

Holy Trinity Riverbend

WHAT'S THE BUZZ? HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING!

December 6, 2020 – Second Sunday of Advent

A **Message from Rebecca:** As we enter another week of living with Covid, I want to thank all of you for doing what you can to help stop the spread. Our own **Ryan Alexander** is working long shifts as a paramedic to be sure everyone is cared for and, with every call, his own health is put at risk. Please remember, the frontline workers are our family members, friends, and neighbors. Keep being vigilant. Thank you.

Your church search committee will be meeting again this week to discuss any developments in finding a permanent home for HTR. Please keep them in your prayers.

Christmas is not that far away, and our children will be making traditional Christingles to celebrate this happy event. Today they made advent wreaths which will hold the Christingles. **Sarah** has

invited everyone, adults and children alike, to join them on **Sunday, December 20th at 9:00 a.m.** to make your own **Christingle**. If you would like to participate, please let Sarah or myself know so we can get sufficient supplies to you. If you would just like to watch, please zoom in. It will be a fun-filled morning for sure.

Last Monday, I delivered HTR's huge mountain of warm clothing to the Inner City Pastoral Ministry. They were overwhelmed with your generosity and asked me to pass along their heartfelt thanks. They had homes for every single item.



H **TR Virtual Coffee Session:**

We enjoyed another fun coffee hour today after the worship service. Living in a cold climate, the conversation naturally turned to sledding. **Olivia** regaled us with stories of sledding down hills, narrowly missing trees, and saving her cousin Ben from disaster by acting as his human shield. **Marx** said he was looking forward to taking **Faye** out sledding soon but he needs to find some gentler slopes, so she isn't scared. We also talked a little about traditions we enjoy and **Carol** said she has wonderful memories of riding in a sleigh pulled by a team of horses. It sounded very Christmassy indeed. **Sarah** shared a great story with us. Her mom and dad, and her siblings and their children, all had a gingerbread house decorating contest via zoom. All was going well until **Bishop Jane's** doorbell rang and she left her 'house' unattended for a

few minutes. While the rest of the family looked on in horror, the dog ate the roof of the unattended gingerbread house! But not to be defeated, the Bishop quickly improvised and placed a gingerbread tree against the house to hide the missing roof! **Chao** sent her greetings from work and said she misses seeing everyone and hopes to join us again very soon. We miss you too Chao! **Maureen B.** also asked me to say hello to everyone. She is slowly settling into her new home, but it has been a lot of work. **Ping and Catherine** continue to do well and look forward to our weekly gatherings. I noticed Catherine's hair is now quite long and she can even put it in a ponytail! Until next week, turn up the Christmas music, watch a favorite Christmas movie, stay healthy and stay warm.

Our HTR Virtual Coffee Hour, takes place **every Sunday, at 11:00 a.m.** via Zoom. The link is sent to all parishioners on Friday's. We hope you can join us as it is a great way to stay connected!



Bishop Jane – Second Sunday of Advent: Please join Bishop Jane in Prayer this Advent. With the help of the Very Rev. Alex Meek and the Rev. Canon Chelsy Bouwman, she will be sharing Advent Prayers and the lighting of the candles with you throughout this coming Advent and Christmas season. The link to the **second week of Advent videos** is:

<https://edmonton.anglican.ca/podcasts/message/2020-12-02-advent-2>



Bishop Jane – Solidarity Letter:

Bishop Jane Alexander is one of more than 25 faith leaders in Alberta who has signed an Ecumenical-Interfaith COVID-19 Statement released December 3rd, 2020. In the face of the current COVID-19 crisis, these leaders stand in solidarity with a plea to citizens and governments to: “commit to carrying the burdens of one another, and to leaving no one behind.”

“It has already been a long season of uncertainty, fear, suffering, and loss,” the statement reads, “and it is not over yet. We must make an even more intentional effort to preserve social cohesion and concern for the common good. We are not alone, and we cannot and do not face this trial alone.” The full text can be found using this link: <https://edmonton.anglican.ca/news/edmonton-diocese-joins-interfaith-statement-of-solidarity>

Advent Activities – 2020 – Week 2:

The advent activities (taken from the Episcopal Church in the USA) for this week help us prepare for the birth of Jesus.

