

# THE KEYS



Church of St. Peter the Apostle  
Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States  
[www.dmas-acc.org](http://www.dmas-acc.org)

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<https://stpetersacc.org>

## The Curate's Corner

*Advent Season*

### **Advent is the beginning of the church year.**

It is often good, at the beginning of the year, or the beginning of anything new, to look at what we're about to begin, what we hope to accomplish, and what is expected of us. So, let's do that for a minute.

We are Christians. This means we follow a man named Jesus who was born into the world, who taught a message about God's love and charity, and then who was betrayed. He was taken by the Jewish authorities of the time and handed over to the secular powers with the request that they kill him. The secular power did not want to, but the Jewish leaders insisted; so, they did. Then, when all seemed lost, Jesus rose from the dead, and told his disciples that he would empower them to carry his message to the rest of the world. This Jesus then was the Messiah, the promised Son of God, the Savior from the race of Israel, who came into the world to save mankind, and who left us a set of teachings, divine instruction that we might know how to please God. It is important to keep in mind that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Son of David. We find our faith from the fulfillment of what was promised to the Jews, to Abraham and his descendants.

We are not a new sect of religion. Christianity is the fulfillment of the promise made by God from the beginning. So, the Christian church made it a point from the very beginning to follow Jesus' life and make remembrance of his birth, life and teachings, betrayal, passion and death, and resurrection and ascent into heaven; and the fact that he will return to judge the world. So, as we enter Advent, we Christians close out the old year of following Jesus and start again - to follow Jesus. This might seem a tedious chore, every year to go through the life of this one man.

Well, it might be - except for the fact that he is divine, and his life is full of mystery, but also grace. God works through the mystery of his life. So really, Advent is an opportunity to delve into this mystery anew. Like walking through a maze wherein you will never find all of the crevices, or a jigsaw puzzle which can be different things each time you put it together. So, let's delve into Jesus' life again together.

The Gospel this morning seems a little disjointed. Why are we thinking about the Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday at the beginning of Advent? Would it not make more sense to talk about the Jews and the promise? Or maybe John the Baptist? Well, that will come, but first, as I said, we need to look at why we're starting over and what we're looking forward to.

You know that saying, it's a part of our liturgy: Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That is true, but it's also only a part of the story. The truth of the Incarnation is that Jesus was incarnated, humbled himself to an extraordinary level, taught, and suffered, so that we could become partakers of his divine nature. So that he could take our lives from us, and give us new ones, his own life. This might sound like a scary concept really: Jesus wants us to give him our lives so that he can give us his. So, let's look into the meaning of that more.

The Church wants to give us a window into Jesus: This is why the Church chooses the scene from Palm Sunday to begin Advent.

### **Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.**

This entry is what Jesus is supposed to have had in history, a triumphal entry, both in time and in our hearts. Psalm 23 speaks of it and the King of Glory shall enter in. Jesus is supposed to be a king. Now as the Collect says: "now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility". So, Jesus does not enter Jerusalem on horseback, armed and ready to overthrow the Romans (I'll speak more about this on the 3rd Sunday of Advent). Jesus enters Jerusalem humbly, on a donkey. This is how he wants us to understand him. A king whose first object is to empower those who choose him as king. A king of hearts, although that sounds a little cheesy.

### **What do we also see here?**

People cutting palm branches and strewing them in the way. Where do palms grow? In the desert. Specifically, they grow where there is an oasis of flowing water. This Jesus who promised living water to all who believe in him, chooses to make his glorious entrance in the desert. What else grows on palms? Palm dates. These were semi-sweet, semi-bitter fruit that grew in the desert (again, at a watery source) and was often a dietary staple for desert dwellers. Bread was a luxury, but dates were commonplace. This is a very important image. He who promised living water to those who believe in him, and who called himself the “bread of life” enters Jerusalem, a desert city and has palm branches strewn in front of him. The spring of living water enters the desert the bread of life enters where only dates grow. This is what the Church wants to put in mind for us as we begin Advent.

Advent has often been called the “little Lent”, both because it is only 4 weeks long (it used to be longer, but the Church shortened it), and because the Hallelujah does not go away. Thus, it is a season of penance, not as penitential a season as Lent. This humble king entering into the desert of Jerusalem is also echoed in the epistle this morning. We need to prepare ourselves for his arrival by loving our neighbor: St. Paul even gives us list of things not to watch out for.

### **So how should we approach Advent?**

We should approach Advent as if we are preparing for a guest in our souls. What happens when you expect a guest? You clean up, you add decorations, you put out your best silverware, linens and glassware, and you might put flowers around or maybe a pine wreath, or other fresh decorations. Advent is a preparation for Jesus’ coming.

