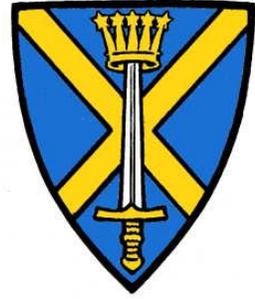


The Centurion

The Parish Magazine of St. Alban's Church

1011 Old Joppa Road, Joppa, Maryland, 21085



My dear People:

We are now in the season of Advent, the beginning of a new ecclesiastical year. Advent is often a misunderstood season. The world typically confuses it with Christmas, which ends, they think, on December 25th (or maybe December 31st). Christians however understand Advent to be a four-week period of preparation *for* Christmas, the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, which *begins* on December 25th and goes for twelve days until the Epiphany and the beginning of Epiphanytide (January 6th). But unless one lives in total social isolation it can be hard to not confuse Advent and Christmas. Yet there are spiritual benefits to remembering the distinction between the two seasons, and it would behoove us to make some sort of effort to try to do so in our personal lives. Advent is derived from the Latin word “to come.” We think of the coming of the Lord in our lives during this season. So obviously Christmas comes to mind... we think of the coming of Jesus, and then, on Christmas Day who has “come” to man, and is present in the manger? None other than Jesus, the Son of God himself. So we try to observe Advent in some way by thinking about his coming that first Christmas Day. That is all fine and well. But there is more to Advent than just that. Advent is not only a time for looking back to the past but also a time for looking forward to the future. This is evident in the readings appointed for Morning and Evening Prayer in the Daily Offices of the Church, as found in the Book of Common Prayer. The biblical passages we read for these daily services come from the book of the prophet Isaiah and from the Revelation of Saint John the Divine. These Old and New Testament lessons were carefully chosen for this time of year to remind us not only that Jesus *came* but that he is *coming again!* And he is not coming again just to hang out with us and have a pow-wow, but rather to “judge both the quick and the dead.” Advent, then, as the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday, is as much about preparing for Jesus’ second coming as it is about remembering his first coming. He is coming again. Are we ready? When he comes will he find us faithful? Will he find us serving him? Will he find us loving our neighbor as ourselves? He could come at any time, so we must be ready. As we prepare for our Christmas and holiday gatherings this year, may we also prepare for the coming of Jesus in our lives by doing “all such good works that he’s prepared for us to walk in.” (BCP p. 83) Faithfully, your priest, *J. Gordon Anderson*

December 2018

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Updates from the Church

UPCOMING SERVICES:

Dec 8th - Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 19th - Ember Wednesday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 21st - St. Thomas

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 22nd - Ember Saturday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 22nd - Ember Saturday

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 24th - Christmas Eve

Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.

Dec 25th - Christmas Day

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 26th - St. Stephen

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 27th - St. John

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

Dec 28th - Holy Innocents

Holy Communion at 10:00 a.m.

 PARISH LIFE: *A History of the Our Church Building — The Old Wilna Schoolhouse*

The building of Union School was probably a church and community venture in the year 1847. Records of both the the Little Falls (Quaker) Meeting and Union Chapel Church showed contributions for the establishment of the school. The Little Falls Monthly Meeting Minutes of August 1847 stated that a school had been established in the Eastern District (at Wilna) and was successful in operation. In 1848, the trustees for the Little Falls Meeting House and Forrest Meeting House acquired one acre from Thomas Kemp and John Saurin Norris “so long as the same shall be used for the purposes of a school or schools... and for no longer time than it shall be so used.”

On March 25, 1848 six members of a committee visited the school and reported that there were 27 scholars in attendance. Pupils were being taught grammar, geography, arithmetic, trigonometry, etc. In May of that year, it was recorded that Mahlon Kirk, a member of the Society of Friends, was the teacher. The Meeting Minutes stated that “his deportment together with the use of plain language to his scholars is highly satisfactory.” In 1850, the minutes noted that there was an “inability to procure the services of a teacher qualified in all aspects to take charge, and it has not been so well patronized as formerly” [sic] and higher branches of mathematics and surveying as well as Latin were being taught.

It is interesting to note that George G. Curtiss taught in this school between 1850-1852 and later returned for 1858-59. He had originally been recruited by Lloyd Norris of Olney. He returned to his home in Massachusetts during the Civil War and upon his return in 1865 opened his own private school at Bagley’s Corner (the intersection of Harford and Mountain Roads) called Oakland School.