Sunday, December 6

What part of gathering for worship fills your heart with hope?

Monday, December 7

Read or watch your local news. Where is reconciliation needed? Pray for healing.

Tuesday, December 8

Read Luke 1:45. Consider how your faith is a blessing. Share your faith story with a friend.

Wednesday, December 9

Offer a prayer of thanks for each person you encounter – both stranger and friend – silently or aloud.

Thursday, December 10

Call or write a family member with whom you desire a closer relationship. Share with them how they are a blessing.

Friday, December 11

Reflect: Where have I fallen short this week? How can I make amends? Give thanks for the gift of fresh starts that we have through God's grace.

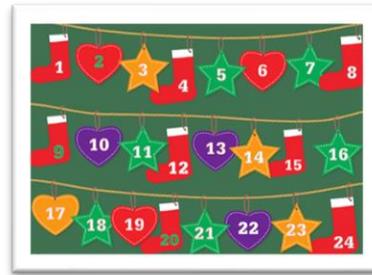
Saturday, December 12

Set aside 30 minutes to rest, pause, and breathe deeply with a friend or family member. Give thanks for the restorative power of love in relationship.



A **dv**ent Children's **C**ountdown: Christians sometimes call Jesus 'God's gift to us' – that's why we give gifts to each other at Christmas. **Make a list of the people your family will give gifts to this Christmas. Thank God for each person.** At the same, remember, Christmas can be expensive. Some people are worried that they do not have enough money for gifts or food. **Could your family**

help by giving a gift to your local foodbank?



A **Very Different Christmas:** Our children (and ourselves) will all

be experiencing a very different Christmas this year. We have included **Part 1 of 2 activities (at the end of the newsletter)** we can do with our children to keep the spirit of Christmas alive. Part 2 will appear next week.

Comfort & Joy: As we approach Christmas, it is a wonderful time to celebrate the greatest story of all. Wherever you are, however you celebrate, the Christ Child's promise of comfort and joy is for you. This short, animated film is from the Church of England.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTtYrCqBnhg&utm_source=Daily+media+digest&utm_campaign=f25e859273-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_11_27_02_01_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_296e14724b-f25e859273-249610628&mc_cid=f25e8

[59273&mc_eid=fe18dacb84](https://www.biggeekdad.com/2010/12/becky-kelley/)

This Week's Bible Quote -- "Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely." ... 1 Corinthians 13:12.

Inspirational Thoughts: "Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear." ... George Addair

And

"Fall seven times and stand up eight." ... Japanese Proverb



Christmas Song: Missing singing Christmas songs at church? – I definitely am. With this in mind, I saw this beautiful video with a song I had not heard before and thought you might enjoy it. <https://biggeekdad.com/2010/12/becky-kelley/>

Sermon: A copy of the Sunday Sermon, and the Prayers of the People, are emailed to our parishioners every Sunday.. Today's sermon is from **Rev. Dr. Elisabeth** and Prayers of the People are courtesy of **Rev. Rebecca**.



Finances: The suspension of in-person worship services, as well as the pressures we have experienced from COVID-19 has put some stress on our financial position. The loss of open plate offerings has also had some impact on HTR. We realize some families are being negatively impacted by the economic situation through job losses or increased financial pressures and are not able to contribute as they have done in the past. If, however, you are able to assist, we would request that if you normally give through the weekly plate, please consider signing up for the **Pre-Authorized Giving (PAG)** program or, alternatively, mailing your cheque directly to HTR. To sign up for PAG, the form can either be **accessed through the Anglican**

Diocese of Edmonton website, or you can contact Rebecca and she will forward the form to you. Also, if you would prefer Rebecca to pick up your contribution, please let her know. Whether you are able to give or not at this time, we want you to know our prayers are with you.



U pcoming for next Sunday, December 13, 2020: Preaching: Rev. Rebecca; Prayers of the People: **Rebecca**.

