

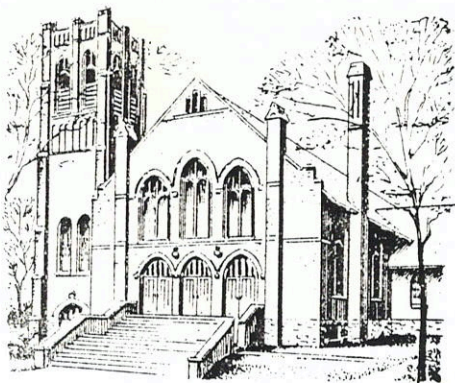
The  
**PARISH NEWSLETTER**

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Rector's Message

Dear Friends and Members of St. John's,

During the next six or seven weeks, we are entering into two separate and distinct seasons of the Christian Church Year, Advent and Christmas.

**ADVENT:** A Period of four weeks (November 30 - December 24) to examine and prepare ourselves for Christmas.

**CHRISTMAS:** The Nativity of the Birth of Christ  
December 25 to January 5  
The Twelve Days of Christmas

Unfortunately, due to commercialization, Advent gets swallowed up in parties, shopping and other festive occasions. Christmas becomes a one day occasion, rather than the beginning of twelve days of celebration of the birth of our Saviour into the world.

Every year I try not to get caught up in the commercialization, but how difficult it is! Santa comes earlier every year, Christmas Carols come earlier every year, the pressure to buy more, spend more, etc., etc. seems heavier every year. Most of us cram all the festivities of Christmas into the two or three weeks before, during the Advent Season, and come Boxing Day we are so worn out that we are glad it's all over, when in reality it has only just begun.

I would like to suggest that some of our socializing be held during the twelve days following Christmas, possibly wait until Christmas Eve or the week before to put up our tree and enjoy it after Christmas Day.

It seems to me that as Mary and Joseph had difficulty finding a place for Christ's birth, so the commercial world is continually making it more difficult to find room for the real meaning of Christmas in our lives.

