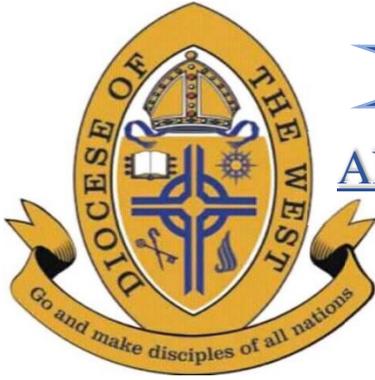


Advent 2018

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF THE WEST

# Diocesan Digest



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## A Word from the Bishop

*By the Rt. Rev. Dr. Felix C. Orji, OSB,  
Ordinary, Anglican Diocese of the West*

### Advent Message



*Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" Luke 3:4-6

We are now in the season of Advent. In a sense we are always in the season of Advent until our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ returns physically and visibly in his glory and majesty. It will be a glorious day indeed!

Every Advent season we are reminded that our Heavenly Father is a God who comes to visit us because he loves us. He visited Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Even after he banished them from the garden, he continued to visit them and his descendants up to today. Why does God do this? He visits us because he loves us and he yearns to give us hope, joy, peace, pardon, truth, guidance, renewal, revival, correction, mercy and much more of himself in the midst of our darkness and desolation. He shines his light for us so that we may see because he is the Light! He gives us peace because he is the Prince of peace. He gives us hope

because he is the God of hope. Two thousand years ago he visited us in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ in order to save us from sin and an eternal hell through the sacrifice of his life.

He has promised to visit us again in the fullness of his glory in the fullness of time to grant us full salvation in the New Heaven and New Earth.

Until then, God wants to encourage and transform us. He wants to build his kingdom and change the world through us. He wants to use us to accomplish great things beyond our wildest imagination. But more often than not our sins hinder the work that the Holy Spirit wants to do through us.

This Advent season is a good time to prepare the way for the Lord to work in and through us. How do we prepare the way?

First, we prepare the way by spending time with God in his Word and in prayer asking him for renewal in your life, your family, your church, and in our Diocese. In prayer we need to ask God to cleanse our hearts, fill us with holiness, joy and gratitude for his coming into the world. We also plead with him to rescue sinners from the dominion of sin and Satan and from the reality of God's eternal wrath that is facing them due to their sins and impenitence.

Second, we prepare the way for his work in our lives by taking time to examine our lives and repent of the sins of unbelief, self-centeredness, apathy, pride, passive-aggressive rebellious attitude toward God, disregard for one another, etc. that stand in the way of the Lord doing great things in and through you. This advent is a good time to cast away the works of darkness so that you can be comforted by his pardon, mercy and hope in Christ. Let this Advent be a time of divine transformation in your life.

*"He shines his light for us so that we may see because he is the Light!"*

Let us pray:

*Almighty God, give us grace to CAST AWAY the works of darkness, and to put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal*

*life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; so that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life which is immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

I wish you all a blessed Advent season as you prepare yourself and the church to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ and as we look forward to his glorious second coming.



**Please Send Submissions for the *Diocesan Digest* to [fatherisaac@allsaintsanglican.net](mailto:fatherisaac@allsaintsanglican.net). We encourage news, photos, and articles from your congregations and communities!**

# Changing Seasons of Ministry

By the Rev. Robert Goodman  
Rector, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, San Antonio TX

As I look out the window and watch the leaves falling like rain, I am reminded that the ministry of a church goes through seasons and change. For the past six years, we packed shoe boxes for [Operation Christmas Child](#). We started small with a call for individuals to pack and bring a box on the Sunday before the collection day. The boxes were presented, blessed, and taken to the collection center. The next year we met and shopped together for items to go in the boxes then packed boxes together. Then we looked at what we were each spending and decided to buy in bulk. The church allocated money through a dedicated offering and one volunteer shopped for items. In this way, for the amount an individual would spend on items for a shoebox (about \$25), we were able to fill a box and pay for the shipping and sponsor the discipleship program for the child who received the box. We still met to pack boxes and pray. For the past two years, we packed, shipped, and sponsored 125 shoe boxes.



world, we will be assisting with the purchase and distribution of gifts for local children through a local ministry.

Packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child was a terrific ministry project for our parish. For the first time, I will not have pictures of my youngest child with a red and green Operation Christmas Child shoebox. However, seasons change, and I am very thankful that our parish will now be serving face to face. As we pray for the mission of the church, I am thankful that in some seasons, we are called with Christ to preach peace to those who are far off, and in other seasons, we are called to those who are near. As I look out the window and see the beautiful colors, I rejoice in the beauty of changing seasons. I also look out and see the leaves covering the ground and am reminded that the changing of seasons is not without toil and sorrow.

This year we are not packing shoeboxes. Two things happened. First, we became so efficient that our parishioners no longer felt involved in serving. Second, the faith of our parishioners grew to the point that they were bothered by not serving directly. Writing a check and giving an hour or so one Saturday morning no longer satisfied their desire to love and serve. This year, instead of packing shoeboxes to send around the



*O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



# Relocation News in Southern California

*By the Rev. Chijioke Orji  
Rector, Living Faith Anglican Church, Inland Empire, CA*

Living Faith Anglican Church had been worshipping at 9944 Highland Avenue, Rancho Cocamonga, California. 91737. By the grace of God, the Church has outgrown the space and sought for a new place of worship. Recently, we found a more spacious, central, and accommodating place at 11255 South Central Avenue, Ontario, California. 91762.

We have just moved into this place of worship as of Sunday, October 7, 2018. Members are excited and new people are joining the Church. To God be the Glory!

Living Faith Anglican Church, Inland Empire, is one of the Churches in Southern California Archdeaconry located in Inland Empire, California.



## Autumn Outreaches

*By the Rev. Canon Isaac J. Rehberg  
Rector, All Saints Anglican Church, San Antonio, TX*

As busy as the Thanksgiving season can be, those of us at All Saints Anglican Church in San Antonio decided to make it even busier with two November outreach events! Extending our patronal feast, we hosted our second semi-annual Chamber Music Night, on Friday November 9. This most recent public celebration of small-ensemble classical music included a flute duets, string duets, a recorder/harpsicord duet, flute solo, and organ solo followed by a potluck supper and fellowship. Musicians included both members and friends of the parish, both professionals and amateurs. It was an excellent way to celebrate the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the parish's founding.



Later in the month, on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup>, All Saints welcomed back [Jordan Enloe](#), a former vestryman,

VBS teacher, and chorister of the parish, who moved to North Carolina several years ago to become an evangelist and trainer for [Evangelism Explosion](#). Jordan led an 8-hour Share Your Faith Workshop to equip our members with practical tools for sharing the Gospel. We had a full house for the workshop and look forward to putting our new

knowledge into practice, especially during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Both events are small parts of our greater five-year vision that was established and discerned during our 2018 Leadership retreat, facilitated by the diocesan Canon for Church Planting and Mission, the Ven. Scott Seeley, earlier in the year.

