



Partners in Faith & Action

December 2016

ADVENT CELEBRATIONS

Advent began on Sunday, November 27th. The word Advent means "coming." We are not only celebrating the anniversary of Jesus' birth but also the promise of His second coming at the end of time. It is therefore a time of preparation.

Advent is a time for prayer, reading the Bible, penance, and sharing. The NDV faith community offers several opportunities to deepen our faith as a family and community.

--Dec. 8th, Fourth grade will be the readers and gift bearers for the 8:45 a.m. Mass celebrating the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day of obligation. Please wear full dress uniform.

--Dec. 11th, Kindergarteners will be readers, gift bearers, and provide a reception after the Family Mass at 9:00 a.m. in the Church.

--Dec. 16th, Eighth grade will present the Christmas Pageant at our 8:45 a.m. Mass. Please wear full dress uniform.

RECONCILIATION DURING ADVENT

The students in grades three and four will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Wednesday, Dec. 7th at 8:30 a.m. and grades five and six on Wednesday, Dec. 14th at 9:00 a.m. in the Church. A Communal Reconciliation Rite will be celebrated at Eglise Notre Dame des Victoires on Friday, Dec. 2nd at 7:00 p.m. The seventh and eighth grade students will attend this Reconciliation service. This would be an excellent time to celebrate this Sacrament as a family.



FAMILIES GROWING IN FAITH

Our next Families Growing in Faith gathering is Friday, December 9th at 6:00 p.m. for a light supper in the Church Hall. The program will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. Please bring your Bibles

ADVENT

Advent is a special time set aside to find the true meaning of Christmas. It's a time to wait for Jesus' coming, to watch for signs of the Holy Spirit around us, and to wonder at the miracle of God sending His son as a tiny baby.

Ways to Wait ó Sometimes during the holidays we have to wait in a lot of lines. Remember, there is a blessing in waiting. We are waiting for a baby to be born. The next time you wait in a line, use the time to think about the Nativity, using your five senses. What did the stable smell and sound like? What did baby Jesus see?

Ways to Watch ó The shepherds were watching their flocks when the angel of the Lord appeared to them. Watch for signs of Jesus all around you. Watch for ways to be Jesus to those around you. Watch for a chance to hold a door for someone, carry something heavy, offer a compliment, offer a seat on the bus, or say hi to someone who looks lonely. Each night at dinner describe ways that you saw Jesus in others or ways that you were Jesus to others.

Ways to Wonder ó The Magi were overjoyed at seeing the star, and did homage to Jesus when they saw him. Watch for the first star of the evening. Think about the wonder and majesty of Jesus born in a manger. Remember or watch small children as they speak their first words, take their first step or laugh. Recapture some of that wonder and awe. Take a walk or a drive and absorb the beauty of the Christmas lights. Welcome the light of the world ó Jesus Christ. (from *Advent 2009—Take Out*)

THE ADVENT WREATH



Today we celebrated the Blessing of the Advent Wreathes. The Advent Wreath is an old Advent custom. It is made of a circle of evergreens, which symbolize eternity and God's love which never ends. Inserted in the wreath are four candles. Three of the candles are purple and one is pink. The four candles remind us of the long wait the people in the Hebrew

Scriptures had before the coming of coming of Jesus, our Savior. Each week a candle is lit and prayers are said. The candles remind us of Christ, the Light of the world. Traditionally, the purple candles remind us of our longing for the coming of Jesus. The pink candle is lit on the third week of Advent to represent our joy because the celebration of Jesus's birth is coming very soon.

ADVENT: LITURGICAL COLORS

The colors for Advent are purple and pink. As we see with the Advent wreath, the first, second and fourth candles are purple. The priest will wear purple vestments on these Sundays. The third Sunday is Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete means "rejoice" in Latin. We rejoice in the promise of redemption through Jesus's sacrifice. We light the pink candle and the priest wears pink vestments as a sign of our joy. It is a reminder that the true joy of Christmas is welcoming God's only Son into our world.

