

Fourth Notes

December 2011

Fourth Presbyterian Church * 340 Dorchester Street, South Boston, MA 02127 * 617-268-1281

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ADVENT 2011 - *The God Who Tents Among Us*



Advent begins Sunday, November 27, and with it a brand new liturgical year. We all know that the weeks before Christmas can be festive, hectic, wonderful, overwhelming, and more. Those of us on the Worship Team invite you to let these days be holy.

The inspiration for our theme this year comes from the Old Testament lesson for the fourth Sunday of Advent – II Samuel, chapter 7 - where God reminds a temple-desiring David that God has been dwelling with God's people all along...in a tent.

Tents are in the news anyway, so it's an image that sticks. PLUS... if you look ahead in the church year and think of that passage we read every Christmas Eve (John 1: ...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...), do you know what the original Greek

word is literally saying? "...And the Word became flesh and tented among us..."

Pretty rich, eh? The worship team sure thinks so. And thus we think of a tenting God in this season of yearning, expecting and waiting.

We invite you to join us for the season, beginning with worship on the morning of November 27. That night we also have our **Hanging of the Greens Service at 7pm.** The youth class will lead our worship, and for the first time (thanks to Ken, Karen and Sharon), we will have REAL greens for decorating. We'll also have a craft and goodies party afterwards.

Each Sunday morning worship will include communion, and the adult Sunday School class will explore our theme with a workshop on prayer.

Every Wednesday night, we'll have a 5:30 supper, and a 6:15 Service of Taize Sung Prayer. Choir rehearses at 7:15 in preparation for a Christmas Concert on December 17, 4pm.

There is also caroling at the Stanfields (Dec 19), gingerbread house construction on the 17th, and the kids party on the 18th. It's a full season. Enjoy.

Sundays: exploring prayer

Katey Schwind leads a new Sunday morning class each week at 9:30am. The focus is prayer, and she is leading an exploration of different styles, techniques and approaches.

wednesday prayer & soup gathering



So how do we *really* prepare for the Coming Light? With all the concerts, parties and shopping opportunities, what is the best way to prepare a way for the Divine. One suggestion – The Practice of Sung Prayer.

Every Wednesday night of Advent, we'll gather for a light supper at 5:30pm. Then at 6:15pm we will have our prayer time. (Children are welcome, by the way, but tutoring is also available and happening at the same time.)

The prayer service is in the style of Taize. We sing simple chants, have an extended time of silence,

and share candlelight. There is also a scripture reading.

In the darkness, with candlelight, we will pray for the Light. Come join us.

caroling party- dec 19

The Stanfields host the annual Christmas caroling party on MONDAY, December 19, 6pm-8:30. Soup, bread and whatever-folks-feel-like-bringing will be available at 6pm. We'll go out to sing around 7pm, and then we can re-gather for desserts and such.

The Stanfield's home is at 11 Norway Road in Milton (02186). The "Capen" stop on the Ashmont-Mattapan trolley is two blocks away. For drivers, take exit 12 on 93 to Gallivan, then south on Adams, right on Eliot. Take Eliot to Cliff, and left on to Norway.

More civic engagement success!

Youth organizers worked hard this fall to make some 500 door-to-door contacts in the neighborhood. They did some great follow-up in the days

leading right up to the election, and now we can report the results:

In one precinct voting went up by 10% (compared to four years ago)

In another precinct, voting increased by 30%

In a third, voting went up by 37%

Well done, people. Special thanks to Heather for volunteering so many hours to help.

church 141st birthday – celebrate on jan 29

The official anniversary of Fourth Presbyterian Church is December 12, so we often pick a Sunday near then to celebrate our birthday—replete with cake, presents, the works.

Mindful that these anniversaries come right in the middle of Advent and Music/Art performances, session has moved our celebration to January 29 (which is also the day to ordain and install new elders and deacons).

