

The Ascension

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

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Advent at Ascension

Advent and the Fullness of Time



By Kevin Antlitz, Assistant Rector

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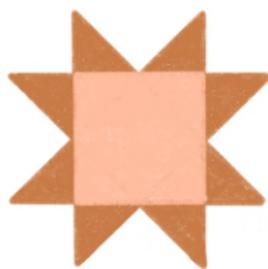
Each year, the season of Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before December 25. This year, Advent Sunday is November 28. Unlike the Gregorian Calendar (the calendar most of the world observes), the Church or liturgical year begins not on January 1 but on the first Sunday of Advent. There is profound wisdom in beginning each new year with Advent. This season frames how we ought to view God, ourselves, and the entire arc of human history.

The season of Advent derives its name from the Latin *adventus* meaning “a coming, approach, or arrival.” Because Advent ushers in Christmastide (beginning on Christmas Eve and extending over 12 days), I think our tendency is to think Advent primarily refers to the incarnation. However, if we focus exclusively on the birth of Jesus during Advent, we’re being a bit shortsighted.

In the New Testament, *adventus* (or the Greek equivalent *parousia*) most often refers to Jesus’ second coming at the end of the age (e.g., Matt 24:27, 37, 39; 1 Cor 15:23; Jas 5:7; 2 Pet 3:12; 1 John 2:28). It never refers to the incarnation (except for maybe once in 2 Pet 1:16, but I think this, too, refers to the second coming).

During Advent, Christians around this terrestrial ball celebrate the coming of God to man. The advent of God to humanity is a story that encompasses the fullness of time. As we observe the season of Advent, we are invited to recall anew the story of what God has done, what He is doing, and what He has promised to do.

I want to highlight reasons why we need Advent each and every year. These three correspond to our past, future, and present.



O RADIX JESSE
(O root of Jesse)

First, we need to remember what God did: He came.

Thus far in human history, the climactic manifestation of God’s coming to man is the incarnation. We need Advent because we need to remember the incarnation every year, every week, every day, every moment.

Above all else, Advent is characterized by a sense of longing. The incarnation is the answer to the yearning of God’s people for God to come, to show up, to set things to

rights. Of course, the incarnation is by no means the first time God had shown up in human history to dwell among his people. NT Wright observes that “Judaism already had a massive ‘incarnational’ symbol, the Temple.” Though in a sense God is

everywhere present, He always seems to ordain a particular place to manifest His presence to dwell among His people (Exodus 40:34-35; 2Chron 7:1). In the Old Testament, that place was the moveable Tabernacle and eventually the Temple in Jerusalem.

This background illuminates the full meaning of John 1:1 and 1:14, the bookends of the greatest description of the incarnation: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us [literally ‘tabernacled among us’]. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

About these verses NT Wright comments: “...the Incarnation of the eternal Word was the event for which the whole of creation had been waiting all along” but despite this longing “creation and even the people God were quite unready for this event.” This is a helpful reminder that God’s coming to us is often full of surprises.



Second, we need to yearn for what God will do: He will come again.

Perhaps the most poignant longing we ought to feel is for Jesus to return to ultimately set things to rights. Even as the entire creation had been waiting for the incarnation, creation continues to groan, awaiting liberation from the bondage of decay when the Son of Man will come to fully establish His kingdom. This is an eschatological itch that can only be fully scratched when Jesus comes again.

In this way, Advent is future oriented. It reminds us of God’s promise and our ultimate hope: Christ will come again. When He comes, he will come in judgment and glory. The result will be new creation. We are given a glimpse of this by the prophet Isaiah:

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:6-9).

When Jesus returns, all that is wrong will be set right. There is no doubt that the Church is called to be an agent of new creation in this present evil age. We are to be signposts of the Kingdom of God reflecting and working for God’s peace and justice in our weary and sin-ravaged world. Nevertheless, the fulness of the Kingdom is something God alone can accomplish on the last day. It is this for which we are watching and waiting.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the Scriptures end with a focus on Advent. Jesus’ final word to His Church in the Bible is the promise upon which we rest our hope: “Yes, I am coming soon” (Rev 22:20a). Our response to this great promise ought to be the great prayer of the Church: “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20b).



