

EXPLORING OUR FAITH – ADVENT WAITING

You may have grown up thinking of the Season of Advent as that four-week sprint just before Christmas. Or, maybe you thought of it as the appetizer whose sole purpose was to get you to the main course—Christmas! When you're a kid waiting for presents (present company included), four weeks of Advent can seem like an eternity. To say that the Season of Advent is four weeks long is liturgically correct albeit a bit short-sighted. The Reign of God broke into the world in the most definitive and subversive way on that first Christmas 2000 years ago, yet the Reign of God is still on the way. Christ has come, but Christ still needs to come.

If that's true, then we are Advent people all year round. Staying awake for the signs of Jesus's Second Coming should be our everyday posture 365 days of the year and not just for four weeks. We say as much, do we not, each time we gather for Eucharist? At each Mass, the presider says, "The mystery of faith." One of the assembly's responses is this (note the ending): "We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection *until you come again.*" Another response goes like this (note the ending): "When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, *until you come again.*" These refrains can only fall from the lips of Advent people. They are little reminders that when Jesus returns in glory, there will be no need to eat this Bread nor drink from this Cup, anymore. But, we're not there yet. We still have to gather. We still have to eat. We still have to drink. So, how *do* we get there? How *do* we wait?

We wait for the Second Coming of Jesus by taking our cues from those who waited for His First Coming. The prophets in Biblical times had to keep the embers hot. They had to give hope to people, over centuries, that the Messiah was coming, a new reign would break upon the land and last forever. Because it was hard to keep the edges hot, many gave up hope. However, a small group, a remnant, never gave up hope. They are referred to as the "faithful remnant of Israel." Here is how they waited and how we are called to wait as well.

1) Wait with a sense of promise. God, through Angel Gabriel, promised Elizabeth and Mary that each would bear a child. God's promise would be fulfilled. We can only wait for what is already growing within us. If you're not pregnant, you have no need to wait. But, if you are pregnant, the anticipation, I'm told, is all-consuming. Similarly, a farmer waits for his planting to bear fruit. Trust that what you are waiting for right now is, in some way, already present to you, although not fully revealed.

2) Wait actively. You know something is happening. Passive waiting means it's out of your hands, and you are simply punching in time. However, a patient person remains still knowing the real thing isn't always tomorrow; it's right here today. Fear makes us run. The angel says to Mary and to us, "Do not be afraid."

3) Wait open-ended. This is the difference between wishing *for* something versus hoping *in* something. Wishing says, "This is what I wish for, and it must unfold according to my agenda or I will be very disappointed." Hope is feeling confident that God's plan will be fulfilled according to God's promises. Let go of wish lists. Hoping says, "Let it happen to me according to your will." I don't try to control the situation. I try, instead, to be formed by God's life-giving will rather than by my own fears.

4) Wait together. Mary and Elizabeth are cousins who sought each other out and helped each other to wait. Each reminded the other of the promise the angel had made and that what they were waiting for would be fulfilled. This is what we owe each other as member of the Church. My job is to remind you that God's promise is growing in you--so stay close to it—even, and especially, on your worst day. Similarly, your job is to remind me, especially in moments of discouragement, that God's promise is growing in me and will come to fruition soon. Although we call Pentecost the "birth of the Church," I think Mary and Elizabeth's waiting together was the real, but "unofficial" birth of the Church."

If we wait with a sense of promise, actively, open-ended, and together, Christmas will come of its own accord. And not only that, it will be more fulfilling than anything we could put on our wish list.

~Fr. Phil Mulligan, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish



Our Lady of Hope Pastoral Unit

1st Sunday of Advent 28 November 2021

Immaculate Conception Church, Rexton

St-Peter's Church, South Branch

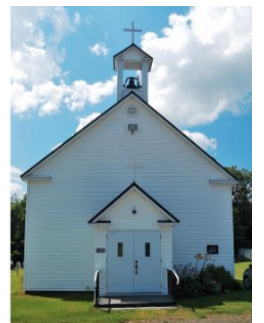


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Office Hours:

Tuesday 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm,
 Wednesday & Thursday – 8:30 am - 12:30 pm



Priest-Moderator: Fr. Bernard Gauthier, C.Ss.R. 523-9788 Cell Phone: 889-0344

Immaculate Conception Mass Times

Sunday – 9:00 am & 4:00 pm (until further notice)
 Tuesday – 4:00 pm (Sacristy)