The hope is that we can keep our focus on Advent during Advent... and then more fully LET LOOSE with a party in January.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – 7pm

Our annual Christmas Eve Worship Service takes place at 7pm. There will be lessons, carols, this year's all-ages Christmas Pageant, and our candlelight circle. There will be a rehearsal for the pageant after the childrens party (And also Perahaps Wednesday, December 21? See Tim!). But there are also many ways to participate without rehearsing!

Please check in with Tim Hughes or Burns Stanfield if you or somebody in your family is interested in participating in the pageant. ALL AGES are welcome!

pledge cards out there!

As of press time, we have \$83,000 in pledges toward 2012. We have deliberately stepped into this campaign without a set goal. We want everybody to prayerfully consider the call to tithe and give proportionately.

As we get closer to budget time, session will indeed have to name the threshold amount needed to continue programming with a full-time pastor. But right now, KEEP PRAYING and DISCERNING. Please turn in a pledge by mail, by phone, or by email. Pledge cards are available. Feel free also to email Burns or treasurer Susan Devine

suzzand@verizon.net

gingerbread house party

A Saturday morning gingerbread house-making festival has become an important piece of our Advent traditions. (Maybe this year it should be a gingerbread tent...) Alice Hageman is our expert, but we need a full array of helpers to work with Tim! It takes place Saturday morning, December 17. Children and adults will have a chance to build gingerbread houses.

Adult helpers are much appreciated!! See Tim to volunteer.

Christmas concert- Saturday, Dec 17, 4pm

This concert was a brand new project for us last year, but it was extremely well-received. SO the choir is ready to do it again.

Come for a concert of Christmas songs from American folks traditions, mixed in with some Christmas scripture readings, congregational carols, and candles.

It's all quite wonderful, and it is happening in the Fourth Church sanctuary. No admission charge, just a free-will offering. Invite all your friends needing a dose of Christmas Spirit.

children's party on Sunday the 18th

Each year, a major outreach to community children for us is our Christmas Party the Sunday before the big day. We expect a big crowd and welcome your help: cash donations help, as do offerings of time to : supervise, lead crafts, clean up, cook, stuff stockings, present presents on behalf of the church... .See Tim Hughes to help. Donations of time and/or money are appreciated. \$500 makes this happen and we have already received a gift of \$250!

weekends of performances

We are fast approaching that December season of frequent performances!

SATURAY and SUNDAY, December 3 and 4 -- Two nights of "The Wiz" performances by the theater workshop , Saturday at 7pm, Sunday at 4pm

FRIDAY and SATURDAY, December 9 and 10 – Two nights

of "Newsies" performed by the younger set, 7pm.

SUNDAY, Dec 11 - music recitals at 4:30 and 5:45

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 14 - Variety Show featuring dancers, magicians, singers

SUNDAY, Dec. 17 - Choir's Christmas Concert at 4pm

Annual meeting- jan 22

The congregation has its annual meeting on January 22. We will receive the ANNUAL REPORT and budget for 2012. We'll also elect new officers and vote on the revised terms of call for Pastor Stanfield for 2012.

prayers...

Thanks to the food pantry crew for a major distribution right before Thanksgiving.

Prayers for Phyllis Curtis at Marian Manor, Sonny Stevens in rehab (also at Marian Manor), Mina DePina (recuperating from surgery).

Prayers for those who are eager to become parents.

Congratulations to Lindsey and Michael Moyes – they are now expectant parents!

Gracie has a broken finger.

Betsy went to NYC to spend Thanksgiving with Kelly, a freshman in college there.

Cindy Curtis has been in town. So has Kathy Dawson!

Thanks to Bethany and Gared for opening their home to Holly and kids. Thanks to many, MANY church people for helping with the move.

Prayers for Tatum and her family as they get transition to an exciting new school arrangement.

Ryan Kim recently preached us and did a wonderful job. Prayers for his coursework and ordination preparation. Prayers, too, for Eunhee's health.

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