

# Worship (con't)

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21ST**  
Carols by Candlelight  
7:00 p.m. (Note change in time!)

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH**  
Family Christmas Eve Service  
4:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 24TH**  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
11:00 p.m.  
The Reverend Jeff Veenstra

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28TH**  
1st Sunday of Christmas  
Isaiah 61: 10- 62:3  
Luke 2: 22-40  
The Reverend Dr. Kay Diviney

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 4TH**  
2nd Sunday of Christmas  
Ephesians 1: 3-14  
John 1: 1-18  
The Reverend Jeff Veenstra

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 11TH**  
Baptism of the Lord  
Genesis 1: 1-5  
Mark 1: 4-11  
The Reverend Jeff Veenstra

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 18TH**  
2nd Sunday after Epiphany  
1 Samuel 3: 1-10  
John 1: 43-51  
The Reverend Jeff Veenstra

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21ST**  
Taizé Service  
6:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 25TH**  
3rd Sunday after Epiphany  
Jonah 3: 1-5, 10  
Mark 1: 14-20  
The Reverend Jeff Veenstra

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST**  
4th Sunday after Epiphany  
Deuteronomy 18: 15-20  
Mark 1: 21-28  
The Reverend Dr. Kay Diviney

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH**  
5th Sunday after Epiphany  
Isaiah 40: 21-31  
Mark 1: 29-39  
The Reverend Jeff Veenstra

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH**  
Transfiguration of the Lord  
2 Kings 2: 1-12  
Mark 9: 2-9  
The Reverend Jeff Veenstra

# A Word From the Minister

## Celebrating Advent



Dear friends,

The church season of Advent is upon us again (time seems to pass by more quickly each year!). Advent marks the beginning of a new church year. It is the time when we prepare ourselves again for the birth of Jesus, and for the coming of Christ once more.

However, despite the season's emphasis for the necessity of being prepared for this holy coming, Advent is also a reminder of the faithfulness of God, for salvation is on the way not because of what we have

done, or will do, but because God is going to act.

For example, consider the titles in scripture given to the child whose birth we celebrate each year. In Matthew's story of Christ's birth, the child is named "Emmanuel", which means "God with us". His given name, Jesus, means that he will "save the people from their sins". In Luke's telling of the birth, the child is called, "Son of the Most High", "Saviour", and "Prince of Peace". And John says of the child that he is the "Word made Flesh", the "Light of the World", and the one who is "full of grace and truth".

These titles remind us that ultimately Christian hope does not rest in what we might do, but in what God has done and will do. Notice, for example, that it is God who acts (salvation) when we cannot. God is "with us" in every moment of our lives: in our days of sunshine and in our darkest moments. It is God's "Light" that gives direction for our faith journey. Christ is our peace in a world beset with turmoil and violence. It is God who rescues us when we are mired in sin and fear. It is God who gives us the victory when we seem utterly defeated. The call of the gospel, then, is not that we learn to rely on ourselves, but that we rely totally on the grace, mercy and love of God.

At this sacred time of the year we celebrate afresh that our hope became flesh. That is to say, that God, quite apart from anything we did, or can do, gave us a gift wrapped in swaddling clothes. We didn't produce it, demand it, earn or expect it. It was a pure gracious, unmerited, unexpected gift. God, so to speak, crept down the backstairs of Bethlehem with a babe in arms and placed him in a manger. All we can do in response is humbly make our way to that place and "There to bend the knee before him whom heaven and earth adore".

May you feel surrounded by God's love and presence this Advent season; may you also be reminded of God's faithfulness.

*Yours in shared ministry,*

*Jeff*

## Send Us Your Ideas for *InsideOut*

If you have ideas for future issues, please submit them for consideration. If you have a question about your Church and how it works, or if you have a question or comment about the Christian faith, we want to hear about it. Submit your ideas, articles, photos or comments to [minister@standrewstpaul.com](mailto:minister@standrewstpaul.com) or [sue.m.stevenson@gmail.com](mailto:sue.m.stevenson@gmail.com). Submissions should be no more than 500 words. Digital and scanned photos should be about a 1MB jpg file.

## Editor's note

The deadline date for material for *insideOut* always comes along faster than you expect. I want to thank everyone who sent photos, copy and help as this issue came together. You know who you are and so do I! THANK YOU! And on to the next one. . . SMS