

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2017

And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. *St. Luke 2:15-16*

Dear Friends in Christ;

The story of Christ's birth is a story positioned quite intentionally in the midst of this world's vulnerable and marginalised. The *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* is borne amidst the kind of rough conditions which are so foreign to many of us who live comfortably in the Developed World but which are so often experienced by those who live in the Developing World. And, as a result, we are given a glimpse of how God's priorities turn human priorities on their head.

Greatness and power and glory are entirely redefined: love and service and sacrifice are laid before us as better, more compassionate, personal goals. The pursuit of material comfort as an end in itself, rather than as a means of blessing others, or in a manner that endangers the blessings of creation, stands in stark contrast to God's great act of self-giving. A new-born infant laid to rest in a manger tells us more than anything that our markets can produce of what really matters most.

And it is precisely the rough poverty of the Christmas story which attracts our attention and touches our hearts: images of farmyard animals and a simple stable, of unsophisticated shepherds in humble adoration, of gentle loving parents just a bit bewildered by all that has happened, return year after year in our Christmas cards and carols and, of course, in our Gospel reading.

As we do each year, we will gather on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day to be reminded of the story which is greater than any other story: the story of a God whose love is so great that he takes our very nature unto himself and is born as one of us that he might rescue us. We will again sing the carols and hear a Gospel story that offers us hope as nothing else can. And, having heard, we will be invited to go back to our homes and our jobs and our communities to be agents of the hope that the infant



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Christ offers to a lost and confused and divided world. If the status quo is to change, it has to begin with us!

We invite you to join with us in this great celebration, to gather in the darkness of that night to hear of a light that shines into every darkness; a light that shines into the fears of our hearts.

Unto us a child is born; O come, let us worship!

In Christ's Name,

On behalf of Janice, Elizabeth and Catherine, may I wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Fr. Kevin M. Stockall,
Priest and Rector



PLEASE NOTE: This year, as it does from time to time, Christmas Eve falls on the same day as the Fourth Sunday of Advent. I believe that it's important for us to take the time to finish off the Season of Advent before beginning our Christmas celebrations, so I have decided to schedule our regular Sunday morning celebrations of the Holy Eucharist at 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. on December 24th in addition to our Christmas Eve celebrations at 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. It is my hope that members of the Parish will join us for both Advent 4 and Christmas.

In addition, those who wish have the opportunity to celebrate the Fourth Sunday in Advent on December 23rd at our usual Saturday celebration at 5:00 p.m.

The Anglican Parish of St. Mary, York
Schedule of Services for the Fourth
Sunday in Advent and Christmas 2017

Saturday, December 23:
The Fourth Sunday in Advent

5:00 p.m. – Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 24:
The Fourth Sunday in Advent

9:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

10:30 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 24:
CHRISTMAS EVE

6:00 p.m. – Family Eucharist for the Nativity

9:30 p.m. – Carol Sing

10:00 p.m. – Holy Eucharist for the Nativity

Monday, December 25:
CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist for the Morning of the Nativity



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