



# The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 8 • December 2016

## Busy Time

By the Reverend Dan Justin

"So, you must be getting ready for your busy time?" The question came from my doctor during a recent routine check-up. In between my flu shot and listening to my breathing, my doctor was making small talk asking about how I was preparing for Advent and Christmas. I said, "Yes, it is my busy time, but it is also my favorite time." I love Advent. The days grow darker earlier; there is a sense of expectancy in the air. Christmas is coming. Jesus is coming. Advent is the season of watching and waiting.

I must say though, selling the idea of Advent seems to be more and more difficult each year. Our consumer culture does everything in its power to skip Advent and jump right to Christmas. Amazingly enough, I started seeing Christmas commercials the week before Halloween! And the season of Advent does seem to become our busiest time. We have decorations to put up, gifts to buy, parties to go to, cards to mail, and cookies to bake. We have peace on earth and good will towards all people to spread and that takes a lot of time! Who has time for Advent anymore? Of course, the busier we become, the less peace we really have.

Advent is a season with a dual focus. Yes, we wait for the coming of the Christ child in Bethlehem; but we also watch and wait for Christ to come into our world again. Advent both looks back and looks forward at the same time. That is why our Gospel readings in Church on Sundays in this season begin with Jesus' messages about his second coming. The season begins with looking to the future—watching and waiting for Jesus to return. The season then moves to looking back—remembering the birth of Jesus. Advent should be the time when we slow down and take notice of these things. Advent should be the time when we become more attentive to the things of God. The busyness of the season can become a distraction. We are invited to watch and wait for all the ways that Christ comes to us in our everyday life.

This year I want to invite you to consider ways you can live more fully into the season of Advent. How can you slow down and live more fully into the watching and waiting this season gives us?



How can you become more attentive to all the ways we see Christ coming to us in our everyday lives? There are actually lots of strategies for this. Two of the most popular are Advent calendars and Advent wreaths. Both of these are tools

that allow you to focus more intently on this idea of watching and waiting. In addition, you may want to consider an Advent devotional book. There are many to choose from. These books provide you with scripture readings and a reflection for each day of the Advent season. You could choose to either start your day or end your day with this tool. Another idea to focus on Advent is through the Episcopal Relief and Development's Gifts for Life program. ER-D provides opportunities to donate to specific projects that provide much needed relief and support for some of the neediest people in the world. It is in the face of

the needy, hungry, and suffering that we are most likely to see the face of Jesus. So setting ourselves to tasks of service and care for the poor is one of the best ways we can observe Advent this year.

Whichever way you choose to observe it, do not allow Advent to be lost in the busy time the holidays inevitably bring. As the great preacher and scholar Fred Craddock once said, "You can skip Advent and go directly to Christmas if you want—but you won't find Jesus there." Join me this Advent in watching and waiting for the coming of Christ. Let's embrace these days and live fully into this season. The joy of Christmas will be just that much richer when Advent comes to an end.

Blessings,

Dan+

### 2016 Advent and Christmas Schedule



<b>Blue Christmas</b>	Wednesday, December 14, at 7:00 pm
<b>Children's Pageant</b>	Saturday, December 24, at 5:00 pm
<b>Holy Eucharist</b>	Saturday, December 24, immediately after pageant
<b>Christmas Eve Reception</b>	Saturday, December 24, immediately after the service
<b>Christmas Music</b>	Saturday, December 24, at 9:30 pm
<b>Holy Eucharist</b>	Saturday, December 24, at 10:00 pm
<b>Christmas Morning Breakfast</b>	Sunday, December 25, at 9:00 am in the Ministry Center
<b>Christmas Day Service</b>	Sunday, December 25, at 10:00 am

# Christmas Pageant

By Amber Russo

I have the great privilege of directing the children's Christmas Eve pageant again this year. The children look forward to it all year as it is a great opportunity for them to show off their acting skills, sing, dress up, and play. More importantly, however, they get to share the amazing story of Jesus' birth. Mary and Joseph in the manger with their sweet new baby boy. After giving birth to two children, it bewilders me to wonder what Mary must've been feeling as she gave birth, in a manger, next to sheep and chickens. I feel blessed to have been able to give birth in a hospital earlier this year! I will forever keep Jesus and his courageous parents in my thoughts as we reflect on this momentous night.