Third, we need to see what God is doing: He comes to us even now.

During Advent we focus on the incarnation and Jesus’ second coming for good reason. And yet, if our focus is only on the past and future, we miss out on how God comes to us in our everyday.

In her wonderful book on the season, Reverend Fleming



Rutledge articulates the importance of Advent for the life of the Church right now. She argues that “of all the seasons of the church year, Advent most clearly mirrors the daily lives of Christians and the church” because it reflects our spiritual position between the first and second comings of Jesus. Advent places us somewhere between memory and hope. To paraphrase the theologian Karl Barth: the only time the church can ever have is the season of Advent.

Rev. Rutledge develops this idea further. She writes: “in a very real sense, the Christian community lives in Advent all the time. It can well be called the Time Between, because the people of God live *in the time between* the first coming of Christ, incognito in the stable in Bethlehem and his second coming, in glory, to judge the living and the dead.” In Advent, we learn to live with in unresolved tension between the already and not-yet that is baked into our faith. That means, as she puts it, “the disappointment, brokenness, suffering, and pain that characterize life in this present world is held in dynamic tension with the promise of future glory that is yet to come. In that Advent tension, the church lives its life.”

This means that even in the midst of our tears, our losses, and our sorrows, God comes to us. In the present, God’s presence comes near in the Holy Spirit that fills us and assures us that we are God’s beloved children. God comes to us – he feeds us and forms us – through the ministry of word and sacrament. God comes to us through his Spirit-filled people as we faithfully love one another, spurring one along as we see the Day approaching.

Advent reminds us that God’s promise rings true: he is with us always even to the end of the age (Matt 28:20). Today, somewhere between memory and hope, God comes to us and then to the world through us.

As we enter into this new year together, I want to highlight a few resources that will guide us into a greater appreciation for what God coming to us in the fullness of time. Of course, you can’t engage with all of them but hopefully there’s something for everyone.

Resources

- Updated Prayer Guides! Same 2019 Book of Common Prayer liturgy, slightly different format with a few extras. The start of a new church year is a great time to jumpstart your devotional life.
- *Antiphons* devotional by Ascension’s Amy Bornman. Please see the next article for more information.
- Fleming Rutledge’s *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*. This collection of sermons from Rev Rutledge is one of the best Advent resources out there. Her intro to Advent is worth the price of the book.
- Malcolm Guite’s *Waiting on the Word*. This anthology of Advent-themed poetry offers a poem a day with commentary. Susan and I read it together every Advent. This is my favorite Advent resource.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel: The Great “O” Antiphons



By Marilyn Chislaghi, Director of Ministry

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One of the ways we mark Advent in our services and in our homes is with the lighting of an Advent wreath. Advent wreaths are a simple circle of four candles: three purple and one pink. There are different understandings of the significance of the four candles which are lit on each new Sunday of Advent. One approach sees the candles as representing the Prophets, the Holy Family, the Shepherds and the Magi. Another approach views the candles as standing for Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. A white ‘Christ candle’ stands in the middle of all Advent wreaths.

At the beginning of each of our Sunday services in Advent we will hear the words of “O Come O Come Immanuel” when the candles are lit, adding a different verse each week.

*O Come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
REJOICE! REJOICE! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

In fact there are seven of these great “O” Antiphons. You can find them on page 56 of our hymnbook:

*O Sapientia (O Wisdom)
O Adonai (O Lord)
O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse)
O Clavis David (O Key of David)
O Oriens (O Rising Sun)
O Rex Gentium (O King of Nations)
O Emmanuel (O God with us)*

Last year we distributed copies of an outstanding devotional written and designed by Ascension member Amy Bornman, simply entitled “the great ‘O’ antiphons.” In her introduction, Amy explains the history of the ‘O Antiphons’: They are very old, 8th century, and come from the Roman Catholic tradition, sung before and after the Magnificat at vespers on the last seven evenings of Advent (Dec 17 – 23). An antiphon is a refrain, a repeated phrase of a song. These seven antiphons are called the “O” antiphons because they all begin with the beckoning call – “O”.



