



THE APOSTLE

DECEMBER
2011

FROM THE RECTOR

A friend of mine recently sent me some information about something called St. Martin's Lent. I had never heard of it before, but it turns out to be the origin of our season of Advent. Just as Easter is preceded by the forty days of Lent, it became the custom – perhaps as early as the fifth century – to prepare for Christmas by a similar penitential season. This season began on the first day after St. Martin's Day, November 11. Hence, St. Martin's Lent. While Advent today is only four Sundays, there remains a trace of this longer period in our lectionary. The scripture readings for Advent tend to focus on the "last days", but our lectionary actually begins with this theme two weeks before Advent begins – a trace of the ancient, 6-week St. Martin's Lent.

Martin was a soldier, born around the year 316 in the area now known as Hungary. It is said that one day, he saw a barely dressed beggar freezing in the cold, so Martin took his sword, cut his cloak in half, and gave it to the man. That night, he had a vision of Jesus wearing his torn cloak. He converted to Christianity and left the army. Eventually he would become one of the founders of Western monasticism and the bishop of Tours, France. He died in 397, and his feast day is still widely celebrated throughout Europe.

It occurs to me that this connection with St. Martin and St. Martin's Lent can help us regain our focus on the meaning and purpose of Advent. You know, Advent isn't just a matter of counting off the days until Christmas,

though it is certainly presented that way often enough. But, like Lent itself, Advent is meant to be a time for us to assess our priorities in life. And St. Martin reminds us that one of the highest priorities for Christians is the service we render to Christ Jesus in the poorest and most vulnerable.

As with Lent, I find it much more helpful not to focus on what we are going to do without, but on how we are going to redirect and reapportion our resources to better reflect our faith. Don't think of "giving up", but of "giving to". What are we going to give to the world in the name of Jesus – to those we love, and those who so desperately need our love?

Episcopal Relief and Development offers its Gifts for Life program as a way to give gifts that will truly make a difference (www.er-d.org/GiftsforLife/). Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find information of Holy Apostles' own outreach to the East Parkside Residents Association. You can go to our website (www.cha-pa.org) and sign up to provide a gift to a needy child. Then join us on December 12 as we deliver the presents and enjoy a Christmas feast with the Association members. In fact gifts of our time and presence may very well be the greatest gifts we can give. That's what our annual caroling party on December 16 is all about. Yes, it is all kinds of fun! But even more it is a chance to connect with members of our parish family who aren't able to join us every Sunday, a chance to let them know that they are remembered and loved.

The surest way to a merry Christmas is to keep a holy Advent!

HEAVEN *and* NATURE SING

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Sunday Worship Schedule

Holy Eucharist
8:30 a.m. - no music
10:00 a.m. - with music

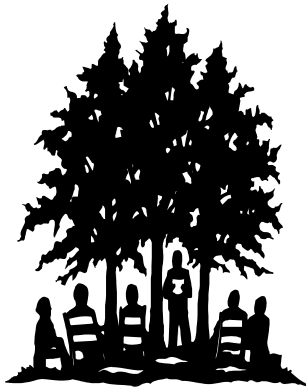
Sunday School
10:00 a.m.

Choir Practice
9:00 a.m.

Parish News



Merry Christmas



WELCOME CHURCH...

takes place on the last Sunday every month at 3PM in Sister Cities Plaza, an open area park between Logan Circle and the Roman Catholic Cathedral.

If you would like to journey down together, we meet at CHA at 2:00 p.m.
Please join us!

CHA'S PIZZA CHURCH

takes place on the **second Sunday** each month at **5:00 p.m.**

Join us!



Genuardi's Club Card

Make sure you are signed up for a Genuardi's Club Card. Every time you use the card, Genuardi's will give Holy Apostles 1%. You must first register with Genuardi's at their service desk or at www.escrip.com. And, you must re-register with them every fall.

Super Fresh Gift Certificates

Super Fresh will give Holy Apostles 5% of each gift certificate sold. Please see J. T. Wertz to purchase gift certificates in \$50 or \$100 denominations. There are three families who currently participate on a regular basis netting CHA approx. \$1,000 per year. If we had greater participation, think of the possibilities!

