

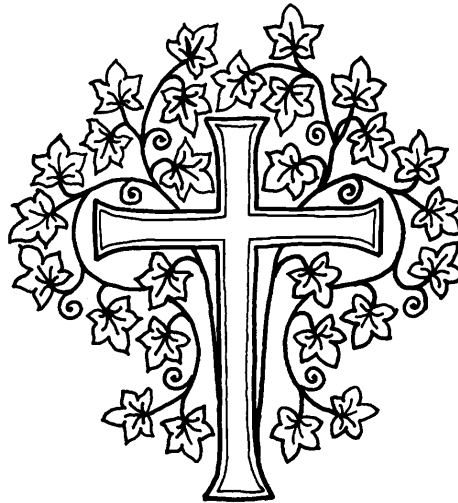
Church of the Incarnation

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The Messenger

December 2021



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A Word from Our Senior Warden

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

First and foremost, I wish to thank you all for your patience and care during this time of change for Incarnation Church. As you'll see in this Newsletter, we have many exciting services and events coming up.

I look forward to us all welcoming our guest priests this month (and our Interim Priest coming in January, the Rev. Adam Linton). I've started a "Sponsor a Priest" program, for our December supply clergy expenses, and thank those who've already stepped up to help.

We'll be putting up our December supply clergy in the Arvon Hotel the night before their services. (Thank you, Peter Gennings, for giving us a discount rate for this.) In addition to the supply fee, itself, we also have to pay mileage for their travel to and from Great Falls. None of our expenses will be paid by the Diocese. So, we need your financial support more than ever. However, Gretchen Swift applied for, and our Diocese has granted, a reduced Assessment for our Parish, for the third year in a row. (Thank you so much for your work on this, Gretchen.)

As we are in "Impaired Congregation" status, our Diocese will also be providing us with a number of much needed supportive resources. Among these will be tech support and video equipment so that we can begin virtual services again for all those unable to be with us in person. The Diocesan Congregational Development team will be providing important assistance, as well. We will be handing out a questionnaire from this team that will help us assess where we are, move forward, improve, and grow as a Parish. This may be filled out anonymously. We will much appreciate your participation in this effort.

Our Annual Stewardship Letter will be mailed out, shortly. As I said before, we need everyone's support, now more than ever. Everyone's generosity makes such an important difference.

As important as our financial contributions are, other kinds of giving are also much needed. We are seeking people to serve in a number of worship ministries: lay worship leader, lay eucharistic visitor, reader, acolyte, usher. Might you be interested? Do you feel called? If so, please let me know. Canon Mikayla Dunfee+ will provide information and training when she is with us on Sunday, December 5 (as will Adam+, after he starts with us in January).

I'm so honored to serve as your Senior Warden, now and through 2022, during this critical time of change and new beginning.

Sara Quay

December Schedule

WORSHIP SERVICES

We'll be offering Holy Eucharist, at both 8 and 10 AM, on all four Sundays in December; and likewise on both Christmas Eve at 10 PM, and Christmas Day at 10 AM. We're very grateful to the clergy who have agreed to cover "supply" for us this month, and also, especially to our own Bishop Marty who will be with us on Christmas! Here's the schedule:

Sunday, December 5. The Rev. Canon Mikayla Dunfee

Sunday, December 12. The Rev. Robin Biffle

Sunday, December 19. The Rev. Canon Bradley Wirth

Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve, 10 PM. The Right Rev. Marty Stebbins

Saturday, December 25, Christmas Day, 10 AM. The Right Rev. Marty Stebbins

Sunday, December 26. The Rev. Robin Biffle

(Adam Linton+ is scheduled to begin with us on Sunday, January 2.)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Sunday, December 5, following the 10 AM service, Parish Hall. Our **monthly Parish Conversation**.

Tuesday, December 7, 12:30 to 2:00 PM, Parish Hall. **Informal "Meet and Greet Lunch" with Adam+ and Lori Linton**. Sandwiches, coffee, and cookies will be provided.

Saturday, December 11, 8:30 AM, Perkins Restaurant (corner of 2nd Avenue North and 6th street). **Saint Andrews Men's Breakfast** for the men and boys of The Church of the Incarnation.

Saturday, December 18, 11 AM to 5 PM, Parish Hall. **Church Bazaar fundraiser**. Music, soup lunch and more! Twelve vendors. Church Treasures Corner. Free admission. Wheel-chair accessibility.

