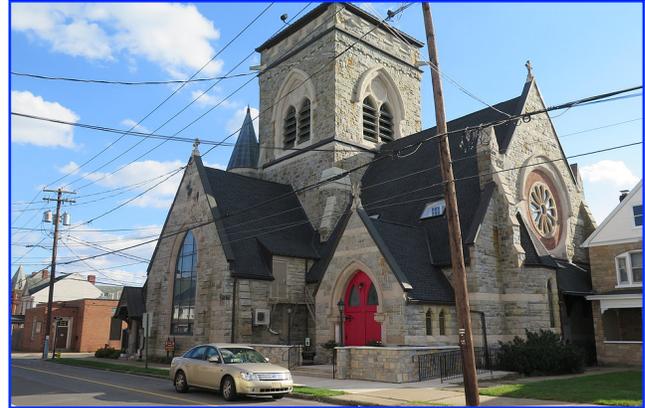


THE CORNERSTONE

Then he told them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Luke 21: 29-32

I was afraid of the world coming to its end when I was a young boy. I was a teenager in the 70s. The Cold War was still a chilling reality. Fundamentalist Christians such as Hal Lindsey proclaimed that the era of the [Antichrist](#) had begun. Jesus Christ’s apocalyptic return was close at hand. Astrologer and Psychic [Jeane Dixon](#) offered lots of publicized predictions. Most of them were erroneous.



“The same stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”
Psalm 118:22

Somewhere in the midst of my mostly silent anxiety I recall [Pastor Horace Crowder](#) saying that our world has always been ready for Jesus Christ’s Second Coming. There are ongoing wars, rumors of war, and violence happening across the planet. This was true in the Middle East during Jesus’ day. It is true in the Middle East of our own time. Heaven and Earth have not passed away and yet in many ways they have. And, we’re still here as Christians and Episcopalians

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Fig Tree—Graphite Print by Harry I. Stickroth

accomplishing our share of the work in Christ's Danville vineyard. We're called to be faithfully present to the Gospel despite our earthly anxieties. Jesus beckons us to detach from our fears while being fully aware of our surroundings

Jesus frequently uses the natural environment as a context for observing God's presence. Fig trees are one example of such an analogy. Fig trees are tough. Biblical prophets, including Jesus used fig trees as a sign of wealth and prosperity in good times. Destroyed figs were similarly a sign of foreboding Divine judgment against God's people. (Bolen, 2005). An angered Jesus curses a fig tree that doesn't bear fruit during his Holy Week time of trial.



Luke's Jesus in this passage points his disciples to gaze upon figs tree as a marker for understanding the seasons of their lives. Mediterranean fig trees produce their leaves twice during the year. The first harvest happens in the spring. The second harvest occurs very late in autumn. These leaves appear right before summer begins. In all cases, fig trees survive through long seasons of drought. They grow in terrible or rich soil because of their aggressive root system. They grow as high as 25' while providing cool and comfortable shade from desert heat. The healthiest of fig trees flourish in all types of conditions – great – ordinary – treacherous.



Let's try this textual interpretation on (for what it is worth). What if when Jesus invites his disciples to look at the fig trees, he isn't predicting Christ's second coming in glory. What if he is instead suggesting that his followers must persevere through all sorts of seasons in their shared lives. Might he be asking us to set aside our fears and place more faith in God's love with and for us. What if we are the fig trees who God is living in and through these troubled days? Biblical wisdom teaches us that God's Kingdom indeed dwells quite closely in and with us during the world's darkest and most uncertain times.

Lutheran pastor and theologian David Lose writes:

“even amid the tumult and trauma of our age, we are not helpless. While we still wait Jesus' complete redemption, yet we have good work to do in the meantime. And we undertake the good work of being Jesus' disciples in the world – the work of compassion for those who are hurting, encouragement to those who are afraid, solidarity with those who are oppressed, resistance to evil, forgiveness for those who have wronged us, and acceptance of all of God's people – ... in light of Jesus' promise, we realize that there are no small gestures, only actions motivated by the love and courage of Christ. And I firmly believe that no action done in love and courage, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” (Lose, 2018)

I'm seeking reassurance and a renewed sense of serenity during this upcoming Advent Season. Some of my adult anxieties are different than my childhood fears. Some of them

haven't really changed that much. Astrologers, prophets, and forecasters still offer projects. Many of them are erroneous. December's nights are longer and colder than in summer. Our Christian faith reminds us that God is not a God of what has been or what is to come. God unfolds with hope from moment to moment of our lives. God's lifegiving birth is never far away, as close as a prayer.

Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay; give new courage to your people, who trust in your love. By your coming, raise us to share in the joy of your kingdom on earth as in heaven, where you live and reign with the Father and the Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessings along the Journey, Father Jim

Announcements and Upcoming Events:

Advent Celebration: We're gathering after worship on Dec. 2nd to eat and enjoy one another's company as well as perhaps share Christ's love with people outside of our doors. We're also going to share a potluck lunch, so bring what you can. Our plans are to create advent wreaths for you to take home as well as to decorate our community room. We can make gingerbread houses, advent calendars and any other sort of craft that people in our community are familiar with and willing to share. I'd like to put together a board of prayers that we will display and contemplate about for four weeks. Join us **Sunday - Dec. 2nd - following 10:00 am worship (approx 11:30)**. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Community Room for you to indicate how many of your family and friends will join us. This celebration might be just the opportunity to invite some of your friends or family members who usually don't worship on Sundays with us to be with us in one of our community's events. If you can assist, please contact Father Jim.

Christ Walk: Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to walk with Jesus? Jesus and his disciples walked throughout their ministry. Christ Walk is a program that leads you through various routes in the Bible during 40 days. It was originally designed by an Episcopalian, who happens to also be a nurse, as a Lenten program. It is a plan that challenges your mind, body and spirit. You can complete it in a variety of ways- walking, or running, other forms of exercise that you may enjoy, or through household and daily activities.

Things you will need:

The Christ Walk book (Michelle Walczak can order all books on Amazon)

A pedometer or fitness tracker

A tablet or journal

If you would like to join the Journey, get in touch with Michelle Walczak

Tea and Testament time will be **December 9th at 2:00 PM** at the Altenbach home.

The Way of the Rosary will be **December 18th at 6:00pm** at the Altenbach home.

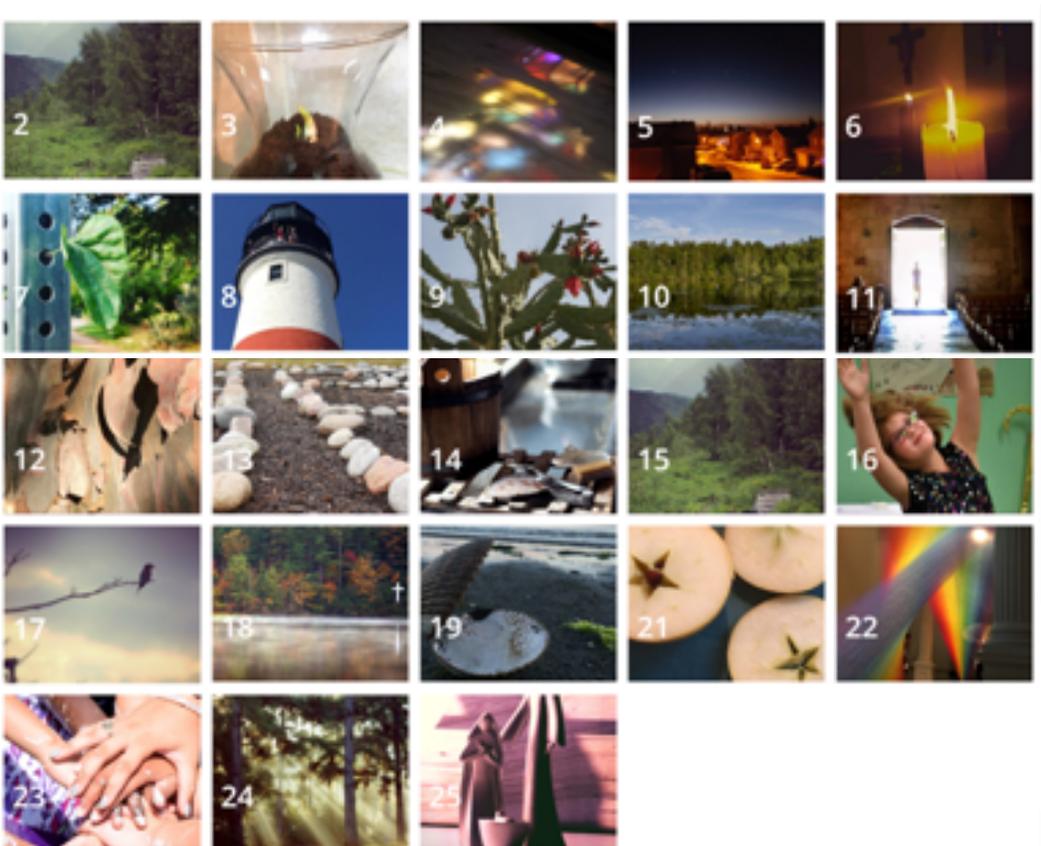
Priest's Office Hours: Jim is usually in the office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. However it is best to schedule an appointment with him if you seek dedicated time to talk. He's

happy to meet at Boil Line, Old Forge, your home or elsewhere- just email him to set up a time together.