Amy has designed artwork, written poems, directed us to scripture, offers a reflection, prayer and a practice for each O Antiphon. Those who used this devotional last year commented on its richness, how it was difficult to digest in one week, their desire to give it as a gift to friends. We will be offering the devotional earlier this year for those who wish to walk through these antiphons more slowly, through the entire season of Advent. And of course, for those who want to savor the tradition, it is available for the seven days prior to Christmas Eve.

Music & Worship Arts

Advent and Christmas Services



By Chris Massa, Director of Music and Worship Arts
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Advent Evening in the Nave – A Service for Drawing Near: Sunday, December 12 at 6:00 pm

Is the hustle and bustle of the holiday season disheartening? Do you need a moment to slow down, pray, and reflect? On Sunday, December 12, we will have an opportunity to do just that, and we'll be doing it through a combination of *visio divina* (a form of contemplative prayer involving visual art) and reflective music inspired by the traditions of the Taizé Community.

Service of Lessons and Carols: Sunday, December 19 at 9:00 am and 11:00 am

There are many different stories that are told in the days and weeks leading up to Christmas. The Service of Lessons and Carols is a unique way of telling one of these stories—the biblical narrative of fall and redemption—through a series of scripture readings, reflections, and a variety of music. This year, the Service will take place at both services on Sunday, December 19. It will be the same service at both times, featuring familiar carols as well as music from the choir, children's choir, and music team. In addition to being an opportunity to worship together, this is a particularly good service to invite people to—friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, etc.



Family Christmas Eve Service at 6:00 pm

All are invited to this warm service that is designed with children in mind. We will celebrate the nativity of Jesus with a children's tableau and sing the great carols of Christmas. *Childcare for children aged 4 (PreK) and under will be provided. Children aged 5 (Kindergarten) and older are with us for the service.* Please remember to bring your bells to this service! It is a great joy to sing the great hymns of Christmas with congregational bells ringing out!

Festival Christmas Eve Eucharist at 10:00 pm

Our late Christmas Eve service will feature a Festival Procession, incense, candles, and the great music of the season in celebration of the birth of the Christ child. *Childcare is not provided.* Please remember to bring bells to this service! This service will be available via livestream.

Christmas Day Eucharist at 10:00 am

The lessons are different from Christmas Eve so that those who wish to make this their second service of Christmas may join those who prefer this quiet one to the festival celebrations on Christmas Eve. *Childcare is not provided.*

Sunday, December 26 at 10:00 am

We will have one combined service at 10:00 am that will be available by livestream. *Childcare for children aged 4 (PreK) and under will be provided. Children aged 5 (Kindergarten) and older are with us for the service.*



Music & Worship Arts

St. Nicholas Night Market

Save the date for Sunday December 5 from 5 - 7pm for our first St. Nicholas Night Market! The Music & Worship Arts and Children's Ministry are teaming up to provide a family friendly event on the lawn that is open to the entire Oakland community. Evening includes:

- Christmas gifts from local artists and artisans
- Feast on some empanadas and hot cider!
- Live music and bonfires!
- Live stable animals! (yes, we're hoping to see the llama again)
- Maybe even a tractor ride!

Artists, sign up to sell your work! Email Elise Massa (elise.massa@ascensionpittsburgh.org) or sign-up directly using the survey found our Ascension Music & Worship Arts Facebook page. Tables are available to both Ascension artists and friends.