The Christmas pageant is December 24th during the 5:00 pm service. Casting and rehearsals began the first Sunday after Thanksgiving, November 27th. Children of all ages are welcome and encouraged to participate. So make sure they attend church the month of December so they can rehearse, learn a few carols, and be a part of this exciting night.

We will also have our Christmas Eve Celebration following the 5:00 pm service, filled with games, cookie decorating, and delicious



treats. We are in need of some volunteers to help on this special night, so please sign up in the back of church or contact Amber at [childrenspastor@stmikessc.org](mailto:childrenspastor@stmikessc.org).

**Save the Date**

Diocesan Program Group on Youth Ministry presents

## The Bishop's Ball

The fancy dress party of the year for high school students of the Episcopal family in Southern California

**January 28, 2017**  
St. Cross, Hermosa Beach

[pgyym.la](http://pgyym.la)

## Blue Christmas

We welcome the community to participate in our annual Blue Christmas service. Blue Christmas is a service which recognizes that the holidays are not a source of joy for many people. They are a time of pain, depression, loneliness, and grief. Difficulty and depression at the holidays can be for any number of reasons.

Blue Christmas is, at its core, a healing service. It will not look like any other service offered here at St. Michael's. The sanctuary will be lit primarily by candle light. The music will be different. It will be a quiet, contemplative service with healing prayer and the anointing with oil made available. The service will also include the Holy Eucharist. We are excited to welcome back Christopher Montella, our former seminarian, as our preacher for this service.

We gather as a community to honor, pray for, and bless those members or friends for whom this holiday is difficult. And of course, all are welcome to attend—even if you are not blue this Christmas. Join us as we pray for others.

The Blue Christmas service will take place on **Wednesday, December 14, 2016, at 7:00 pm** in the church.



## December Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Mary Ann Jacobson
	Hallie Walker
15	Laz Meiman
19	Preston Fray
	Will Pryor
22	Dawn Bassman
23	Maggie Jackson
	Meg Pryor
24	André Herrmann
28	Avery Wright

### Should you be listed here?

Or, if you wish to leave your birthday or anniversary unpublished, give the church office a call or e-mail [administrator@stmikessc.org](mailto:administrator@stmikessc.org) to let us know. Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.

## Treasurer's Corner

### October 2016—Revenue and Expense Summary

	October Actual	October Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 32,688	\$ 35,863	\$381,555	\$358,627
Total Expense	34,400	39,155	367,302	382,643
Net	(\$ 1,712)	(\$ 3,292)	\$ 14,253	(\$ 24,016)

# From the Vestry

Tina Wilson, Senior Warden  
Ron Schwartz, Junior Warden



Special December activities start with Advent Lessons and Carols on December 4th and we also look forward to our largest outreach project, Holiday Cheer, on December 10th. Blue Christmas, a pre-Christmas service for those needing a light in the darkness, is scheduled for December 14th at 7:00 pm. The purpose of this service is to minister to those people who find the holidays difficult, with a focus on music and meditations.

This month we have our beautiful Christmas Eve services Saturday, December 24th, at 5:00 pm and 9:30 pm, as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. The first service is a family oriented service and begins with the children's Christmas pageant. The Holy Eucharist begins immediately following the pageant. The second service begins at 9:30 pm with Christmas music and carols. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist begins at 10:00 pm. A reception in the narthex of the

church follows the service. Please plan to attend one of these two services, the choir is spectacular and the service at night is so beautiful.

We want to bring to your attention another service that will occur Sunday, December 25th, Christmas morning. Please join us for an ongoing tradition at St. Michaels, where we have a breakfast at 9:00 am, followed by a Christmas Day service in the church at 10:00 am. This is an opportunity to share the joy and excitement of Christmas morning with our church community and to come together for a delicious, hot breakfast with all the trimmings. We meet in the Ministry Center at 9:00 am and spend an hour celebrating Christmas together over a shared meal. St. Michaels invites everyone to Christmas Eve and Christmas morning breakfast and services. On behalf of the vestry, we wish our parish family a blessed and joyous Christmas.