Sunday, December 19, following the 10 AM service. **Caroling to our shut-ins**. Meet in the Parish Hall at 11 AM. We'll carpool where possible. Any members you'd like included among those we visit, please email to church email by December 11.

Sunday, December 19, 3 PM, Guild Room. **Vestry**.

Tuesday, December 21, 7 PM, Outside front of Church. **Darkest night; a candle memorial**.

A Word from Our Interim Priest-in-Charge

Dear Friends,

While my ministry with you does not begin until January, I wanted to share a few words with you now. First, I count it a blessing and a privilege to have been called to serve you. Lori and I are eagerly looking forward to our time with you in Great Falls, and getting to know all of you.

Even after forty-plus years since my priestly ordination—and now, two years into my official “retirement”—please know that I’m genuinely excited by the prospect of congregational service. The wonderful basics of parish work—pastoral care, worship, preaching, communication, and administration—never grow old. They don’t grow old because they are the instruments of the One “who is making all things new.” They will always be the grounding of everything else that the Church might do. These wonderful basics are Grace-chosen means by which the Lord touches his People, and holds them in his good Purpose. With all my heart, I pray that you know that this means—that this truly includes—*you*.

Yes, of course, Church can sometimes be a challenge. It comes with its own frustrations, disappointments, and even hurts. Yet we believe that it is *Christ’s* Church, after all. Since he established it, we have to think that in spite of all its frailties (none of which would have been a surprise to him) he still thought that it was a good idea! Church is a key part of how our Lord is continuing his mission “for the life of the world.”

We must keep Jesus Christ first, front, and center. Always. Only in so doing can everything else find its healthful place. That certainly includes Church. But in our Creeds we also say that we “believe” in the Church, too, don’t we? We believe in it because we believe in its Lord. So, I invite all of us to a renewed faith: both in our Lord, and also in one another.

It also needs to be stressed that my own ministry among you is *interim*. I will be serving you in a *limited, transitional* capacity. Nevertheless, please be assured—once again—that I’m much looking forward to being with you, in the time given for us to be together, in common service to our gracious God.

I’d like to share a verse of Scripture that seems apt for this very time at Incarnation. I propose that we keep it well in mind, in heart and in spirit.

Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Blessings to you in Christ; this Advent, Christmastide, and always,

Adam+

About the Rev. Adam S. Linton

After twenty-two years of active ministry in the Episcopal Church, the Rev. Adam S. Linton officially “retired” in the autumn of 2019. He is Canonically Resident in the Diocese of Massachusetts, but since retirement has lived in Columbia Falls, Montana, and is Licensed in our Diocese, here. In his previous Episcopal ministries, he was Rector of parishes in Illinois, Utah, and then Massachusetts. (He has served additionally as an active-duty Navy Chaplain, on diocesan staff, as a Standing Committee member, and as a Deputy to General Convention.)

Prior to his ministries as an Episcopalian, Adam+ served for sixteen years as an Eastern Orthodox priest. Despite his deep appreciation for that tradition and its people, over the course of a number of years he discerned that his own authentic place of belonging, in faith and ministry, was the Episcopal Church, in which his priestly orders were received in 1997, by the Right Rev. Frank Griswold, then the Bishop of Chicago.

Adam+ is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts (Master of Divinity, 1990), having previously graduated from College of Marin, Kentfield, California, and from Saint Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, Pennsylvania. Additionally, he completed a mentored program of Anglican Studies (as part of his preparation for ministry in the Episcopal Church), and is a Graduate of the Clergy Leadership Project, Class XIII, Trinity Conference Center, West Cornwall, Connecticut.

Adam+ is also a noted student of the work of the Sixteenth Century English theologian, Richard Hooker; and also that of the Twentieth Century theologian, Karl Barth. His on-going personal education includes substantial efforts in Biblical Studies, Church History, and Theology, with a special interest in the writings of C. S. Lewis. Additional personal interests include classical music, literature, fine arts, and nature.

Adam+ and his wife Lori have been married for forty-four years. They have five adult children, and four grandchildren (with a fifth grandchild very shortly due to arrive!). They reside in Columbia Falls, Montana; less than a half an hour’s drive to the West Entrance of their beloved Glacier National Park. Two of their children also live in Columbia Falls, and Adam’s sister Sara lives in Great Falls.