St. Nicholas Night Market



Sunday, Dec. 5th @ 5-7pm

**THE CHRISTMAS
OVERNIGHT IS BACK!**

FRIDAY DECEMBER 17



Advent: Cultivating Habits for a New Year



By Andrea Millard, Director of Prayer Ministry & Leadership Development andrea.millard@ascensionpittsburgh.org

The beginning of a new year is a great time to make a new or renewed start. Advent is the church's New Year. We begin (again) the cycle of the Church's calendar. The Christian calendar is organized around the Story of God – his plan of rescue and our place in this grand narrative. By marking and participating in the Church's various seasons, we open ourselves to the transforming power of God's loving plan of redemption and salvation. This yearly rhythm invites us to take our place in God's story.

Advent is a great time to start (or restart) practices of daily prayer, bible reading and other spiritual disciplines. To that end, we have the following opportunities to encourage you in your spiritual formation.

Seasonal Daily Prayer Booklet: Advent through Lent (available Nov. 28)

Fr. Kevin has prepared a seasonal booklet to help us enter into the pattern of daily prayer and bible reading. Perhaps this will be the year or this will be the season you gather with a few friends or family members to pray one of the offices together.

Not only does this booklet provide background as to why Anglican Christians pray the way we do, but also it provides tips and resources for digging deeper into habits the Church practices during particular seasons. The Daily Office and reading are from the 2019 Book of Common Prayer, our Anglican Prayer Book. This booklet is designed for maximum usability and portability. All that is needed to pray the Daily Office has been assembled for you and will tuck easily into most bibles. Pick one up beginning November 28 and join the Church in prayer.

Advent Weekly Prayer: The Great Litany

Wednesdays, December 1, 8 and 15 from 7:00-7:15 pm (on Zoom)

Join us on Zoom to pray *The Great Litany*. The Great Litany is an ancient penitential rite and is particularly appropriate for Advent – a season of preparation and expectation. Join at 6:45 pm to meet, greet and center ourselves for prayer. We begin promptly at 7:00 pm. This interactive prayer takes about 15 minutes to pray. If you have never prayed The Great Litany, this would be a wonderful opportunity to give it a try. (If you would rather not pray aloud, no worries – only those who volunteer will be called upon. And for those who do volunteer, all the words will be provided.)

Come to one or all three of these prayer sessions. Contact Mother Andrea or use the following Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81409069998?pwd=Tm1abDFtRnJ3SXZOL2FvMWVNBmIh6dz09>

we beseeche thee to here vs
good Lorde.
Erō our enemies defende
vs O Chyiste.
Graciously looke vpon our
afflictions.
Erō our enemies defende
vs O Chyiste.
Graciously looke vpon our
afflictions.
O lambe of god, that takest
away the inies of the world:
Graunt vs thy peace.
Good Lorde deliuer vs.

Don't Miss It!

Advent Soul Care: December 4 from 9:30 – 11:00 am

An important part of our life of prayer is listening. In our busy lives it can be challenging to find solitude and silence to hear from God. We have designed Soul Care gatherings to give our souls space to be refreshed in the presence of the Lord. We gather for silent prayer, Scripture reading and individual reflection. The tempo of the morning is slow. We slow down to listen, pray, and respond to the love and grace of Jesus. Each gathering will feature a reflection led by an Ascension Spiritual Director. This month Brian Janaszek will guide our reflections in Advent on Saturday, December 4.



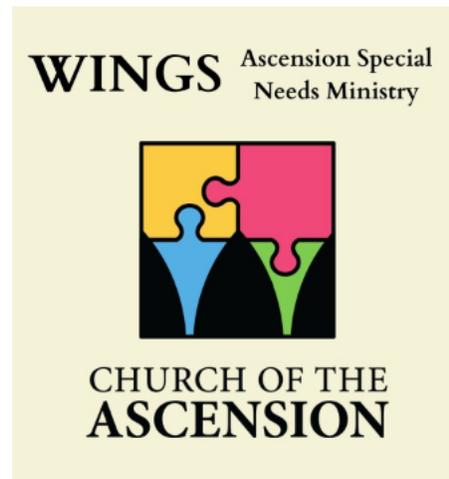
Explore Ascension: December 4 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Interested in learning more about Ascension? Anglican history? Contemplating membership? Want to get to know clergy and staff? Please join us on Saturday, December 4 from 1 – 4pm for a great afternoon designed for those who are brand new, those who have been around for a few months and still feel 'newish', those who want to know more about

