

Press Release

2023 Advent and Christmas Events at St. Mark's

In the Episcopal Church, Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year and is the first season of the church year. It begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and continues through the day before Christmas (Christmas Eve.) The name is derived from a Latin word for “coming.” The season is a time of preparation and expectation for the coming celebration of our Lord’s nativity, and for the final coming of Christ “in power and glory.” In many parishes, the main liturgical celebrations of Christmas take place on Christmas Eve.

In the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)*, the Christmas season is the second season of the church year and lasts twelve days, from Christmas Day until January 5, the day before the Epiphany. The season includes Christmas Day, the First Sunday after Christmas Day, the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and may include the Second Sunday after Christmas Day. Christmas Day is one of the seven principal feasts in the Episcopalian tradition. *The Book of Occasional Services (BOS)* is a companion volume to the BCP. It includes a variety of resources for use during Christmas, including a form for a Station at a Christmas Crèche, a form for a Christmas Festival of Lessons and Music, and seasonal blessings for use during the Christmas season.

All events described below will be held at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 335 Locust Street, downtown Johnstown PA 15905, unless otherwise noted. The events are free. All are welcome. Masks are optional at all events.

If you are not feeling well, please participate via Zoom. If you wish to participate via Zoom, please contact The Reverend Nancy Threadgill at revnancy-stmarks@atlanticbbn.net or (814) 535-6797 in advance of the event to obtain login information.

❖ **Advent Quiet Day 2023: “The Why of Advent Traditions” Saturday, December 9 from 9:00AM—1:00PM In-person and via Zoom**

Advent Quiet Day 2023 will be held in-person and via Zoom on Saturday, December 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

A Quiet Day is a period of respite when time is set aside to be quiet, spend some time with God and refresh your spirit for the days ahead. Quiet Days frequently are held during Advent and Lent. Though the structure of the event remains the same from year to year, the theme differs for each event. The theme of our 2023 Advent Quiet Day is “The Why of Advent Traditions.”

The event consists of alternating periods of meditation and quiet time followed by final prayers and a vegetarian lunch. During quiet time there are activities set up in the parish hall for relaxation and books available for learning or you may find a quiet spot in the church or offices to read and/or meditate. Participants are asked not to talk until after the final prayers. If you are at home, please consider the quiet times as sabbath time and be as quiet as possible.

❖ Compline at The Rectory Wednesday, December 13 at 7:00PM In-person and via Zoom

We gather monthly at the Rectory, 102 Leila St. in Southmont, for the service of Compline, the “goodnight prayer of the church.” The dates vary each month. Our next gathering will be Wednesday December 13, 2023. Service bulletins will be provided. Please bring a chair if you would like to sit. Wine, cheese and crackers will be available. All are welcome to join us for prayer and fellowship. If you would like to join us via Zoom, please send an email or call the church by noon Wednesday (12/13.)

❖ Greening of the Church Sunday, December 17 In-person event following the 10:00AM Holy Eucharist

Join us for Holy Eucharist at 10:00AM and stay to help as us prepare the Church for the upcoming Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Refreshments will be available. Masks are optional. All are welcome.

❖ Blue Christmas Service Thursday, December 21 at 6:00PM In-person and via Zoom

Blue Christmas Service is held on the longest night of the year. This liturgy is a quiet meditative service especially for those for whom the Christmas season is a profoundly sad and lonely time, a reminder of loss and brokenness. The death or impending death of a loved one, loss of health or employment, family crises, separation or divorce, and depression are some of the many reasons that Christmas can be painful and isolating. Our lighting of candles during the service offers an opportunity for remembrance, reflection, prayer and spiritual healing. One can grieve knowing they are not alone and be comforted and strengthened by the love of Christ and those present. A light shines in the darkness. Come for yourself, for someone you love or for those who suffer around the world.

❖ Holy Eucharist Rite I for the Fourth Sunday of Advent Sunday December 24 at 10:00AM In-person and via Zoom

Join us on Sunday morning in-person or via Zoom at 10:00AM for Holy Eucharist Rite I for the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Coffee hour follows the service. Masks are optional. All are welcome.

❖ Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist Sunday, December 24 at 6:00PM In-person and via Zoom

Join us in-person or via Zoom on Sunday evening at 6:00PM for our traditional Christmas Eve service. Refreshments will be available after the service. Masks are optional. All are welcome.

❖ Christmas Day—No services

❖ Lessons and Carols Service Sunday December 31 at 10:00AM In-person and via Zoom

Join us in-person or via Zoom on Sunday morning at 10:00AM for our traditional Lessons and Carols service. The service consists of Bible readings and hymns for the liturgical season of Christmas. Episcopalians celebrate the season of Christmas from Christmas Day through the Day before Epiphany January 5. Enjoy music presented by our wonderful pipe organist and choir and participate in sing-a-longs of familiar hymns. Coffee hour follows the service. Masks are optional. All are welcome.

For additional information about the events, check out our website <https://saintmarksjohnstown.com/> or contact The Reverend Nancy Threadgill at revnancy-stmarks@atlanticbbn.net or (814) 535-6797.