Because of the inability to induce Friends to patronize Friend’s Schools and because public schools had been built, the Quakers sold the Wilna School and property to the school commissioners of Harford County in 1870 for the sum of \$500.

In 1889, Emma Norris was a teacher at the Wilna School. The Norris family preserved a diary

that she kept during that year. Emma’s teaching activities for one day give a fascinating insight into the life in a typical one-room schoolhouse of the period and an idea of what was required of one of those teachers! (For grades 1-7... grammar, reading, and spelling; Bible; history; geography; arithmetic; etc.!)

D.J. Shanahan erected the existing two-room frame building in 1914 at a cost of \$2,175. The design is the traditional one used for schools from the early 19th century, but was one of only a few one or two teacher schools built after 1910. (*Ed. note: this is our current church building.*)

The school served the community until 1950, being one of the last small country schools in Harford County. The Wilna School was officially closed in June 1950 and its students consolidated with Bel Air Elementary the following year.

The Bel Air Seventh-Day Adventist Church purchased the school property and building in 1951 at public auction. The church was organized in December 1950 and had worshipped at the Odd Fellows Hall in Bel Air. Rev. Louis Cunningham was the pastor. The congregation transferred to their newly purchased building and soon thereafter changed the church name to Wilna Seventh Day Adventist Church to correspond with the locale. In 1976 the congregation opened the Wilna Seventh Day Adventist School, reestablishing “a Christian education system upon the original country school house premises.”

When the Seventh Day Adventist congregation wanted to build a new sanctuary, they gave the old school building to Mrs. Harriet Roger, owner of Olney Farm. In 1982, she had the school building moved to her land across Old Joppa Road and donated it to serve as the home of a new church, St. Alban’s Anglican Church. It was remodeled and enlarged and is currently serving an active and growing congregation in its third life. ☩

Adapted from the Harford Historical Bulletin, Winter 2002 article “Wilna: On the Road from Bel Air to Joppa”

SPIRITUALITY: "Challenge and Response: A Reflection on the Advent Collect" by the Rt. Rev'd J. W. C. Wand

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever.
(Book of Common Prayer, page 90)

Sounding through the opening prayer of the Christian year is the trumpet call of the Last Judgment. The collect shows the immediate response of the Christian soul to this challenge. Three emotions are aroused by the solemn warning of judgment to come.

First there is the *ardent desire* of judgment to come. Preparation must be made in the only way possible, by casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armor of light. We no longer wish to appear as Black Knights, wearing the uniform of the Prince of Darkness, but in shining brightness as followers of the Prince of Light, wearing the truly Christian armor, the whole armor of God, which St. Paul describes so effectively in the last chapter of Ephesians.

Darkness and light cannot coexist together: there is no possibility of a "peaceful coexistence" here. No doubt we often act as if there were, and we become so insensitive to the contradiction that we cannot always distinguish clearly the one from the other. But the time is coming when there can be no mistake.

Several religions, such as Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, have held that the peculiarity of our

present existence lies in the fact that in primeval darkness and primeval light—the essential bad and the essential good—have become intermingled. Human life belongs wholly neither to the one nor to the other, but is a kind of smudge.

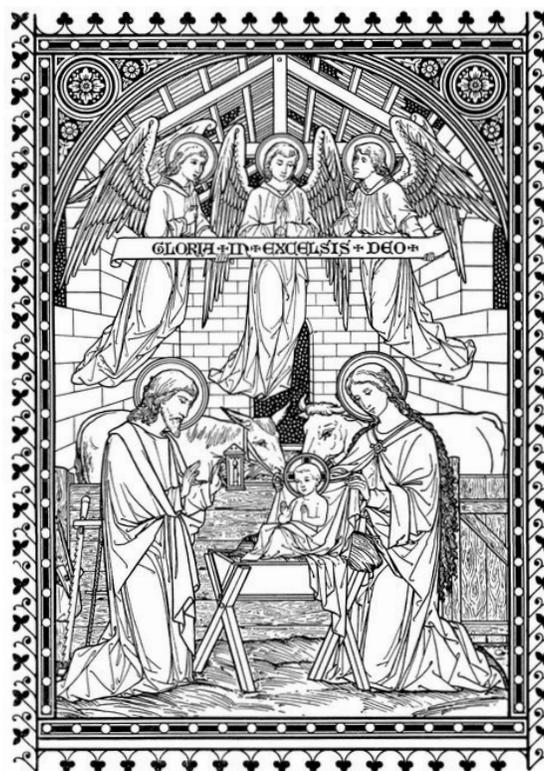
Christ taught that the difference between the two qualities was fundamental and should always be decipherable. At any rate, there would come a day when confusion would be no longer possible.

