca Email: holyspiritparish@nb.aibn.com
 Pastor – Rev. David J. Martin

HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

ST. MATTHEWS & ST. ROSE WORSHIP SITES

“Where we WELCOME everyone, WORSHIP together and WITNESS to Jesus Christ”

First Sunday of Advent

December 03, 2023

Sunday Exposition/Adoration: Dec 03, 2023 at St. Rose Worship Site from 1-2pm

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AT ST. ROSE WORSHIP SITE BEGINNING AT 3:15PM PRIOR TO THE 4PM SAT MASS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Holy Spirit Parish –Please contact Linda Spinney at 506-636-0677 or email her at holyspiriteducationsj@gmail.com

Gentle Path – Counselling Services – Pathways to Hope

Gentle Path Counselling Services provides counselling at the 199 Chesley Drive, Saint John Office and is now scheduling appointments at Horizon’s Market Place Wellness Centre in the Lower West Side

We offer counselling for:

Anxiety	Addictions	Grief & Loss	Domestic Violence
Couples Counselling	Sexual Assault Trauma	Self Esteem & Body Image	Sexual Identity & Orientation
PTSD	Parenting	Depression	First Nations
Kids & Teens	Blended Families	Anger Management	Work Related Issues

(Subsidies are available)
 Gentle Path Counselling Services, Ltd.
 Phone (506)652-7284 Toll Free 1-888-394-4022
www.gentlepathsj.com

Facebook: Gentle Path Counselling Services
<https://www.facebook.com/gentlepathcounselling-services/>
 Charitable # - 85377 7175 R0001