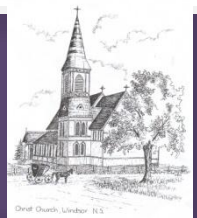


Christ Church Chronicles

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Rector's Ramblings



God comes to us that we may come to him. Advent is the season of grace that marks the beginning of each and every year of grace. It signals the wondrous mystery of God's coming to us. We are not left alone, the cosmic orphans of an indifferent and cruel universe. Advent is the coming of light to a dark and dreary world, a world weary of its own uncertainties and fears. That light is the light of Christ, the Light of God coming to us as Word and Son, as Judge and Redeemer. Powerful stuff.

It alters our perceptions of life and death. In the darkest time of nature's year, at least in the northern hemisphere, we look to *"the light which shineth in the darkness,"* as we shall hear on Christmas Eve, the Light that is the Word and Son of the Father who becomes flesh, for us and for our salvation. Here is

the grace that bestows grace upon our dark and dreary souls. *"Almighty God, give us grace,"* the great Collect of Advent prays, *"that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light."* The works of darkness: what is in all of us when we are simply left to *"the devices and desires"* of our own hearts.

Advent reminds us of new beginnings, of the renewal of hopes and the redemption of desires. It comes always, I think, as something timely and needed. The word itself signals hope and the renewal of love in our flagging and failing hearts. Advent recalls us to God and to his will and purpose for our lives. In *"that time of year... / when yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang / upon those boughs which shake against the cold"*, in *"the twilight of such day / as after sunset fadeth in the west"*, even among the *"bare ruined choirs"* of our church and culture, *"where late the sweet birds sang,"* the light of God's advent recalls us to God, whose love seeks our good and truth in his beauty and holiness. We begin again, beginning in him who is our beginning and end.

But how do we make this beginning? Not by some heroic effort on our part but

by God's grace renewing and restoring our hearts of darkness with the light of his almighty grace. By hearing and marking the progress of God's coming to us in the pageant of his Word proclaimed and celebrated. One of the most wonderful Anglican moments in that pageant of Word and Sacrament is expressed in Cranmer's Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent. He recalls us to the purpose of God's Word coming to us in judgment and joy. *"Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning,"* it begins, immediately setting before us the theology of Christian Revelation which unites Word and Light with God and Son. *"Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,"* it prays, awakening us to the grace of reading according to the divine purpose for which the Word is written and proclaimed.

"In such wise" means reading and hearing the Scriptures as something written for our learning. Something is made known, revealed, to us about God and



his will for our humanity. That alone makes us no longer alone.

The prayer is *“that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life.”* Hope is conveyed on the wings of the Word, the Word of God that enlightens and encourages. Such is our ever-beginning, our beginning again in the journey of our souls to God. God comes to us that we may come to him.



Humility and Judgment, each returning and reflecting upon the other, proceed in counterpoint in the rhythms and patterns of the Advent season. The light which shines in the darkness is judgment and mercy, at once *“visit[ing] us in great humility”* in the humanity of Christ, but also signaling the sense of judgment ever present and yet to come. Only so can we hope to *“rise to the life immortal.”* God comes to us that we may come to him.

In the Parish

The Fall has been an exceptionally busy time. The first Christ Church Concert was a lovely classical guitar duo by Eugene Cormier and Matt Martin on a fine September evening. Quite different weather-wise was

the Choral Evensong in October. It was on a dark and very stormy night that we held a special evensong, sponsored by the Prayer Book Society of NS & PEI, commemorating the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible. Despite the wind and the rain, there was a good turn-out from several parishes in the Valley and beyond. Choirs from four parishes, including our own, produced *“a joyful noise unto the Lord”* in the form of choral evensong with rousing hymns of praise. Dr. Jim Gow provided a most thoughtful address about the King James Bible. The Archdeacon, Lynn Uzans, and the Regional Dean, David Garrett, along with Rev'd Tom Henderson of Avon Valley, were present for the occasion. Our ladies produced a stellar luncheon and all who came seemed refreshed both in body and soul by this venture. My thanks to all who assisted and to Owen Stephens, our organist, for his labours in helping to get it organized.

The Parish also hosted the 84th Highland Regiment's annual banquet. As seen in the photo at right, the Regiment arrived in full kit and costume of the mid-18th century.



At the time of writing, the Ham Supper is underway and we look forward to the Advent Service of Lessons &

Carols with King's-Edgehill on Sunday, December 4th at 4:00pm. The second of the Christ Church Concert series will be held on Sunday, December 18th at 7:30pm. *“A Concert for Christmas”*, it will feature Paula Rockwell, Eugene Cormier, Owen Stephens and Nelly Chen (cost: \$ 10.00/5.00 students). Mark that date in your calendars!

This year marked as well the 100th anniversary of the College of Pharmacy at Dalhousie University. Dr. Tannis Jurgens is an associate professor of the college. She and her husband, Alex, took Helen Gibson along to the celebrations. Helen is a graduate of the School. It was a wonderful occasion for her to reconnect with an important part of her life and story.

This year, Advent runs its longest course, a full four weeks, since Christmas falls on a Sunday. The Christmas Eve services on Saturday evening are at 7:00pm (Children's Crèche Service) and 9:30pm (Communion). The Service on Christmas Day is at 10:00am.

It is all the grace of Christ towards us, his Advent culminating in the mystery of his holy birth which graces our humanity with joy and dignity. O come, let us worship. The Blessings of the Child Christ be upon us all.

Fr. David Curry
The Sunday Next Before Advent