## An Advent Reflection



"To dream of a world of peace and justice, where God's goodness is all in all, and to wake to the realization, is a cherished human hope. The figure in Dali's *Girl Standing at the Window* waits with full attention for something. She looks expectantly out into the wide world beyond her familiar harbor. Attentive, hope-filled, alert, with her whole being trained on the horizon, she watches for the sign: the break in the meeting of sea and sky, the cloud of smoke that heralds the messenger's arrival. Fully attentive—eyes and ears and imagination—she is ready to recognize and greet a hope-filled future.

So the church waits for the arrival of Jesus through Advent. Poised, we are alert to the signs of the times in nature, Scripture, newspaper, ready to greet wherever Christ appears. The Promise comes in unexpected peace blossoming like a garden in winter, in the wake-up call of the unlikely prophet, in the sudden courage to risk bringing God's future into being, in Mary's risk to bring Jesus into the world. Advent's color is the royal purple of the coming king. The king for whom we wait to come—both as the one who comes in the manger in Bethlehem and the one who will come in the clouds at the sound of trumpets."

## 2017 Stewardship Update

St. Michael and All Angels Church thanks its pledging members for their support.

Avisheh Aazami	Peter Juzwiak &
Teddy Adair	Donald DeRose
Johan Agerbeek	Marion & August Kammer
Diane Ballowe	Anne Kelly
Frank & Kristen Barberia	Alexander & Janet Kirkpatrick
Elizabeth Bartolomea	Anastasia & William Lefler
David & Melissa Basta	Rose Leibowitz
Barbara Beckner	Peggie Leidelmeijer
Donald Browne	Chris Long
Sarah Bull	Julie Meine
Steven Clark, Alfonso Zavala, and Family	The Mooradian Family
Susan Clark	Alex Morales & David Connors
Ed & Diane Collins	Margie Mullen
Polly Davis	Kim O'Reilly
William & Doreen Dean	David Peterson & Judie Fox
Eliza Diliberti	Bruce Rankin &
Betty DuVall	Catherine Wagar
Theodore &	Paul & Meredith Reese
Jacqueline Eckberg	Nicholas & Sharon Renton
Betty Ferrell	John Schouweiler &
Alan & Bill Fields	Ann Hamilton
Preston Fray	Ron & Denise Schwartz
Lise Friedman	Duane Steadman
Andrea & DJ Fuller	Petra Sutter
Peer Ghent	Brooks & Kathleen Taylor
Gail Green	Sharrell Treat
Susan Guire & Cece Tsou	Granville & June Van Dusen
Elizabeth Hailey	Lois Vaughan
Mitchell Hampton	John & Laurie Vincent
William Hendley & Jon Albert	Ruth Warson
Nicholas & Jennifer Hernandez	Bonnie Winings
Patrick & Kaoru Holder	Anna Wilson
Ian Holder	Tina Wilson & Jennifer Best
Karen Holleman	Nancy Woods
Mary Ann Jacobson	Steven Wright
Donald & Norma Johnson	Bill & Gail Wright
Daniel Justin	

This list includes pledges received as of December 8.



# Book Recommendation from the Rector

## *Advent in Narnia* by Heidi Haverkamp

**A**re you looking for a new and creative way to deepen your faith during this Advent season? Consider going back to Narnia this Advent. My friend and colleague, the Rev. Heidi Haverkamp, is the vicar of St. Benedict's Episcopal Church in Bolingbrook, Illinois. She has written a lovely Advent devotional designed to be read along with C.S. Lewis's famous book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

In the introduction to her book, Haverkamp writes,

**I** read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* for the first time when I was in elementary school. I loved to stare at the cover, a picture of the four children in fur coats, framed by a forest with the White Witch's castle looming behind them. They looked like kids I might know. The lamppost was like lampposts in my Chicago neighborhood, but it stood by itself in the distance. The castle told me that this was a fairy tale, which thrilled me. It was both familiar and unfamiliar: a whole world on the other side of a closet door.



"C. S. Lewis said that he began to write the Narnia Chronicles because an image appeared in his mind: a faun with an umbrella and his arm full of packages, walking under a

lamppost in the middle of a snowy forest. He also saw a queen riding in a sleigh and a majestic lion. As we wrote, 'At first there wasn't anything Christian about them; that element pushed itself in of its own accord.' The novel unfolded as a work of imagination and faith.

