

**The Net**  
**St. Andrew's Episcopal Church**  
**December 2009**

**Church Office: (972) 262-1788**

**Web Site: [www.standrews-gp.org](http://www.standrews-gp.org)**

***From the Rector:***

**Advent and Repentance**

As I mentioned in my sermon on the first Sunday of Advent, there is a considerable amount of identity crisis in the season of Advent. Are we celebrating Jesus' first coming or his second coming? How does it relate to Christmas? The secular calendar and the call to unrepentant shopping binges has even preempted the other great secular feast of Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving, once devoted to devouring vast quantities of comfort food and watching the Macy's parade and Cowboy's football, has now become the official start to the Christmas shopping season. Soon we'll be anticipating Christmas at Halloween, or maybe July 4<sup>th</sup>! Please excuse the exaggeration, but there doesn't seem to be an end in sight when the culture is constantly misplacing the emphasis of the season. Advent, always a divided moment, has disappeared from the scene.

So what can we, who attempt some keeping of Advent, say about it? If the colors of the vestments have any say, we might make some association with Lent for both are commonly marked in purple. Advent and Lent do both have a penitential flavor to them but it would be a mistake to make Advent into a little or pre-Lent. A way forward in distinguishing them from one another is to consider what each season leads us to. Lent leads to Holy Week and Easter. Advent leads to Christmas and in some way to the end of the Age. Lent was originally a season of preparation for Baptism on Holy Saturday, and so was marked by solemn repentance of sins past and rigorous discipleship as prelude to entrance into the Church. Advent was also concerned with re-

pentance, but not as those who have no hope, but those who hope in Christ's appearing. In the Daily Office we are lead through some of the more obscure portions of the Old Testament: the Minor Prophets. These are often gloomy and depressing. They refer to people and places that we know little about, and the subject matter verges on the inflexible. Why is God always sending these cranky people who will never be satisfied? Amos is a great example. His ministry falls in the last great peace that the 10 Northern Tribes enjoyed before they were wiped out by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The money, food, and economy were all good! But Amos preached a message of impending doom. Amaziah, the priest of the royal chapel in Bethel, said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom." Go away! Quit complaining! Can't you see everything is ok?

Advent is populated by these men, culminating in John the Baptist, because we are warned to prepare our hearts and our lives to meet our King who is certainly coming. We are, as Christians, children of God and heirs with Christ. But we must not be content to sit and rest, as though we were waiting for some celestial bus to arrive and carry us to our destination. Instead, the Scriptures and the Church, if she is faithful, shake us from doldrums and cries out that we must make ready for the bridegroom! He is coming! If we are ready, like the wise virgins, when he appears, then we may be sure that he will bring us into his kingdom. Let it be so among us here at St. Andrew's. Sleepers awake, for now our salvation is nearer at hand than when we first believed!



CONGRATULATIONS TO CLYDE AND VERNA BARGSLEY who were inducted into the Court of St. Andrew for 2009. Their long., varied and dedicated service to the Parish and children serve as an inspiration for all who love the church. They are pictured here with their son, Drew.

**FYJ**

*The Women of St. Andrew's cordially invite each of the ladies of our Parish to our annual Christmas Dinner. The catered dinner will be held in the Parish Hall, December 8, at 6:30. Please join us for good food, fellowship, and the installation of the WSA officers for 2010. Tickets are \$18 and are available from Sue Whatley or Donna Davis. You may also contact the Church Office.*



**The Vestry** wishes each of you and your families a blessed Advent and Christmas season. Keep us in your prayers as we continue the process which will complete the Parish Profile and bring a new rector to St. Andrews.

It is not known at this time if a New Year's Day service will be conducted at the church. What is certain is that you are invited to Patty Fuller's home to enjoy the traditional black-eyed pea soup, guaranteed to boost your year off to a good start and keep the good fortune coming throughout the year. New Year's Day, 12 to 2. If you have to have a huge TV, bring your own. If you want beer, bring that, too.