



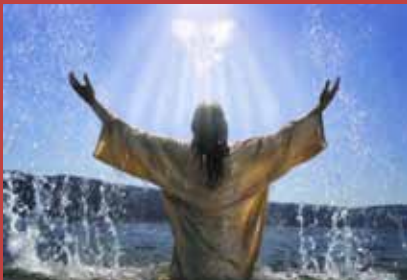
November 26, 2017

# WHAT'S HAPPENING!



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Reverse Advent Calendar?**

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING!

### St. Paul's Bloor Street

227 Bloor Street East  
Toronto, ON M4W 1C8

Phone: 416-961-8116

Email: [mail@stpaulsbloor.org](mailto:mail@stpaulsbloor.org)

### Office Hours

Monday to Friday  
8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Sanctuary Hours

Sundays: 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

### Parking

Parking is free on Sunday mornings at the Manulife building located on the north side of Bloor Street at the top of Ted Rogers Way. To gain access to Manulife's parking, press the intercom button and inform the security attendant you are attending a service at St. Paul's.

Charitable Number  
119194942RR0001

[www.stpaulsbloor.org](http://www.stpaulsbloor.org)

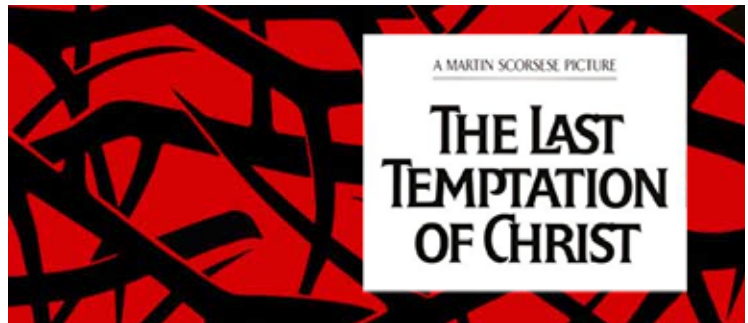
 @stpaulsbloor

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# Join us at our Newcomers Welcome Lunch



If you are wondering how to get more connected, you are invited to the Newcomers Luncheon **today at 12:15 p.m. in Cody Hall.**



## Young Adults Movie Night

With Free Popcorn!



**November 30 at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room**

All young adults (ages 18-35) are invited to join us for a screening of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

**For more information, contact Ian Koiter  
at ext 295 or [ikoiter@stpaulsbloor.org](mailto:ikoiter@stpaulsbloor.org).**

# Reverse Advent - Making Some Room

By Janet Earle

*But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Saviour;  
my God will hear me. Micah 7:7*

I must confess I like all the seasonal decorations that begin to appear, as if by magic, just after Halloween. It's like a musical chord growing louder and louder until at last, Christmas arrives. The world grows darker at this time of year, so for me, the lights and colours of Christmas are a welcome addition. Twinkly lights, red bows, a little sparkle here and there, why not?

You may have seen some bright red bags at St. Paul's in the atrium, or tucked under someone's arm. These large festive bags have a calendar inside, and they are one way we are encouraging our community to observe Advent this year.

We live in a world tuned into 'the holidays', barely able to remember what Christmas is all about, let alone Advent. Is Advent just a time to open a calendar door each day, and eat a little chocolate to fortify ourselves for more shopping and parties? What is Advent really all about?

Advent is not the party before the party. It is a time of preparation, both for Christmas when we remember the birth of Christ, but also preparation for Christ's return to earth in power and glory. We are meant to be both hopeful and prepared for the return of Jesus. Although it is easy to lose sight of this amid the pre-Christmas celebrations, Advent is a season of expectant waiting. So how might we engage in this?

The Bible has a lot to say about hearts and what they should be filled with. It seems to me, especially at this time of year, that our hearts are filled with many things besides God. Advent provides an opportunity to focus on making space in our hearts for Him.

If you want to make room in your closet, you need to give something away. If we want to refocus our hearts, we can turn away from things that distract and destroy us, and turn to our God and to our neighbours - the ones we are called to serve.

*(continued on page 4)*



The image shows a 'Reverse Advent Calendar' for the year 2017. It is a grid with 7 columns (Sunday to Saturday) and 4 rows. The first row contains dates from Nov. 27 to Dec. 2. The second row contains dates from Dec. 3 to Dec. 9. The third row contains dates from Dec. 10 to Dec. 16. The fourth row contains dates from Dec. 17 to Dec. 23. Each date cell contains a small activity or prayer. The Sunday cell in the fourth row is highlighted in green and says 'Please return your bag starting Dec. 17'. The table is framed with a red border and snowflake decorations.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Pray for those whose hearts it is unlikely that they may feel (Partner: Lombard)	Nov. 27 Pair of New Socks	28 Adult Mittens or Gloves	29 Warm Hat	30 Tim Horton's Card - \$5	Dec. 1 Adult Underwear	2 Lip Balm
Pray for those who are lonely, that they would find community (Partners: Youth Unlimited & Toronto City Mission)	3 Toothbrush & Toothpaste	4 Travel Size Shampoo & Soap	5 Deodorant	6 Nut-free snack bars	7 Child-friendly Crackers (eg. cookies)	8 Fruit Cups (non-perishable)
Pray for those who are hungry, that they are able to combine the feast of Christmas (Partner: Yonge Street Mission)	9 Pasta or Rice	10 Canned Kidney or Black Beans	11 Can of Diced Tomatoes	12 Can of Condensed Cream Soup	13 Carton of Vegetable Broth	14 Fajita or Chili Spice Mix
<b>Please return your bag starting Dec. 17</b>	15 Bring cookies to your neighbours	16 Write a thank you note	17 Share smiles & kind words today	18 Pick up litter on the street today	19 Pray for each person you meet today	20 Give thanks for the birth of Jesus!





