

Weekly Update from Father John Allison 12-7-17

Dear members and friends of our parish family,

We are now deep into the first week of Advent and already signs of the season are calling us to prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas. On Sunday, we began a modified schedule that included morning prayer, Advent study, and the first lighting of our Advent wreath. Then, on Wednesday afternoon we continued our Advent study as we hosted other partnership parishes and joined together in singing and study of the book, "Let Every Heart Prepare." Joyous singing and thoughtful discussion were enhanced by hearty attendance and I came away feeling strengthened and encouraged as we journey together toward Christmas. Study will continue on Sunday at 9am and then again on Wednesday, December 13, at 4:30pm as St. John's, Southwest Harbor hosts the study in partnership with the other MDI parishes. I urge you to come and share in the fellowship, even if you've not read the book.

On this upcoming Second Sunday of Advent our readings continue to explore the Advent themes of expectation, repentance, waiting, and the fulfillment of God's promises. For this Sunday and the next John the Baptist takes center stage as herald of the Messiah's coming. This Sunday the Gospel of Mark (1:1-18) conveys the excitement and anticipation of "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This bold statement of Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah is central to the entire Gospel and proclaims the beginning of a new age. Quoting our Old Testament reading from Isaiah (40:1-1), Mark declares in reference to John the Baptist, "See I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Just as John prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus, we can look to John's example for our own work of preparation to receive the transforming presence of Christ in our lives. The message is further complemented by the Second Letter of Peter (3:8-15) who reminds us of God's patience and desire for all to turn to him. "In accordance with his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home." Please welcome Mother Kathleen as preacher and celebrant.

Finally, thanks to all who made the annual Christmas Fair a big success. I'm told, in fact, that it was perhaps our most successful ever. I continue to be inspired by so many of you here at Church of Our Father who give so generously of yourselves in service to God and the increase of His Kingdom. Surely the Spirit is working through us!

Faithfully,

John+