Publishing Deadline: Articles for the parish newsletter are **due on the third Friday of each month** (unless otherwise noted) in order to allow enough time to compile, print, and collate. Please provide any items you would like published to the office by that day. Every effort will be made to include all appropriate articles, however, editing may be necessary due to space restrictions. Thank you.

Parish News

Celebrate Advent with our Penn Wynne neighbors!

On **Wednesday, December 21**, Holy Apostles will once again host a non-denominational worship experience for our neighborhood. This year it will be a one-time service beginning at **7:00 p.m.** and will include music, prayer, bible readings, and a brief message. Last year, we had well over 100 people in attendance! It was great to see so many people visiting our beautiful church. It would be even better if our visitors could meet more of our church members. I hope you will put this on your calendar and make every effort to attend these services this year.

Dennis+

Christmas with the East Parkside Residents Association

This year our annual celebration with the East Parkside Resident's Association will take place on **Monday, December 12**. We will **meet at the church at 5:30** and car pool since parking is in short supply! The program will run from **6:00 to 8:00 at Christ Community Baptist Church, 1224 N 41st**.

This year we will be providing toys for children whose mothers are in a shelter for abused women. Each child has asked for one toy. You can go to our website (www.cha-pa.org) and sign up for which toy(s) you will be providing. There are 38 children, so if you are able to provide for more than one child, please do so. Wrap the present and make sure it is labeled with the child's name, then bring it to the church. If you are unable to attend the dinner, we will make sure your present gets delivered. The children will be there that evening, so we will have a chance to meet them and their mothers. Also, good used clothing for all ages would be welcomed.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the parish hall so let us know if you are attend-

ing, and if you are bringing a dessert or side dish. You can also call in your reservation to the office.

If you have any questions, please contact Laura Sibson or Dennis Lloyd.

Christmas Altar Flower Memorials

Enclosed with this newsletter are envelopes that you may use to donate **Christmas Altar Flowers in memory of your loved ones**. Envelopes **must be returned to the office by Tuesday, December 20th** in order to be included in the Bulletin.

Annual Church Caroling Party

Join us on **Friday, December 16th**! Gather at the church at **6:30 pm** for neighborhood caroling. Then end the evening with refreshments and fellowship at the home of **Chris and David Arenson (293 Sycamore Ave in Merion)**. Bring an appetizer, dessert, or drink to share. Sign up in the parish hall. (Please see David Lees if you know of a parishioner or friend who would appreciate a visit from the carolers.)



UPCOMING HOLIDAY SERVICES AND EVENTS

December 4—Sunday—Visit from St. Nicholas during coffee hour following the 10 a.m. Service

December 11—Sunday at 5:00 p.m.—Pizza Church

December 12—Monday from 6-8 p.m.—East Parkside Residents' Association Dinner, 1224 N. 41st St.

Children's Christmas Pageant—TBA

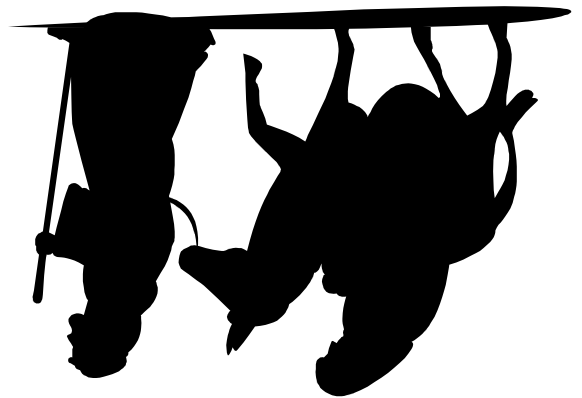
Service of Remembrance—TBA

December 21—Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.—Neighborhood Advent Worship Service

December 24—Saturday at 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.—Christmas Eve Services

December 25—Sunday at 10:00 a.m.—Christmas Day Service;
3:00 p.m.—Welcome Church

www.cha-pa.org



Office E-mail: holyapostles@verizon.net
Rector's E-mail: cha_rector@verizon.net

Church of the Holy Apostles
1020 Remington Road
Wynnewood, PA 19096
610-642-6617
610-642-4867 (fax)