The Jews, who we are called to think about during Advent waited for a messiah for a long time, and some of them had begun to doubt, while others were not ready, because it was not a good time for the Messiah to come; not while Judea was subject to a pagan foreign power. So, they were not ready at least many of them were not. So, we need to see their example and be ready ourselves. This is a season of preparation. We need to take extra time this season to examine our relationship with God, and with our neighbor. Are we loving our neighbor while we wait for Jesus? Because it is all too easy to scorn our neighbor while we try and keep our own house in order. And who can be blamed, once all of your prayers are said, and you have asked forgiveness for all your faults, and you have gone to communion and renewed your commitment to Jesus. I mean, once you have gone through all that trouble, who needs to add a neighbor to the mix?

The chances of you thinking uncharitable thoughts, or getting impatient, or of noticing all your neighbor’s faults and realizing how much more you try than they do. If you do all of that, it’s just going to mess up all the work that you have done to prepare yourself, your own soul as the perfect resting place for Jesus when he’s born. The problem is that Jesus said something different possibly the most annoying thing he ever said. Whenever you do this to the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me. You know what that means!? The least? I mean how about I start by loving those who try almost as hard as I do? How about those who at least believe as I do, and practice a modicum of virtue? But no, he said the least of these. So, we have the awful and unsavory job of reaching out to those who not only do try as hard as we do, but even to those who don’t try at all! And how are we supposed to make our souls ready for him when we have to risk getting them dirty with the people who seem to be the worst transgressors of all? You see, that’s the great Christian mystery which everyone must take time to learn. You cannot prepare your soul yourself! You cannot make your *self* clean by yourself. You cannot make your soul attractive to Jesus by yourself, regardless of how much shiny, clean, and fresh stuff you put up for him. The only one who can clean your soul is Jesus himself. And how will he do this? By his coming. But he won’t come if you don’t practice charity towards your neighbor. So, yes, prepare your soul. Yes, say your prayers. Yes, go to Mass, and confession if you need to. But also know that exercises will not accomplish what they should if you do not also love your neighbor. So let us begin this season of Advent like someone entering a new maze for the first time. Like someone putting together a jigsaw puzzle that they know; but don’t know, looking forward to what the image will look like this time. Let us prepare ourselves for the Jesus we know, and the Jesus we do not know.

Because the more we trust that mystery that is Jesus Christ, the more he can surprise us with his coming; and the more prepared we’ll be, because we are anxious to see what happens when he arrives like the kid who tries to stay up until Santa Claus comes, wondering with all awe at what presents he is going to bring us!

### News and Information

**Annual Meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup> will be following the 10 AM service.**

**Cookies with Santa (Parish House):** Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 10 am – 12 Noon.

**Advent Lessons & Carols:** Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> - 6 PM.

**Christmas Services:** December 24<sup>th</sup>: Family Service - 6 PM. Midnight Mass – 11 PM (Carols at 10:30 PM).

December 25<sup>th</sup>: Morning Prayer and Mass – 10 AM – No 8 o'clock mass.

Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>: St. Stephen's Day – 4 PM masses.

Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup>: St. John the Evangelist – 4 PM Mass.

Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup>: Holy Innocents – 4 PM Mass.

DECEMBER, 2022						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&amp;HU – Prayers and Holy Unction</b>				[1]  12 noon HC	[2]	[3]  5:00 p.m. HC
[4] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  ADVENT II	[5]	[6]	[7]  7:00 p.m. HC 7:30 p.m. Vestry	[8]  12 noon HC	[9]	[10]  5:00 p.m. HC
[11] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE Annual Meeting  ADVENT III	[12]	[13]	[14]	[15]  12 noon HC	[16]	[17] 10-12 noon Santa  5:00 p.m. HC
[18] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS  6:00 p.m. Advent Lessons and Carols ADVENT IV	[19]	[20]	[21]	[22]  12 noon HC	[23]	[24]  6:00 p.m. HC 10:30 p.m. Carols 11:00 p.m. FHE CHRISTMAS EVE
[25] 10:00 a.m. MP & HC  CHRISTMAS DAY	[26]  4:00 p.m. HC  ST. STEPHEN	[27]  4:00 p.m. HC  ST. JOHN	[28]  4:00 p.m. HC  HOLY INNOCENTS	[29]  12 noon HC	[30]	[31]  5:00 p.m. HC

### IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, PLEASE SECURE A REPLACEMENT.

	<b>December 4</b>	<b>December 11</b>	<b>December 18</b>	<b>December 25</b>	<b>January 1</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	M. Slayton	V. Williams	J. Butterfield	M. Slayton	V. Williams
	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham	B. Higginbotham
<b>Coffee Hour</b>	E. Paisley	C. deRosset	L. Olver	B. Von Claparede	TBD
<b>Sat. Epistoler 5 p.m.</b>	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield	A. Butterfield
<b>Epistoler 8 a.m.</b>	C. Von Claparede	D. Drysdale	G. Mauney	C. Von Claparede	D. Drysdale
<b>Epistoler 10 a.m.</b>	T. Paisley	P. Williams	G. Terrell	T. Paisley	P. Williams

**Altar servers and ushers will be assigned as available before each service.**

2022 Vestry (term end): Dan Drysdale ('23), Lisa Olver ('24), Ted Paisley ('24), Marnie Slayton ('22), Clemens Von Claparede ('22), Phil Williams ('23)