Bad and good would be forever separated; darkness would flee before the dawn of light; the goats would go to the left hand and the sheep to the right. For that day we long and prepare. However conscious of its own unworthiness, the Christian soul still longs for the appearance of the Master.

The result of this ardent desire is a *sense of urgency*. We cannot delay our preparation. Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the Son, but the Father. If we cannot tell when he will come, then we must be constantly ready. Like the Wise Virgins, we must keep our lamps always trimmed.

That, in fact, is the reason for our presence in this world, that we may prepare ourselves for eternal happiness with him. We are given the opportunity to become like him 'now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son came to visit us in great humility.' Having been the agent of his Father in creation and having placed us in these conditions, the Son later joined us in them in order to help us put right what we had spoilt.

Continued on the next page...



PARISH NEWS & UPDATES: *Please note these important items!*

Seminarian Update from Mason Waldhauser

Dear Friends,

I hope you had a good Thanksgiving, and I am praying for you as we enter into this new church year with the beginning of Advent. This Sunday I will begin teaching an Advent series at my parish out here, and I plan on teaching on the Incarnation and what it means for us in our day to day lives. Since I saw you last, God has been drawing my attention to the oneness which we now have between Man and God in the person of Jesus Christ. Because our lives exist in him, our spirituality is the playing-out of his own life in us, so this showed me that this union with God isn't the goal of our spiritual lives: rather, it's the starting-point. This is why our salvation is said to be by grace, being the free gift of God. I'm looking forward to teaching and discussing these things with the parishioners there. Tonight we're having a party for the Feast of Saint Andrew here at the seminary. Because he's considered the patron of Scotland, we're

having haggis and have hired a guy to come in from Milwaukee to lead a scotch tasting. Apparently we'll be having scotch from all six of their regions. We don't have anybody Scottish people here, but we do have an Englishman visiting with us this week. One of my college friends from my year in Oxford is here with the exchange program we have with the Anglo-Catholic seminary there. It's been really fun catching up with him and reminiscing, and it's funny getting his reactions as he experiences American Christianity, which apparently is much different and much more formal in comparison, believe it or not. I only have two weeks left before finals begin, and things are going to be pretty busy leading up to them. This upcoming week, I'll be giving a presentation on St. Bernard of Clairveaux, I'll be preaching in chapel, and then I give a sermon that Sunday at my parish out here. So by the time I make it to Christmas break on the 18th, I will really feel like I earned it. Looking forward to seeing you then! *Mason*

Continued from page 3...

Here then is our opportunity. We must show ourselves on his side, put on his uniform, for all the world to see. Even the Jewish prophets had tried to nerve their people to make a decided choice. 'I put before thee two ways: light and darkness, good and evil, life and death: therefore choose life.' We are fortunate in having had the life of the Son of Man in the condition of his humility lived out before our eyes. This has made the distinction clear. There may be many doubtful questions still, but in the main the difference between right and wrong stands out unmistakable. All the goodness in heaven and earth is written in his face. It is that which here and now we choose.

To the desire to be ready and to the sense of urgency is added the note of *joyful expectation*. 'The last day when he shall come again in his glorious majesty.' That will be a day of great triumph for his followers. Our fear of judgment is lost in our anticipation of final victory.

The collect evidently has behind it the language of St. Paul in Thessalonians where he pictures the scene at God's last appearing: the dead raised from their graves in their spiritual bodies and the living changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' from material to spiritual, so that all alike can be caught up to meet him in the air. No doubt this is picture writing. But the final end of the material world and its passage into the eternal sphere imply something of the kind. In what better language could this ultimate translation be described?

In any case here is the supreme hope held out to every Christian: that with Christ at his appearing we may rise to the life immortal. That is our glad expectancy; that is the event for which we have to make ready; that is what we must on no account miss. There is the challenge and, we hope, the response of Advent-tide. ☩

From "Reflections on the Collects" by the Rt. Rev'd J.W.C. Wand, sometime Bishop of London (Mowbrays 1964)