Readings – (Third Sunday of Advent)
Is 61:1-4, 8-11
Canticle 18
1 Th 5:16-24
Jn 1:6-8, 19-28



Virtual Sunday School: Sunday School takes place each Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to approx..9:30 a.m. via Zoom. If you would like

your children to take part, please let **Sarah Alexander** know so she can arrange to deliver the necessary materials to you. We are also including (courtesy of the Diocese of Chelmsford), **an additional series of activities for younger and older children.** Please see the end of the newsletter to view the material you will need as well as the lesson.



HTR Online Worship: We have moved to online worship services using ZOOM. The **link to the services is distributed each Friday, along with the HTR Virtual Coffee Hour link.** You do not need to have ZOOM on your computer to be able to view the service.

To access the service, simply click on the link on Sunday (**the service starts at 10:00 a.m.**). The **service bulletin will be sent on Saturday. Please join us on Sunday.**

Vestry – Steve Johnson
Rector's Warden
Suzanne Pearson –
People's Warden

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A very different Christmas

Together @ Home

Christmas is going to look very different this year, restrictions and guidance in place for our safety will have an impact on who we can meet with and which of our traditions can take place.

It is important to take time to prepare our children for a very different Christmas this year, but this can also be an opportunity to have some meaningful conversations about what Christmas is really about.



What is your favourite part of Christmas Day?

Which is your favourite thing we normally do at church for Christmas?

How is Christmas going to be different this year?

What are you going to miss the most this Christmas?



Family

Spending time with family is an important part of Christmas for many of us. This year you may be unable to meet with family members or you might find yourself having to be socially distanced from them.

Why not encourage children to write letters or create special Christmas cards to relatives. Fill them with messages of love, taking the time to let them know some of your favourite things about them. You could even take time as a family to wait on God and ask for a message of encouragement or a picture from God for each member of your family.

Presents

When asked, most children will say that their favourite part of Christmas is the presents! During these strange times many families will be struggling with finances. Don't be afraid of sharing honestly with your children and managing their expectations.

Why not get creative and crafty, working together to hand make some presents/edible gifts for others. You could pray for those you are making presents for and include a message of encouragement or a favourite Bible verse with their gift.

What is the best present you have ever given?

God's love is a free gift for everyone – how can we share it this Christmas?



Together @ Home

Lectionary Edition
Sunday 6th December
Second Sunday of Advent



Here are some activities you could do together as a family, begin with the story and then do as many or as few as you like, in any order.

Bible Passage

Today we will be exploring together, the story of John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus.

You can find it in your Bible in:
Mark 1 v 1–8

Read the story together – choose a Bible translation or children’s story version which best suits your group.

The other passages we might be thinking about at church this week are:

Isaiah 40.1-11
Psalm 85.1-2,8-13
2 Peter 3.8-15a

A prayer to say together

Dear God,
Thank you for the story of John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for Jesus. Thank you for the reminder that you are gracious to us, that you love and forgive us.

Today would you help us to be messengers for you on the earth sharing your love and kindness with those we meet. Help us to speak to others about Jesus and teach them about his life, death and resurrection.

As we explore the Christmas story together let us not forget that Jesus came to the earth as part of your big plan to save and forgive us all.

Amen.

Discussion

A question for adults to ask children

Why do you think God sent John before Jesus?

Throughout Jesus’ life many things happened which fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament. In this passage we can read about how John fulfilled Old Testament prophecies which said a messenger would come before the promised Saviour.

In Biblical times God’s people would seek forgiveness through the sacrifice of animals, but John encouraged people to repent their sins and to be baptised. John was preparing the way for a new way of receiving forgiveness, through the death and resurrection of Jesus forgiveness would become freely available to all.

Some questions to answer as a family

What is your favourite thing about preparing for Christmas?

What does Baptism look like in our church?

A prayer of love



As we light the second Advent candle, we remember the love of God demonstrated through Jesus.

We thank God that He loved us enough to send his own son to the earth to live and die for us.

We ask for your help this advent as we share your love with those we meet. Help us to be loving in our words and deeds. Amen.



A verse to remember

Isaiah 40 v 3

**This is the voice of one who calls out:
"Prepare in the desert the way for the Lord.
Make a straight road in the dry lands for our God.**

Read this verse together and then find it in our Bible Passage for the day and in John 1 v 23. John the Baptist used these words from the Old Testament to describe himself, why do you think that is? Try to learn this verse together, you could come up with some actions to help you remember it or decorate a copy and put it up somewhere you can see it during the week.

