



November 2013
Volume 86 Number 9

From the Clergy Associate

Yes, it's only November, but...

... do you know where your Advent wreath is? With Thanksgiving falling so late this year, Advent will be here before we know it... One thing that I wish I had been more intentional about when my children were growing up was our Advent wreath. When I was young, on the Sunday before Advent began, my mother would take my sisters and me to a relative's farm to collect our Christmas greens, including Princess Pine for our Advent wreath. The wreath was simply an old metal jell-o mold which our mother would fill with wet sand and then stick in the Princess Pine and Advent candles. And back then, we took it for granted that we were all home each night to light the Advent candles, say the prayers, and have dinner together. That simple ritual was a huge part of what Advent meant to me.

I must admit that years later, as a young family, we started out OK with our Advent wreath and prayers. And then, truth be told, as swim practice, basketball, scouts, business travel, and other evening activities came along, our week-night dinners together as a complete family dwindled. And probably more of an issue was the fact that our Advent wreath was often "missing in action"... Often it would get scooped up and put in a box with the rest of the Christmas decorations after Three Kings Day. And it was not until we took all the decorations down from the attic in mid- to late December that we would locate the poor thing.

Well, I am grateful to say, that despite these inconsistencies in my family's Advent wreath and prayer practices, it was my *children* - as they returned home from college for their winter breaks - who made sure that we had our Advent wreath out on our kitchen table and that we took the time to light the candles and say the prayers before we ate dinner together. And now we make sure to store our wreath in a separate closet, *not* in the attic - oh, such a simple thing... And thanks to the Advent Event at St. Elizabeth's each year, it is just that much easier to make sure that we have our candles.

If your wreath has become "missing in action", I encourage you to come and make your own Advent wreath on Tuesday evening, December 3 at this year's Advent event. And even if you have your wreath, please come and share in the great fun and fellowship of this joyous evening - one of my favorite gatherings of the year. Yes, we are called to pass our faith along to our children - often

in such simple practices as prayers around an Advent wreath – but it is also our children who often remind *us* of the importance of these simple practices of faith.

In great gratitude,
The Rev. Joan F. Conley
Clergy Associate