Ascension and Anglicanism, as well as for those who want to become members. Childcare is provided. Please RSVP on the website or email jess.bennett@ascensionpittsburgh.org and let Jess know you hope to join us.

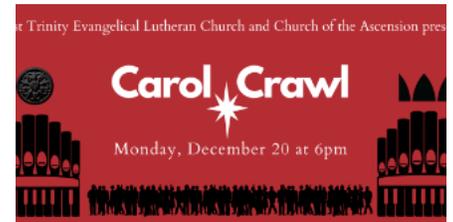
OWLS Seniors Ministry

Ascension's Older Wiser and Lively Saints will have a Christmas party luncheon as well as Service of Holy Communion on Thursday, December 9. Ann Paton will preach, Lara McGill will sing, Both Catherine Crotty and Jeanne Kohn will play the piano and lead in song. This will be a truly wonderful event. All are welcome. To RSVP for the luncheon, please email Ann Tefft at tefft.ann@gmail.com



Special Needs Ministry in December

In December, Ascension Special Needs Ministry will be preparing for Christmas. In November we successfully launched our new pattern: 10:30am classes on 1st and 3rd Sundays, with a service project and pizza lunch on the 2nd Sunday at 12:30pm. In December participants will be led through Advent Godly Play lessons and will complete a project at their pizza lunch to help with the Greening of the Church and our Christmas Services.



Carol Crawl: Monday, December 20 at 6:00 pm

Jeanne Kohn and Jonathan Hoyt, organist at First Trinity Evangelical-Lutheran Church, will be presenting a very special evening of organ music and traditional carols. The event will begin here at Ascension and move to First Trinity at roughly the halfway point, giving us a wonderful opportunity to sing and worship with our neighbors from another church. Come experience the wonder and beauty of organ music and carols of Advent and Christmas!

Fear Not! Shepherds, Angels, and The Newborn King



By Catherine Slocum

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There is so much packed into Christmas Eve that stirs our hearts. Just consider for a moment the accumulation of memories that collect over the years, both good and bad, during this season. Each year they return as we relive Christmas from past years and add new memories to the collection.

There are cherished family traditions, ethnic and church traditions, that help evoke feelings of joy and loss as we embrace those we love and ache for those we have lost. And there are little things too, that, though small can mean a great deal to us individually, as families and as a Church; the photo in front of a certain Christmas tree, a certain holiday meal or dessert, or a song or film that stirs in us. “The hopes and fears of all the years,” as the song says.

It is our hope that the 2021 Family Service at Church of the Ascension will stir the hearts of all those who attend. The service will be in many ways familiar with a Christmas Eve reading from Luke 2 where Shepherds learn of Christ’s promised birth from Angels who must tell them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” We will sing cherished songs that include Angels We Have Heard on High, What Child is This, and Silent Night. Many of our children will come brimming with anticipation as they take part in the pageantry of dressing in a costume (Angels, Sheep, Shepherds). Everyone will get a chance to hold a lit candle as we sing words many of us have committed to memory, “Round yon virgin Mother and Child, Holy infant so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.”

In contrast, some of what we experience will be new, adding new memories to our collective joy in this night of worship. We will experience the power of monologue from a gifted actor, see the talent of a young filmmaker on screens, and take part in worship in ways that will make an old familiar story come alive as we see the angel of the Lord appear in ways that we have not in the past.