Expense Reimbursement: In order to be reimbursed for any expenses you incur on behalf of the Church, you need to complete the “Request for Payment or Reimbursement” form. Please attach the invoice/sales receipt to the form. Approval is needed from one of the Wardens, or the committee chair for which the expense occurred. These forms can be found in the office or on the table with the mailboxes. Any questions can be directed to the Wardens or Parish Administrator.

Birthdays in December	Anniversaries in December
1- Abigail Cummings	2- Peter and Pauline Hesbacher
3- Pauline Hesbacher	13- Deb and Michael Noll
7- Diane Reabuck	17- Ken and Pat Ackerman
12- David Salwocki	27- Mark and Deb Shipe
13- Pam Kanaskie	30- Richard and Jane Pierce
14- Edward Deskie	
15- Jessica Cooper	
20- Catherine Stobo	

Be extra-creative and hopeful. Join with a global community in celebrating a theme everyday throughout Advent. Visit [Adventword](#) & reflect upon what Christ’s birth means to you each day of this season of anticipatory celebration.



Vestry Minutes for October 21, 2018

In Attendance: Father Jim, Becky Sutherland, David Peterson, Doug Cummings, Barbara Rhoades, Michelle Walczak, Debra Noll, Greg Harvey and Kathy Sidler.

Father Jim opened us with a circle prayer and check-in.

Becky moved to approve the September minutes meeting. Michelle seconded. Approved unanimously.

Priest-in-Charge Report: There are a number of families in the congregation facing pastoral care troubles. There are a lot of programs that we are experimenting with as the way we face a changing world. The diocesan convention went well. The Episcopal Home is seeking financial assistance and Jim would like us to participate in their fundraising. The Bishop will be visiting us November 2nd for All Souls Day, with several confirmations taking place that evening at 6:00 PM, with members of the Vestry encouraged to join the worship. Father Jim will be going to a meeting about the diaper bank with several local organizations and will give a report at the next vestry meeting.

Senior Warden's report: Dave attended a warden's meeting early in the month. Nothing else to report.

Jr. Wardens Report:

The following were accomplished:

- * Fall flowers placed in urns at front entrance by J & D Landscaping.
- * Cabinet in church office ordered at Larry's Lumber (old cabinet had come off wall and was broken in fall)- plan to use old cabinet doors so that all will still match.
- * New cabinet doors for under kitchen sink were ordered- one was broken beyond repair- 2 were ordered to match.
- * Free-standing canopy replaced.
- * Door project has begun
 - o Pine street light kit (window), camera/intercom system and access control installed; temporary new lock set installed and keys distributed. This lock set is not does not fit the thick door well- properly fitting lock ordered by Lezzers and arrived.
 - o Light kit installed in outer and inner doors of community room. New lock set to fit thicker door also ordered and has arrived.
 - o Control panel installed in church basement to control door closure, locking, card access with battery back-up, and camera/intercom system. Wires for Pine Street and Community room doors have been pulled.

Upcoming plans:

- * Work party to redo the brick walkway and patio in the yard postponed until spring.
- * Will install new cabinet in church office upon its arrival.
- * Will stain and install new doors under sink in rectory upon their arrival.
- * Will install new weather stripping to front door of rectory.

* Door project:

- o Gray Builders scheduled to complete installation of card access at community room door and update lock set, install handicap access to front doors on Market Street.
- o Lezzers will come when Gray builders completes their work to make all final connections for doors and install monitor in the church office for secretary to see Pine Street entrance.
- o Gray Builders will return to change lock set at Pine Street door after orientation of card access and distribution of cards/fobs. No keys will be distributed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle A. Walczak

Jim has a proposal for a new lease on the printer.

Dave motioned to pursue a new printer lease. Barbara seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Cemetery Committee Report: No new business, other than the Pat Ackerman Burial in September. There is a need to get burial records from Fulton.

Treasure's Report: No red flags in the reports. There will be a 3rd Quarter pledge report going out to everyone, showing what they pledged and what they have actually contributed. It should go out concurrently with the Stewardship letter. Greg will be stepping down from the Treasurer at the end of the year. The Vestry thanks Greg for his work in this role. We will discuss his replacement at the November meeting.

