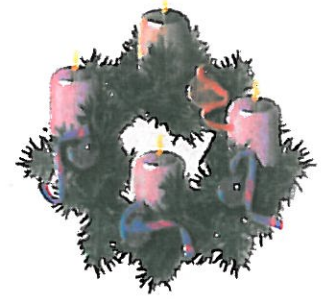


*Saint Philip Religious Education  
Advent  
2010-2011*



*Dear Parents:*

*It's that time of year again. The frantic season of shopping, decorating, baking, wrapping, and partying. Radio stations started playing Christmas music weeks ago, stores decorated right after Halloween and many are caught up in the busy-ness of "getting ready." Our Church gives us a very different message. Stop. Look and Listen.*

*We are in the season of Advent - the season of waiting. We await a coming - the coming - the change in our lives, JESUS! We read in the scriptures the prophecies about the coming of the Savior. In the book of Isaiah we read "A voice calls out: prepare the way of God, make straight in the desert highway for our God."*

*We are preparing as well. Or are we? Jesus is knocking, knocking at the door of our heart. The question is: will He find a home there?" Are we preparing ourselves for the coming of Christ in our lives - have we prepared a temple worthy of his presence and love in our lives? Advent is not only the time to get Christmas shopping done - that is indeed a lovely symbol of the giftedness of the Christmas that approaches - but the true and only gift of Christmas is not what we get but what we truly receive in the fullness of life that is JESUS. The gift of Christmas is JESUS. We need to open the door of our heart and prepare to receive him.*

*Jesus, you are indeed knocking at the door of my heart. Help me to hear and feel that knock in the unexpected and to be ever aware of the many ways that I meet you each day. Keep my eyes, ears and heart open to recognize your presence around me and in the many gifts of creation. Cleanse what needs cleansing in me, help me change my ways so that your presence in my heart and life may become my voice and I may share your gifts with others at Christmas and always.  
Amen.*

*Blessings this Advent!*

*An Advent Prayer*

O Word made flesh, you came to dwell among us long ago. No matter how dull and lifeless, or happy and fulfilling our lives may be, there is always need for a deeper awareness of your hopeful presence. There are signs of your coming, signs of your continued presence everywhere in our lives. Help us to recognize your dwelling within us and among us as we move hurriedly in this busy season of the year. May our lives be filled with love for all those who come our way. We open the doors of our heart to you.

Amen



Here's a question for you:

*One of our 6<sup>th</sup> grade students asked: If Christmas is Jesus' birthday, why do we get all the gifts? Hmmm...that's a good question! I answered with another question: What gift can we give to Jesus this Christmas?*

*Advent calls out to us to get ready for the Coming of Christ into our hearts and homes. Here are some ways we might do that:*

- *Be more positive in your thoughts & words*
- *Listen to Christ in the voices and cries of your family or those in need*
- *Be a more considerate driver.... Be a more considerate shopper*
- *Despite the running around, remember to pray each day*
- *See the good in others- don't be so ready to criticize*
- *Play and sing religious Christmas carols in your car and home*



Christmas  
Caroling

Our Religious Ed children will be spreading the joy of Christmas with older adults in our community. Children will be caroling at Cortland Place and Heritage Hills over the next couple of weeks sharing their smiles and voices and we hope good cheer!

*The perfect way to open  
the door of your heart to  
Jesus- receive the healing  
and forgiveness of Jesus in  
the Sacrament of  
Reconciliation*

All Day Confessions  
St. Philip Church  
Saturday, Dec. 18  
8:30am-3:30pm

*~ One Solitary Life ~*

*He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in still another village where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty. Then for just three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He never went to college. He never visited a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did any of the things that one usually associates with greatness. He had no credentials but himself. He was only 33 when the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves and his executioners gambled for his clothing. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Twenty centuries have come and gone and today he is the central figure of the human race.*

*All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as that*

*One Solitary Life.*