The priest will wear white vestments on Christmas Day and all Masses through the feast of the Baptism of the Lord as a sign of the purity of Christ. (from *Creative Communications*)

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- Make an Advent wreath.
- Create an Advent calendar by gluing numbered paper "pockets" onto a poster board. Write Bible verses on slips of paper or cut pictures from old Christmas cards to hide in the pockets. <http://www.thecraftycrow.net/2010/11/24-advent-calendars-to-make.html> gives several other ideas for creating Advent calendars.
- Every morning at assembly, NDV's Religion Commissioner tells about the Jesse Tree and members of Jesus's family. Ask your child to tell you about it and make your own Jesse Tree to learn about Jesus's family tree. http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgical_year/activities/view.cfm?id=545
- Stuff the children's shoe(s) for St. Nicholas Day (December 6). Tell your children the story of St. Nicholas and then have them put their shoes out on the evening of the 5th. Fill the shoe(s) with an orange, nuts, cookies in a ziplock baggie, or other goodies.
- Read in Scripture the events leading up to Christ's birth. This could be done when you light your Advent Wreath.
- Read the reflections in *The Little Blue Book* available from Eglise Notre Dame des Victoires.

The left-hand page has a variety of thoughts about the Advent and Christmas seasons, the feast of the day, or various traditions and customs. The right-hand page walks the reader through the first part of Luke's Gospel.

--Go to Reconciliation and Mass as a family during Advent.

--Set up a nativity scene (crèche). Add a new figure each day. Save the Christ Child until Christmas Eve or Christmas morning.

--Learn more about the Advent Feast Days

Feast of St. Nicholas Dec. 6th

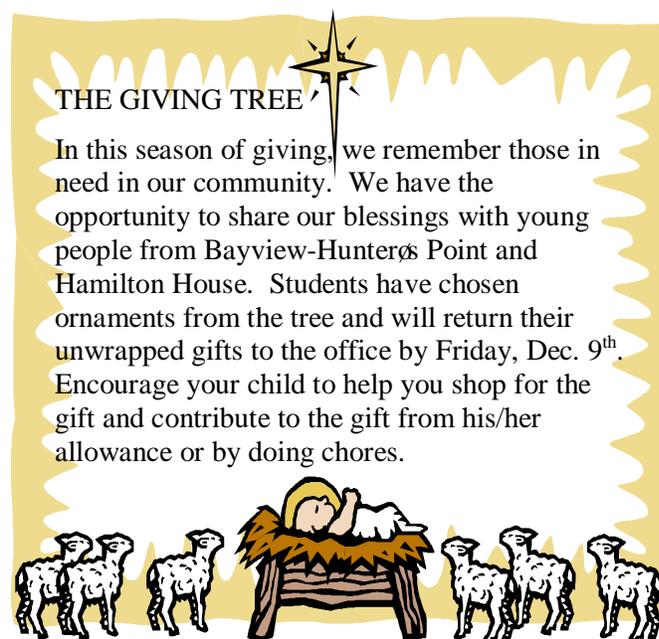
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Dec. 12th

Feast of Santa Lucia Dec. 13th

Some additional sites with Advent and Christmas activities:

<http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/home/>

<http://www.catholicicing.com/advent-and-christmas-with-kid/--lots> of great ideas



THE GIVING TREE

In this season of giving, we remember those in need in our community. We have the opportunity to share our blessings with young people from Bayview-Hunter's Point and Hamilton House. Students have chosen ornaments from the tree and will return their unwrapped gifts to the office by Friday, Dec. 9th. Encourage your child to help you shop for the gift and contribute to the gift from his/her allowance or by doing chores.

CHRISTMAS SEASON

The Christmas season officially begins with the evening prayer (Vespers) of Christmas Eve and concludes with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord which is Monday, January 9th.

PEACE

When we think of Christmas, we often think of shopping, gifts, parties, and relatives visiting. Preparing for Christmas can be a stressful time. However stressful the preparations, it is important to slow down, light the candles, tell Jesse Tree stories, and prepare for the birth of our Savior with a peaceful presence about us. (from *Catholic Digest*, December 2016)