"When we deeply trust something we can't see, we must use our imaginations. Consider Hebrews 11:1: 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.' Too often, Christianity may seem to be a known quantity. We can take its radical values for granted and see Jesus as a cliché instead of our Savior. Lewis, by placing Christianity into another world, makes it unfamiliar again. He gives us the chance to feel a newfound wonder at the depth of God's love, the power of Christ's grace and the totality of his sacrifice, and the wonder of a world infused with the Holy Spirit. We all can use a spiritual wake-up call like this, whether we aren't sure Christianity can mean anything to us or whether it means everything.

"Entering Narnia, though, means becoming a little bit 'foolish,' as St. Paul would put it.

Reading children's literature might be embarrassing for adults or teenagers, but it can be a deep source of wisdom (and fun); as Lewis wrote, 'When I was ten, I read fairy tales in secret and would have been ashamed if I had been found doing so. Now that I am fifty I read them openly.'

**I**n 2013, I first thought to use *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* for an adult Advent series at my church.

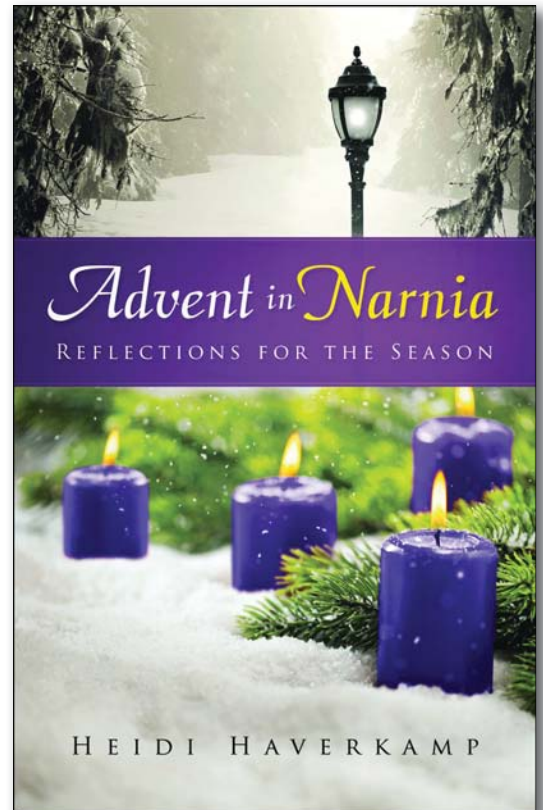
We had a wonderful time reading the book; watching scenes from one of the movies; discussing spiritual imagination, temptation and repentance, lions and beavers, witches and fauns. It was such a rich experience that I wanted to share it with other individuals and churches as a way to observe Advent and prepare for Christmas.

"Lewis's first book about the land of Narnia is a perfect fit for the season of Advent. The snow, a glowing lamppost, the children, waiting for the return of a savior, and the visit of Father Christmas make it a natural reading partner for this time of year. The novel very quickly moves from Advent into Christmas, then Good Friday and finally to Easter; so, for the most part, the reflections and activities in this book focus on the first half of the novel, which is most pertinent to Advent.

"There is a whole theological world Lewis created in the Narnia Chronicles (for more on this, read Rowan Williams's book *The Lion's World*), and while I do refer to the *Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*, I focus on the characters, images, and themes of the first novel.

"You can read along in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* as you do this Advent study; relevant chapters are listed at the start of the reflections that focus on the novel. Other devotions reflect primarily on Scripture or make only general reference to the novel. Reading the novel in its entirety is not necessary to understand or enjoy the reflections. You can watch one of the movie versions, if you prefer. Either strategy will help you get the most out of the reflections, the discussion sessions, and the Narnia Night for families.

"However, my purpose in writing this book is not to help you know Narnia better but to know God better. Rowan Williams wrote about Lewis, 'The reader is brought to Narnia for a little in order to know Aslan better in this world.' I hope that by



spending a little time in Narnia this Advent, you will get to know Aslan—and Jesus Christ—better, and to prepare for Jesus' birth at Christmas all the more richly for it."