Having assembled a talented team of actors, musicians, liturgists, and volunteers, we will be working hard in the time leading up to Advent and into the Advent season preparing for a very special service. We invite you to take part, invite family and friends, and join the Church of the Ascension family in this very special night of worship.

Just as the Nations Among the Decapolis...



By LuAnn Pengidore, Director of International Ministry
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We have had much to be thankful for in November. Fifty participants from many nations had the opportunity to learn about the tradition of giving thanks to God at an outdoor picnic with fire pits, music, and games. A big shout out to Rhonda Herman who helped put this event together!

We also walked Regent Square in late October, talked about the American tradition of decorating for Halloween, and ended our time by grilling out at the home of RD and Donna Wilkes. Students told me how thankful they were to RD and Donna who gave them hot cider and sandwiches, but best of all, a very warm welcome. Other students joined me for a beautiful fall foliage afternoon at Living Treasures Animal Park. We are thankful for the 8-11 students who participate weekly in the *Journey through the Bible* series on Friday nights. They enjoy diverse and delicious homecooked meals along with great discussions with Ascension volunteers.

In the spirit of Advent, we look forward to the Christmas season and preparing room for Jesus. Most of our programming in December involves inviting students more deeply into the life of Ascension, with one exception – a historical tour of the decorated buildings



downtown with Alan Irvine on December 11. We anticipate students will eagerly participate in the St. Nicholas Night Market on December 5, help decorate the Nave and eat Christmas cookies on December 18. We hope some internationals will participate in the Advent Evening in the Nave, the Soul Care morning, the Carol Crawl, Lessons and Carols, and Christmas Eve. Our hope has been that our international friends know they are welcome.

Just as the nations among the Decapolis came to hear and see what Jesus was doing, we currently have 26 nations represented in our program of 91 weekly participants, some of whom are political refugees as well. To find out more about the international ministry, whether as a participant or volunteer, please feel free to contact me.





Venite Campus Ministry



By Leah Hornfeck, CCO Campus Ministry Staff & Associate for Youth and College Ministries
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To the tune of "Comfort, Comfort, O My People"

Study, study, O you students
 "Its half your grade", now says the prof
 Study through the nighttime shadows
 Mourning time spent goofing off
 Sleep this week will lack of REM
 But plenty coffee waits for them
 Say a prayer, wish on a clover
 That soon finals will be over

This is a season of great anticipation (and I'm not just talking about Advent). In the liturgical world, we focus our attention on the once and future coming of Jesus Christ. But, in the world of college students, we focus on all that we've learned throughout the past semester and dread the future coming of finals.

Either way, judgment is coming, and the question looms large: Will I be prepared?

Advent gives us this opportunity to prepare our hearts, minds, and lives for the coming of Christ, and the things we can gain in the midst of our preparation will help us through finals too. We can have peace and joy in the midst of darkness and hardships, when things feel like they're at their absolute worst. We hope and long for the rest that is promised to us—the rest we will receive one day in God's Kingdom, and the rest we will receive over the few weeks of winter break.

This Advent, at Venite, we'll be looking at our lives, including this season of finals, through the lens of these themes. If you're a college student, we'd love to have you join us at our



weekly fellowship gatherings for this 2-week mini-series! We'll be meeting on Wednesday, December 1st and Wednesday December 8th from 6:30-8:30 pm at Church of the Ascension. For more information, please contact Leah Hornfeck.



CAYG Christmas Greens Fundraiser

Christmas Greens will be delivered on Sunday December 5, 2021 - so don't miss out on walking home with a fragrant wreath or elegant pine roping. You can order online at <https://caygonline.com/wreaths/> but do so before Sunday, November 28. Profits made go towards scholarships to support our youth in their 2021 summer service trip to Harrisburg. And why the pizza overlay to the wreath image? The first team of youth groupers who get 100 items ordered in their names, win a pizza party!