Active Advent

Just as John encouraged people to change their hearts and lives, we can use this advent season to prepare our own hearts and lives before God. Why not take on these challenges during the second week of Advent, you could do one each day or do them all at once.

Dec 6th

Draw a picture of yourself on a piece of paper, pray and ask God to help you draw closer to Him this week.

Dec 7th

Add to the picture to show you using a skill or talent that God has given you. How could you use that skill to serve and worship God today?

Dec 8th

Draw a heart on your picture, pray and ask God to give you a heart more like His, full of love for the world.

Dec 9th

Add a house to your picture, what ways can you think of that you could love and serve others in your household?

Dec 10th

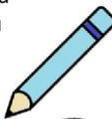
Who are the people you can share God's love with this week? Add them to your picture.

Dec 11th

Write or draw a message to God today, spend some time saying sorry for any mistakes you know you have made this week.

Dec 12th

Spend some time waiting on and listening to God today. Ask God if there are any areas in your life where you could serve Him better or be more obedient.

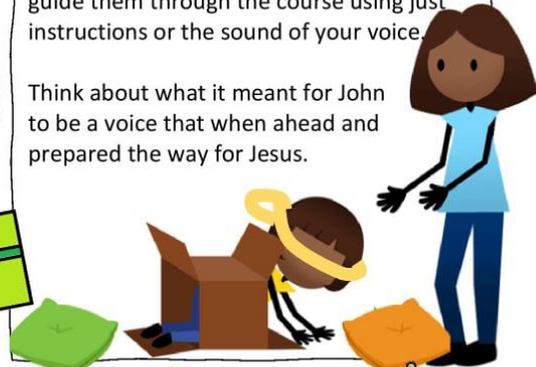


Family Activity 1

Go ahead!

Set up an obstacle course, blindfold somebody and then go ahead of them and guide them through the course using just instructions or the sound of your voice.

Think about what it meant for John to be a voice that when ahead and prepared the way for Jesus.



Family Activity 2

Shoe-tying competition

John said he was not worthy to tie Jesus' sandals. Have a shoe-tying competition with somebody else in your family. You will need to sit opposite one another with your shoes untied.

You must each try to tie the other persons shoes at the same time. Who can complete the shoe tying first?



Helping Younger Children

You could talk about baptism and the work of John the Baptist at bath time. Think about how water is used to wash people clean and how God's forgiveness washes us clean from our mistakes.

A colouring page you could print and colour together

Isaiah 40 v 3

This is the voice of one who calls out:

"Prepare in the desert
the way for the Lord.
Make a straight road in
the dry lands for our
God.



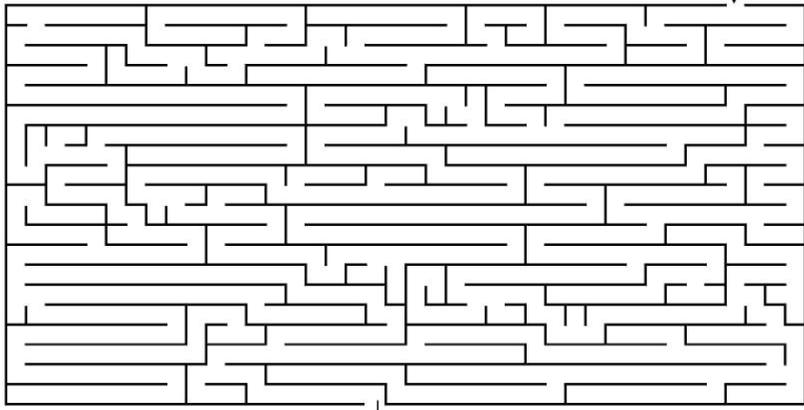
PUZZLE SHEET

John came to prepare the way for Jesus. Can you find your way through this maze?

John had a rather unusual diet!

How many locusts can you find on the page?

How many jars of honey can you find on the page?



Can you find ten differences between these two pictures of John the Baptist?

Can you unscramble the names of two prophets from the Old Testament who wrote about John the Baptist.

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