### From "Advent 1955"

**T**he Advent wind begins to stir  
With sea-like sounds in our  
Scotch fir,  
It's dark at breakfast, dark at tea,  
And in between we only see  
Clouds hurrying across the sky  
And rain-wet roads the wind blows dry  
And branches bending to the gale  
Against great skies all silver pale  
The world seems travelling into space,  
And travelling at a faster pace  
Than in the leisured summer weather  
When we and it sit out together,  
For now we feel the world spin round  
On some momentous journey bound—  
Journey to what? to whom? to where?  
The Advent bells call out "Prepare,  
Your world is journeying to the birth  
Of God made Man for us on earth."

*John Betjeman (1906-1984)*



# The Calendar

December 2016

**Sunday Schedule** • *Sunday Services are 8:00 am (no choir) and 10:30 am (with choir) in the Sanctuary.*  
 • *Adult Learning Opportunity begins at 9:15 in the Ministry Center*  
 • *Sunday School begins at 10:30 am.*  
 • *Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 am service.*

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

*Locations:*

- CO Church Office
- MR Music Room
- FR Fireside Room
- MC Ministry Center
- L The Loft (formerly the stage)
- S Sanctuary

**1**  
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)

**2**

**3**

**4** Advent 2

- 8:00 am Holy Eucharist (S)
- 9:15 am Adult Education (MC)
- 10:30 am Holy Eucharist (S)
- 10:30 am Sunday School
- 11:30 am Coffee Hour (MC)
- 11:30 am Sunday Sack Lunches (MC)
- 11:30 am HS Youth Group (L)
- 5:00 pm Advent Lessons & Carols

**5**

**6** St. Nicholas

**7**

**8**  
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)

**9**

5:00 pm Holiday Cheer Preparation (MC)

**10**  
8:00 am Holiday Cheer (MC)

**11** Advent 3

- 8:00 am Holy Eucharist (S)
- 9:15 am Adult Education (MC)
- 10:30 am Holy Eucharist (S)
- 10:30 am Sunday School
- 11:30 am Coffee Hour (MC)
- 11:30 am MS Youth Group (L)

**12**

**13**  
6:30 pm Finance Committee (CO)

**14**

7:00 pm Blue Christmas (S)

**15**  
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)

**16**

**17**

**18** Advent 4

- 8:00 am Holy Eucharist (S)
- 9:15 am Adult Education (MC)
- 10:30 am Holy Eucharist (S)
- 10:30 am Sunday School
- 11:30 am Coffee Hour (MC)

**19**

**20**  
7:00 pm Vestry (L)

**21** St. Thomas

**22**  
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)

**23**

**24** Christmas Eve  
5:00 pm Christmas Pageant & Holy Eucharist (S)  
9:30 pm Christmas Music (S)  
10:00 pm Holy Eucharist (S)

**25** Christmas Day

- 9:00 am Christmas Breakfast (MC)
- 10:00 am Holy Eucharist (S)

**26** St. Stephen

**27** St. John

**28** Holy Innocents

**29**

**30**

**31** New Year's Eve

# St. Michael and All Angels Church

3646 Coldwater Canyon Ave., Studio City, CA 91604

phone • 818.763.9193

fax • 818.763.2172

general e-mail • mail@stmikessc.org

web address • www.stmikessc.org

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



### VESTRY

Tina Wilson, *Senior Warden*  
Ron Schwartz, *Junior Warden*  
Jenni Hernandez, *Treasurer*  
Avi Aazami, *Clerk*  
Diane Ballowe  
Elizabeth Bartolomea  
Gail Green  
Karen Holleman  
Alex Morales  
Amber Russo  
Julie Bellevue Smollar  
Steven Wright

### PARISH STAFF

**Rector** The Rev. Dr. Daniel Justin (rector@stmikessc.org)  
**Priest Associate** The Rev. Stefanie Wilson Brown (wilsons@campbellhall.org)  
**Children's Pastor** Amber Russo (childrenspastor@stmikessc.org)  
**Director of Music** David Connors (dconnor@calstatela.edu)  
**Parish Administrator** Duane Steadman (administrator@stmikessc.org)

### THE MIKE STAFF

**Publisher** Duane Steadman  
**Editor** David Connors  
**Editor Emerita** Soni Wright

### Vision Statement

*To be a welcoming, inclusive Christian community growing in faith through worship, prayer, study, and social action.*

### Our Mission Priority

*Our mission priority is to focus on the United Nations' First Millennium Goal: To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.*