A Season of Waiting



By Chris Kirkland, Director of Graduate Student Ministry
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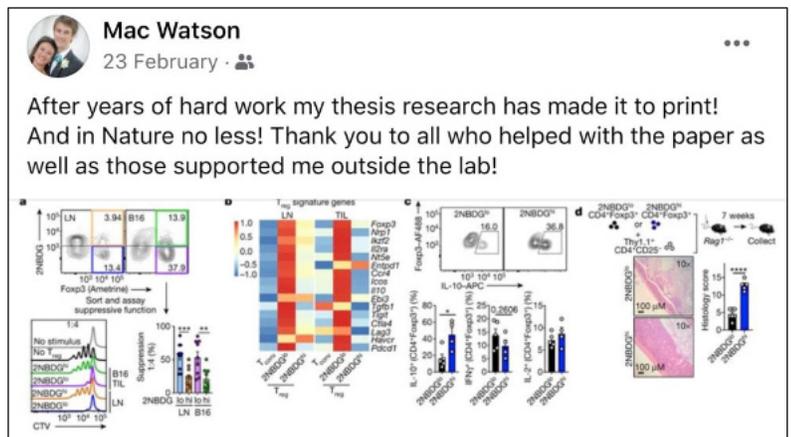
Advent is a season of waiting, struggle, hope and anticipation. In few places is that tension more keenly felt than in the long journey of PhD program. Mac Watson, who has been a member of Ascension since 2019, just completed his PhD in Microbiology and Immunology. He offered his reflections on parallels between graduate study and Advent as an avenue for God's grace:

Five years to complete a degree is a long time and more than once during my PhD training I thought I wasn't going to make it. One of the biggest lessons I have learned from all my training, classes, and time spent in the lab is persistence. While I started out my PhD in a full-on sprint, I quickly found this pace unsustainable. It wasn't until about halfway through my PhD I realized this was a marathon that required consistent steady work rather than pushing myself to the limit every day. When I reflect on Advent, I find that persistence is also a key lesson. Like a long PhD degree, Advent calls us to wait, to anticipate the prize and persist to the end. Also like a PhD, Advent waiting is not something done idly. Receiving a PhD and receiving the coming of Christ are not a matter of course, but something we are called to participate in and work towards. While of course we cannot earn Christ's love or bring about His coming through our own efforts, God invites us to participate anyway, in part, to receive him more fully.

Our participation is played out over a lifetime, a marathon not a sprint. This means a steady consistent pace in the same direction always keeping the finish in mind. Luckily for us as Anglicans we have amazing tools to help us keep this steady consistent pace. The Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer, weekly celebration of the Eucharist, and the liturgical calendar all help us to persist and work towards the coming of Christ. Advent is a chance for us to renew our pace, which for most of us means slowing down, so that we may consistently and steadily draw closer to Christ. And Christ has promised that when we draw near to Him, He draws near to us. We don't need to have some superhuman strength or resolve but to draw near slowly and consistently and He will do the rest, for with man it is impossible but with God all things are possible. Just like I finally received my PhD, we will one day finally receive Christ in His fullness and how glorious that day will be!

Congratulations to Mac on his successful thesis defense and thank God for the grace that enabled him to successfully conclude his program. It's the same grace that God offers to all of us as we run the race he has set before us as we await his return. May God bless Mac and his Carly in their next stage of life and offer all other students at Ascension the same encouragement.

For more information on how Ascension can support you in your graduate studies, or can help a graduate student you know, please contact Chris!