Sharing Lori and Adam+’s household is the irrepressible Polly, an almost five-year old Yellow Labrador Retriever, their devoted canine companion.

Parish Bible Study to Begin Again in January

Starting on January 4, Bible Study will begin again, meeting on the **Tuesdays**, from 10:00 to 11:15 a.m. (Please note the change of day.) We will meet in the Guild Rom. However, these will be “mixed sessions,” combining participation in person and also by Zoom. When I’m in Great Falls I’ll lead in person; when not, I’ll do so “virtually.”

We will be working our way through the Gospel of John. I believe that there’s great benefit to studying a whole book of the Bible, all the way through. By doing this, one gets that book’s whole message, and also experiences the full sweep of its “story line.”

Although I’ll be bringing in appropriate background material on an as-needed basis, and while we’ll seek to engage our minds in this study, as well as our hearts and spirits, this will not be an academic course. Rather, we’re aiming for a deep, experiential immersion in John: a pilgrimage. There will certainly be plenty of room for our questions! But our intention will be to foster an undistracted and un-distanced focus on John’s Gospel, itself, to see what gifts God has to give to us though, in, and by this amazing text.

I’ll provide a schedule for us, and encourage people to read each session’s portion of John ahead of time, prior to the day we meet, and more than once, if possible. After our first introductory session, and the two sessions after that in which we’ll take two weeks to cover the first chapter, we’ll then be taking a chapter a week.

“Come and see.” (1:39) Either in person, or on-line! Together, let’s launch into the adventure.

Adam+

FISH Activities Report

On behalf of FISH, thank you for your kind and generous support. Your love and concern make this worthwhile organization possible. You have been generous to FISH in the following ways:

Supporting the contributing to the Town Pump challenge; volunteering at FISH when your week is scheduled; donating food; supporting FISH with financial gifts; and praying for our continued success; contributes to the overall success of the FISH program.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of FISH thanks you again for all your support and your partnership in the FISH program during 2021. May God bless you during the up-coming holiday season.

FISH Board of Directors

FISH Data October 2021

The chart below is a comparison of those serviced by FISH between October 2020 and October 2021. As you can see there have been some changes between the 2020 and 2021 figures. There were decreases in the number of families (non-singles), singles, adults, children, meals served, and total pounds delivered; we were down 50.0%, 40.6%, 19.5%, 51.8%, 51.4%, and 41.6% respectively. There were no increases in any of the categories served. The YTD numbers also showed decreases for families (non-singles), singles, adults, children, meals served, and total pounds delivered; we were down 45.7%, 39.6%, 39.4%, 52.2%, 43.6%, and 39.8% respectively. The YTD numbers did not show any increases in any of the categories served. However, FISH still provided about 3.1 tons of emergency food to our community during the month of October 2021 and 24.2 tons (or 2.4 tons per month) YTD from January through October 2021. As you can see there is still a demand for emergency food here in Great Falls. This demand is met only by your generous donations to FISH and is greatly appreciated by all the recipients.

	October 2020	2020 YTD	October 2021	2021 YTD
Families (non-singles)	102	698	51	379
Singles	64	560	38	338
Adults	254	1,793	124	1,087
Children	137	887	66	424
Meals Served	5,865	40,200	2,850	22,665
Pounds of Food	10,515	80,183	6,145	48,306

Clearly, there is still a demand (in our community) for the emergency food we distribute through FISH. *Amen!*

Bob Shanks

Member of the FISH Board of Directors, Representing The Church of the Incarnation.

Incarnational Thanks!

To **Richard Pate**, Incarnation's new Security Director, to **Tom and Patti Liston**, for cleaning, painting, and more, throughout the Church and Parish Hall, to **Nona Munroe and her team** for the delicious luncheon provided on Sunday, November 14, for our Parish Meeting with Bishop Marty, to **Barbara Eliason** for leading Morning Prayer on Sunday, November 21, to **Gayle Archey** for assisting Sara Quay with her many duties in our Parish Office, to **Sara Quay**, for all her work as Senior Warden, "keeping our Church moving forward," and to each one of **YOU**, for *every* time you come to Church, for *every* contribution you make, and for *every* prayer you offer for our Parish and its members.

Church of the Incarnation
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