

# Family and Faith: Finding sustenance for the journey

Issue #22

## *A message from the Assistant Rector*

The pandemic has persisted longer than we first thought, and the hard truth is that we won't be regathering indoors as Church for a while. We may feel grief and sadness and wonder how will we move us forward in new ways as the beloved community God calls us to be.



Advent ushers in a new liturgical year. How might the season of Advent prepare and sustain us through the long and cold and dark nights? What is ours to discover in this season of waiting, of hope and of expectation? What new thing awaits? What do we hope for? What do we expect?

If I'm being honest, I expect little more than the now familiar refrain: Stay home, wear a mask, keep social distance, and remain in my household bubble. Am I missing the true meaning of "expectation"?

A wise spiritual director once said to me that Advent beckons intentionality. Here's mine. I expect and hope that you and your family feel connected to the parish, are supportive of one another, and have the awareness that you are surrounded by God's love. What do you think? How are you feeling connected to God and to your parish right now? Not just you, but your partner, your children, your housemates, all those who are in your bubble?

Did you know that the single greatest factor is determining whether a child or youth develops an adult faith is having parents who are active in their faith? It is participation in worship and connection to other adults in the faith community that matter more than anything else. Feeling your anxiety level rising? Keep reading.

You already have what it takes to be the spiritual guide and mentor your family needs. You don't need a theology degree to embody Jesus' love, forgiveness, and kindness. Fortunately, there are resources to help nudge us when we need it. Having our routines hickacked by COVID may have slowed us down but not left us hopeless. Since some of you have asked, here are some "pro-tips" to keep the faith. I hope you'll find them helpful.

## ***First.....Engage the stories of our faith.***

Stories from Scripture help us to remember that bad things have happened to God's people since the beginning, and that God has delivered and loved God's people all along, even when they questioned God's presence and power. Let the stories do the work, let them open up feelings and inspire questions, and don't feel the need to make every story teach a moral lesson. Be open to wonder.

If you are curious about how to do this I hope you'll join us on Sunday mornings at 9:00 on zoom. Breakfast eating is encouraged! [Email me](#) for the Zoom link.



## ***Best Bibles***

for younger children: [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) and the [Desmond Tutu's Children of God: Storybook Bible](#).

for older children and youth; [The CEB Student Bible](#)

for serious youth and adults: The [NRSV Harper Collins Study Bible](#) has footnotes that help with interpretation and self-study.

***Best digital resources:*** Sign up to receive weekly emails from [Faith at Home](#). There are excellent conversation prompts that correspond with our lectionary readings and they work for all ages. Godly Play parables such as the Parable of the Good Samaritan can be found on the Godly Play [Youtube channel](#).



## **Second... Worship and Pray as a family**

If the Sunday morning service is too long for your child, [view it later](#) and skip to your child's favorite parts. Print out the Sunday Paper Jr. from Thursday's e-prophet (right hand column) and allow your child to color and work.

Check out the Christ Church Zoom services of Morning Prayer or Compline. You can join these with your video camera turned off or on. Teens and children are always welcome at these services, and a few attend them regularly! Click the link in the [parish website](#) to join, or reach out to a clergy-person to learn more.

In the Book of Common Prayer, starting on page 136 there are short and simple devotional services that are designed for a family to practice together at home. There are extra prayer books in the back entry to Glebe House that you may take, or you can find a [digital copy here](#).

Light the Advent Wreath at your dinner table each Sunday night! It doesn't have to be complicated. Focus on the Advent values- hope, peace, joy, and love. What does it feel like to wait, to hope? How does peace within your own heart create peace in the world? Is there a difference between happiness and joy? Who needs to feel love?

---

## **Third.....Embody Christ's love for others**

God has given each and every one of us special gifts and abilities-- things that we love doing. God wants us to share those things with others. Sometimes we do them imperfectly, but when we do them with love, they hold great power. Do you or does your child like to bake, draw, paint, create, make videos, tell jokes? Are you good at chess, dance, decorating, organizing, writing? Frederick Beuchner says, "the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." It is not always obvious how and where to serve in a Church during a pandemic, but there are definitely ways to plug in to all the good things that God is inspiring in the people of Christ Church. Whether you've been coming here for years or just recently found us, may your connection to this parish remind and encourage you to serve others. Don't hide your light-- let it shine!