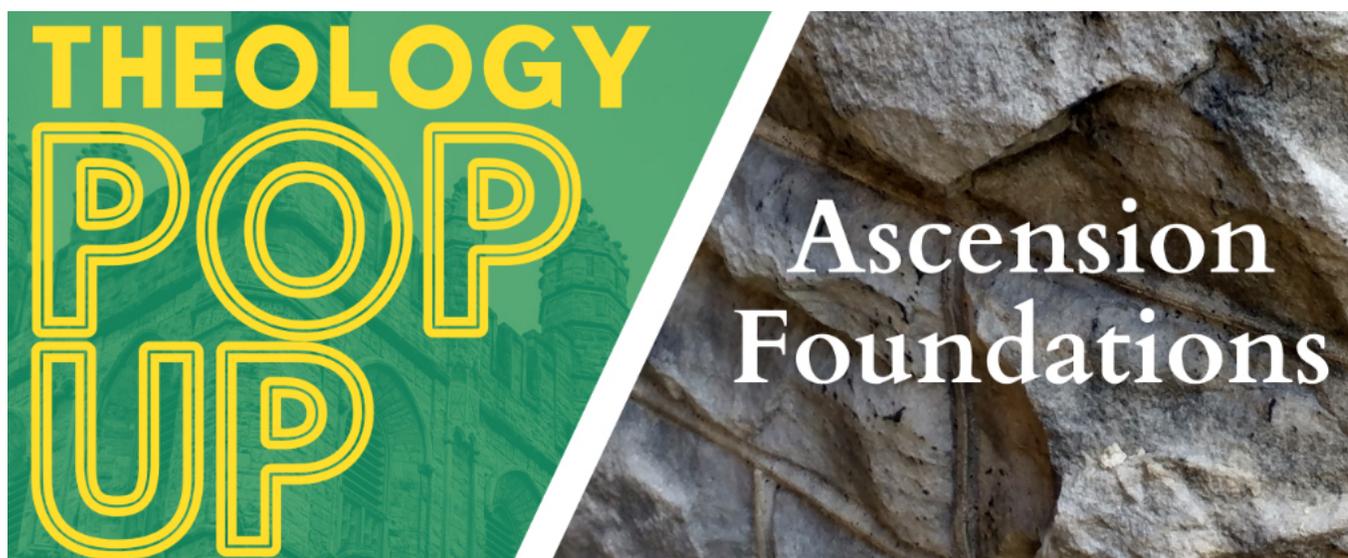


Adult Spiritual Formation



By Kevin Antlitz, Assistant Rector

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At Ascension, we are always trying to create opportunities for us to grow more and more into the likeness of Christ. In all the things we do, our aim is to help us grow up in Christ as we establish deep roots in Him. Towards this end, I am excited to share about two new spiritual formation opportunities that we are developing in the new year. By way of introduction, I'll share the mission and vision of each of these new initiatives.

The first one you've already heard about: Theology Pop Ups (TPUs). These Pop Ups exist to provide an occasional space for spiritual formation that complements the rhythms of the church year. Our vision is that they would help you saints grow up into Christ by engaging with timely questions on theology and culture.

We held a great inaugural Pop Up on the sacrament of baptism. We hope to hold a variety of events with different formats sporadically throughout the year. If you have a topic or question you'd like to tackle, please reach out to me and we'll see if it's something we could address in this context.

The second formation opportunity is a new course called Ascension Foundations. This course exists to establish a foundational understanding of the Christian faith. Our vision is that Foundations would foster clarity and confidence in the core beliefs and practices of the Anglican Church.

Foundations follows the classic catechesis model. That means it covers the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, as well as the sacraments and Anglican history. The course will include 12 sessions and will be taught by Father Kevin through the winter/spring.

I like to think of this as an intensive discipleship cohort or a Community Group with a semester long commitment. Foundations is open to everyone. Whether you are brand new to Ascension or you've been around for 50 years and want a refresher, this course is for you. Successfully completing this course will also serve as preparation for adult confirmation.

The day, time, and start-date are still TBD but it will most likely be a weekday evening. Stay tuned for the opportunity to sign up! Space will be limited.



St. Nicholas Night Market



CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION



Sunday, Dec. 5th
5:00–7:00pm

Worship Services **Sunday 9:00 am , 11:00 am Nave Services** with [YouTube](#) live stream.

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A Worshipping Community;
Equipping God's People; Sharing
Christ's Healing with a Broken World