St. Peter's Mass Time

Saturday – 4:00 pm

Scripture Readings for Upcoming Week			
Mon	Isaiah 2:1-5	Psalms 122	Matthew 8:5-11
Tue	Romans 10:9-18	Psalms 19	Matthew 4:18-22
Wed	Isaiah 35:6-10	Psalms 23	Matthew 15:29-37
Thur	Isaiah 26:1-6	Psalms 118	Matthew 7:21-27
Fri	Isaiah 29:17-24	Psalms 27	Matthew 7:21-27
Sat	Isaiah 30:19-26	Psalms 147	Matthew 9:35-10:1
Sun	Baruch 5:1-9 Philippians 1:4-11	Psalms 126	Luke 3:1-6



PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

Immaculate Conception

Loose: **\$68.75**; Regular Envelopes: **\$720.00**;
Needs of Cdn Church: **\$10.00**;
Missals: **\$105.00**; **TOTAL: \$903.75**

St. Peter's

Loose: **\$15.00**; Envelopes: **\$110.00**;
Missals: **\$100.00**; **Total: \$225.00**

Immaculate Conception Cemetery Fund

Memorial Tree: **TOTAL: \$235.00**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Please note your envelope donations can also be left in the locked box outside the parish hall.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR UPCOMING WEEK

Sat	27	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Jeannette Curtis
Sun	28	IC	9:00 am	Bessie Walsh†	Alban & Janet
Sun	28	IC	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Dick Hudson
Tue	30	IC	4:00 pm	In Honour of St. Anthony for Favour Received	A Parishioner
Sat	4	SP	4:00 pm	Leon Vautour†	Claire Murphy
Sun	5	IC	9:00 am	Faye Hudson†	Dick & Family
Sun	5	IC	4:00 pm	Faye Hudson†	Dwight & Jeannette Little

LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR NEXT WEEKEND

				Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
Sat	4	SP	4:00 pm	1 st Reading & Psalm 2 nd Reading & Intentions	Lois Stella
Sun	5	IC	9:00 am	1 st & 2 nd Reading Intentions	Donna Corinne Gloria
Sun	5	IC	4:00 pm	1 st & 2 nd Reading Intentions	Bob

WE PRAY FOR STRENGTH FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Alverie Robichaud, Roger Mazerolle and all residents in special care homes.



2021 MEMORIAL TREE Help support our cemeteries by purchasing your Memorial Tree bulb in memory of a loved one. Bulbs are \$10.00 each with all proceeds going to the cemeteries. For South Branch call Stella @ 955-3612 or Carol @ 523-6389 and for Rexton call Trevor at the Parish Office @ 523-6817. **Please submit your requests for Memorial Tree bulbs by the end of November.** The Memorial Tree in South Branch will be lit following the 4:00 pm mass on November 27th. The date for the lighting of the Memorial Tree in Rexton has not yet been determined.

CATECHISM/SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Fr. Bernard would like to hear from all parents whose children are due to receive sacraments. **Please contact the parish office by the end of November** to let us know if you are seeking sacraments for your children.

2022 LIVING WITH CHRIST SUNDAY MISSALS are available at the back of the church or by dropping in to the parish office. The cost for Missals is \$5.00.

2022 PARISH ENVELOPES have been placed at the back of the church for you to pick up. If you have not been assigned an envelope # and would like to make your weekly contributions with parish envelopes, please contact the parish office. There are extra envelopes left over. You will receive a tax receipt for your donations at the end of the year.

2021 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE Please note that with the current COVID-19 restrictions in place, pre-registration for Christmas Masses will be necessary by contacting the Parish Office where you plan to attend mass.

DIOCESAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

BE STILL The 25th Annual Advent Festival of Carols & Scripture, which is taking place Sunday, November 28th at 6:30 p.m. at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist, St. John's, NL will be livestreamed at www.thebasilica.net for those who may be interested in tuning in.

CCCB ADVENT VIDEO SERIES Beginning Sunday, November 21, the Solemnity of Christ the King, and for the four Sundays of Advent, the CCCB will release a video recording of one of Canada's bishops reflecting on the Gospel Reading for that Sunday. This year's reflections were inspired by the Indigenous Delegation travelling to Rome to meet with Pope Francis from 17-20 December 2021, and may be found at the following link:

➔ <https://www.cccb.ca/evangelization-catechesis-catholic-education/video-resources/journey-through-advent/>

Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24th

Elsipogtog.....6:30 p.m.
Rexton.....9:30 p.m.
Indian Island....12:00 Midnight

December 25th

South Branch...11:00 a.m.

December 26th

Elsipogtog.....11:00 a.m.
Rexton.....4:00 p.m.

December 31st (No Mass)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Rexton.....7:30 p.m.

January 1st

South Branch.....4:00 p.m.

January 2nd

Rexton.....4:00 p.m.
Elsipogtog.....11:00 a.m.