Finance Committee Report: We will be beginning the 2019 budgeting process shortly. The 2018 budget has gone well and will be a good base for next year. We will be reviewing the first draft of the 2019 budget at the November meeting.

Old Business:

-2019 Budget: Pledge envelopes are here. Father Jim will be sending out a letter and inviting discussion during worship over the coming month.

New Business:

-2019 Vestry: There are a number of options for next years 'class' of vestry, and Father Jim has recruited one person for the next class, but is looking for two new members.

-CEEP Membership: Father Jim believes it is a worthy membership. We need to begin the budgeting and registration process before the end of the year. The next meeting will be in Boston in February. We will discuss and decide about this in the November meeting.

Next meeting: November 11 at 11:30.

Closing Circle.

Advent Adventures

Take time out to listen to music that offers hopeful awareness. I'll play this once at least three times a week in December.



Coldplay - Midnight

74,885,773 views

267K 15K SHARE SAVE ...

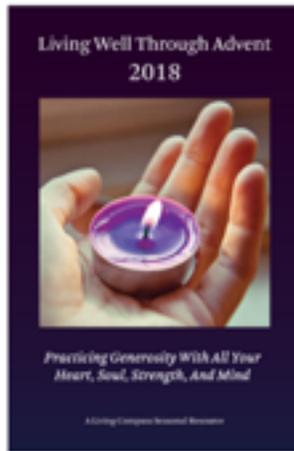
Songwriters: Lamar Taylor / Darnell Dalton / Edward Martin / Cecily Wagner / James Rolling

Midnight - Coldplay

In the darkness before the dawn
In the swirling of this storm
When I'm rolling with the punches and hope is gone
Leave a light, a light on
Millions of miles from home
In the swirling swimming on
When I'm rolling with the thunder but bleed from thorns
Leave a light, a light on
In the darkness before the dawn
In the darkness before the dawn
Leave a light, a light on
Leave a light, a light on

Fill your body, mind and soul with the food your “living compass” needs:

Outfitting individuals, families, congregations, and organizations with tools and training for the journey toward wellness and wholeness.



WE ARE HAPPY TO OFFER SEVERAL WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH US THROUGHOUT THE 2018 ADVENT SEASON:

- Purchase our Advent devotional as a printed book in English and Spanish while supplies last
- Enroll for free to receive each day's reading via a daily email
- Join our closed Facebook discussion group moderated by The Rev. Dr. Scott Stoner & The Rev. Jan Kwiatkowski
- Access all past daily readings through our archive online
- Download our Advent devotional as a FREE PDF file in English and Spanish
- Download our Advent leader's guide as a FREE PDF file
- Purchase our Advent devotional as an e-book from Amazon

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR OFFERINGS

Scott Stoner and the wonderful folks at [Living Compass](http://LivingCompass.org) are offering their annual Living Well through Advent program. This year's theme is "his year's theme is, "Practicing Generosity With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind." You can register [here](#).

Bylaws Revision

We will be voting on a revision to the bylaws at the January Annual Meeting. They have been sent out by email, and if you have any questions, corrections, or did not receive a copy, please contact either Senior Warden Dave Paterson (dpete@ptd.net) or the church administrator (cmecdanville@ptd.net).

December 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10:00-12:00 Trains and Diaper Bank
2 1st Advent 8:00 AM Eucharist 9:00 AM Choir 10:00 AM Eucharist 11:30 AM Advent Potluck 5:00 PM Centering Prayer	3 7:00-9:00 PM Frosty Friends (Community Room)	4	5	6	7	8 10:00-12:00 Trains and Diaper Bank
9 2nd Advent 8:00 AM Eucharist 9:00 AM Choir 10:00 AM Eucharist 11:30 AM Vestry 2:00 PM Tea and Testament (Altenbach's) 5:00 PM Centering Prayer	10	11	12 11:00 AM Danville Ministerium Meeting	13	14	15 10:00-12:00 Trains and Diaper Bank
16 3rd Advent 8:00 AM Eucharist 9:00 AM Choir 10:00 AM Eucharist 5:00 PM Centering Prayer	17	18 6:00 PM Way of the Rosary (Altenbach's)	19	20	21	22 10:00-12:00 Trains and Diaper Bank
23 4th Advent 8:00 AM Eucharist 9:00 AM Choir 10:00 AM Eucharist 5:00 PM Centering Prayer	24 Christmas Eve 4:00 PM Family Worship 10:00 PM Eucharist (St. Paul Bloomsburg)	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29
30 8:00 AM Morning Prayer 10:00 AM Morning Prayer	31					