

St. Andrew's United Church

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Advent & Christmas

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday, November 26th

Reign of Christ Sunday

This is the last Sunday in our Church year, before Advent begins! Plan to stay after Church for a Second Hour Forum with George Couhie. George is a member of the Nipissing First Nation and recently retired from the OPP. We are grateful for his time as we think about what it means to be in right relationship with our neighbours in the Indigenous Community. The forum runs from 1 to 3. We promise to feed you!

Saturday, December 2nd ~ 10 a.m. to noon



'Kids-Only' Bazaar

This annual tradition is an opportunity for the young folks, ages 4-13, to do their Christmas shopping for their families. We can always use adult help as assistant shoppers for the little ones. Also, if you have new or gently used items that you would like to donate, or if you would like to volunteer as a gift wrapper or general helper, please contact Lois Carey at 705 474-6358.

Sunday, December 3rd

First Sunday in Advent

Come join us as we begin our journey toward Bethlehem. We begin our journey as we gather for Communion. All are welcome! Worship begins at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 10th ~ Advent II

White Gift Sunday

Someone asked me, "What the heck is white gift Sunday anyway?" It's simple. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, we think about bringing gifts to Jesus by sharing what we have with others, especially those in need. *This year our gifts will be directed toward the Teen Lunch Program at St. Brice's Church.* Grocery cards for any denomination would be most welcome!

Sunday, December 17th ~ Advent III

10:30 a.m.: *Service of Lessons & Carols*

Join us for this annual gift from our own Ralph Johnston and the Choir.

7:30 p.m.: An *extended version* of this program is held Sunday evening by candlelight. Come and join us!

Thursday, December 21st ~ 7:00 p.m. at Trinity

Longest Night Service

A contemplative, meaningful and beautiful worship service shared by St. Andrew's and Trinity

Sunday, December 24th ~ Advent IV

Please note! There will be no 10:30 a.m. service



Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, December 24th

7:00 p.m.: Our Gathered Christmas Pageant with our traditional Candle lighting. Come and join the fun!

10:30 p.m.: Candle light Vigil Service with Communion





From Rev. Jane's Desk

Dear St. Andrew's Friends,

Advent finds me a little out of breath this year. Maybe it's my age or the busy and challenging fall we've been having. Now, as we approach the season of Advent and Christmas, I feel a bit like I've taken a seat on a roller coast ride. Hang on, cause here it comes ready or not!

Maybe you are feeling the same way? So here's a challenge and an invitation for us during these busy days. "How will I, how will we, make space for God during these days filled with so much activity and so many obligations? What expectations will you bring to our celebrations?"

For some the announcement of the Good News of the Bethlehem babe, news heralded by angels and brought by the shepherds, will fall on deaf ears. The problems we are facing are daunting and sometimes feel overwhelming. For some of us Christmas is a tough time because someone we love is missing or struggling with illness or hardship. Where will we find enough hope and courage to make space for God to enter in and to be born among us again this year?

Our faith has many things to say about hope and nothing to say about optimism. That may come as a shock to some of us. Optimism is the belief that things are going to get better. It is future oriented. All of us know the "eternal optimist" who says, "Don't worry, things will get better."

Hope, on the other hand, is centered in the here and now and can exist alongside despair. Hope always wants to make way for God; to talk about the presence of God with us. Emmanuel.

Writing this in the season of Advent, I am reminded of the hope that is ours as symbolized by the candles we light at worship. Sometimes hope flickers, like the light of one small, fragile candle fluttering in the storms of life. At other times our hope is as intense as a northern December sunset over Lake Nipissing.

Light is such a powerful symbol of what our life in Christ is all about. I am thankful for the many ways each one of you shines forth the light of Christ in making space for the stranger among us, in your willingness to take risks for the whole earth community and in your thirst for justice and compassion.

This is a season for gifts and some of them are you! Thank you!

May the light of Christ shine brightly this Christmas and may the hope it offers find a home within us during these Advent days!

A blessed Christmas to you and yours from your staff: Jane, Barb, Tracy, Ralph, and Lucy

