



"Out Of Darkness Into Light"

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, (1 Pet.2:9)

Christmas is coming!

People will soon start counting the days until December 25. For countless centuries, people seeking God have divided time into special seasons for worship.

Both ancient and modern religions follow universal cycles of human experience in patterns for spiritual living. The regular rotation of nature's seasons inspires the cycle: birth, life, growth, death, then on to new life again. This is the cycle or season of Easter.

Then there are the cycles of darkness and light. The sun, moon, stars and planets shine with brightness and darken into night. Christmas celebrates the coming of the "light shining in the darkness". Jesus is born. The Word is made flesh. The light of the world has come!

This cycle of darkness and light consists of three seasons: Advent, Christmas & Epiphany.

Advent begins four Sundays before December 25

Christmas begins the evening of December 24 and continues for 12 days

Epiphany begins January 6 and continues (for 7 Sundays) until Lent

Advent means "coming." It is a season for faithful Christians to prepare to meet God when he comes. Scripture readings tell of the promise that God will come as Saviour, Lord and Judge. He will come as a little baby, to be born in Bethlehem. He will come to his faithful people in prayer and worship and in the bread and wine.

Prominent in Advent is the prophet Isaiah's vision of the future fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist bears his witness to "He who is to come". The Blessed Virgin Mary shares with us her own experience of the "coming of the Lord."

This is a season when we think of the darkness of a world without the light of Christ. It is a time when our human longing for God is expressed in the liturgy. Solemn, majestic music prepares us for the Advent of the Lord and King of all Creation.

In our parish, the "Advent Wreath" provides a focus for our prayerful preparation for the coming of the Lord. This wreath is a circle of evergreen branches. Both the circle and the evergreen are symbols of eternal life. Four candles stand for the four Sundays in Advent. (Sometimes a fifth "Christ Candle" is added for Christmas Day.) Each Sunday, a candle is lit and a prayer is said



Before the beginning of the Sunday Eucharist, the Advent Candle in church will be lit and the appropriate prayer offered.

Observing this solemn season is sometimes difficult. Commercial interests begin their Christmas season in November and end it on December 25 -just when the church's season begins! It requires real effort to wait until Advent is over before beginning Christmas!

Christmas is "Christ-Mass"

It is 12 days of joyful celebration beginning the eve of December 25. We celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ sent by God to be the Saviour of the world.



White and gold hangings deck the Altar. Flowers fill the sanctuary with new colour. All the candles are lit. The church bell peals. Joyful music rings out the good news: Light shines in the darkness, the Word of God is made flesh to dwell among us -Jesus Christ is born!

In our Parish:

Last (4th) Sunday in Advent (Dec. 23)

9.30 am. BAS Eucharist, St. Peter & St. Thomas, Weymouth North

11.15 a.m. Service of Lessons & Carols (no Eucharist) Trinity, Digby

7 p.m. Book of Common Prayer Communion (no music) at Trinity, Digby.

Christmas Eve Eucharist - (Dec. 24)

6 p.m. Trinity Digby – Candlelight service
8 p.m. St. Peter's Weymouth North

Christmas Day

Trinity at 10 a.m. – on the St. Paul's altar
The Order of Service at the Christmas Day Eucharist this year will follow the Church's ancient Gregorian Rite.

Before the development in Canada of the "Book of Alternative Services" (more than 20 years ago), the Gregorian Rite (in English) was probably the main alternative to the Anglican Church's "Order of Holy Communion" printed in the revised Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1959). The Order of Service on Christmas Day will, of course, be in English, but is otherwise very similar to the Holy Eucharist rite of the Roman Catholic Church prior to 1962. A special opportunity to experience worship as our ancestors did!

First Sunday after Christmas, December 30, celebration of the birth of Jesus continues - celebrating the Boyhood of Jesus and looking ahead to New Year's Day;
9.30 Eucharist at St. Peter's and 11.15 at Trinity.

Second Sunday after Christmas is ...

January 6 -Epiphany

9.30 a.m. BAS Eucharist, St. Peter & St. Thomas, Weymouth North
11.15 a.m. BAS Eucharist at Trinity, Digby

Epiphany means "shining forth" as light in darkness. The Book of Common Prayer calls it "The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles".

We celebrate the Epiphany of Christ until the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. In 2013, there are seven Sundays in the season.

The Gospel for the Feast of the Epiphany is the story of the Magi (Wise Men or Kings), who followed the light of a star and found Jesus. They are symbols of the shining light of Christ on all the people in the world.



January 13, the first Sunday after the Feast of the Epiphany, is a celebration of the Baptism of the Lord.

The light of Christ shines forth in the world as he receives the Holy Spirit and begins his mission as redeemer of the world. It is an appropriate time for Baptism and the renewal of Baptismal promises.

January 20, on the second Sunday after Epiphany, the Gospel of John recounts the story of Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. This Sunday falls within the International week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

January 27, the third Sunday after Epiphany, will focus on the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

February 3 we celebrate "Candlemas", or the "presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple". The Gospel tells how Mary and Joseph brought the infant Christ to the temple, where he is recognized as the light of the world by Simeon and Anna.

Candles are powerful symbols of Christ, as light in the darkness of our world. The candles to be used in the church in the coming year will be blessed at the 10 a.m. service.

This will be a Sunday where parents and children are especially encouraged to worship together at a Eucharist which gathers all ages within our community of faith.

February 10 is the last Sunday of the Epiphany season. The Gospel tells how Jesus' glory is revealed as shining light on the Mount of Transfiguration.

This Sunday completes the three seasons that make up our celebration of the Incarnation of God in the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent is the time for getting ready for the coming of light. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the "true light". Epiphany tells how God illuminates us with his presence. Advent, Christmas and Epiphany focus our hearts and minds on Jesus, the light of the world.