Think not about what we want, but what others really need. That is the intent behind the red 'Reverse Advent' bags. The calendar has a list of suggested items to donate to St. Paul's for our partners in ministry – Youth Unlimited, Yonge Street Mission, Sanctuary, and Toronto City Mission – organizations that serve youth and adults in need in our city.

Fill up your bag with some or all of the items on the calendar, ensuring you include only new, and non-perishable items. Bring your bag back on **Sunday, December 17th**. Donations will be distributed in 2018.

Take a bag home and fill it up. Engage with Advent this year, and open your heart to God's goodness and love.

## Advent Ask

This Christmas season we are challenging everyone to participate in our Advent Ask in one of three ways – or all three.



**1) Gifts:** The Reverse Advent Calendar gives back. Join us as we partner with local outreach ministries and provide much needed necessities, as well as prayers and acts of kindness, each day during Advent. Calendars can be picked up at St. Paul's Central or downloaded at [stpaulsbloor.org/adventask](http://stpaulsbloor.org/adventask)



**2) Money:** There are millions of disadvantaged Afghan refugees in Iran, especially mothers and young women. Donate to Operation Mercy's Women's Empowerment Project to provide education and training to enable these women to have a better, more positive and stable future. Our goal is to raise \$27,500. Donate online at [stpaulsbloor.org/adventask](http://stpaulsbloor.org/adventask)



**3) Time:** Volunteer your time at the Christmas Day Lunch to serve a hot meal to those who would otherwise be on their own. Sign up at [stpaulsbloor.org/christmaslunch](http://stpaulsbloor.org/christmaslunch)

# Baptism: The Call to a Full Life

By Mark Regis, Associate Priest



In a remote and barren area near the Dead Sea, 325 meters below sea level, lies an ancient Biblical and archeological treasure. Centuries ago, the Essenes, a Jewish ascetic community, settled at what is known as Qumran. Seeking a life of holiness and purity, they established a place off the beaten track, away from the temptation and corruption of 'regular' life. The ancient historian Josephus described the Essenes in this way: *"It also deserves our admiration, how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue, and this in righteousness; and indeed to such a degree, that as it hath never appeared among any other men."* (from Antiquities of the Jews)

One of the ritual practices was to be immersed in a particular pool on a regular basis, signifying the washing away of corruption that was always close at hand. The Essenes were very perceptive of their inner condition. They knew repeated washing would need to correspond to the ways they repeatedly fell away from what was good and true. Noble as this community seemed to be, can life truly involve an unending cycle of washing away spiritual and moral imperfections?

One hundred kilometres north of Qumran, a young poor Rabbi appeared by the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist, whose own personal piety closely resembled the Essenes. This young Rabbi was Jesus of Nazareth, and by entering into those waters he changed the nature of baptism and all of life. At that moment, through his unique divine identity and purpose, he began a ministry that would literally change the world and countless lives. No more would people have to return again and again to wash themselves clean, as Jesus took upon himself all that separates us from God and one another.

Today, that baptism of Jesus is the same. No more do we have to live by principles that state 'you'll never have enough, you'll never be enough, you'll never be good enough.' Followers of Jesus become bearers of God's gracious promises; to have their identity radically redeemed from spiritual darkness to light, to be welcomed into God's family, to be forgiven, washed clean from all that harms once and for all. Baptism into Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection life signifies all this and more.

(continued on page 6)

The Biblical writer Paul of Tarsus wrote this: *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."* (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Jesus calls all of his followers to be baptized into the one, redeemed life of eternal purpose and hope that he promises for all his followers, and desires for the world. When we are baptized, in a mysterious way, Jesus draws especially close.

This Sunday, 9 individuals and families have decided to answer the call to follow Jesus into this baptized life. Together as a community we rejoice and give thanks as we hold them in their prayers for their future journey with Christ.



### Prayer for Baptism & Membership Sunday

Lord Jesus, you know our hearts. Help us, by your Holy Spirit, to examine our hearts, to hear you and to follow you. As we gather today to witness and celebrate the steps of faith people are making, help us all to be transformed into your likeness. We give you thanks and praise that we have the opportunity to follow you by faith and in life. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

### **The Pageant is Coming!**

Share in the joy of Christmas at our annual Christmas Pageant and Family Supper. Everyone is welcome to join the fun.

The Pageant will take place on **Sunday, December 10 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.** The cost for the dinner is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child.

To sign up for the dinner, RSVP to Janet Earle at ext. 241 or [children@stpaulsbloor.org](mailto:children@stpaulsbloor.org)



### **Toronto Star Christmas Concert Did You Request Tickets?**

You can pick up your pre-ordered tickets for the Toronto Star Christmas Concert today at St. Paul's Central, or at the office during the week. Tickets must be picked up by Thursday, November 30.

## This week we are praying for...

### World and National Issues

- An end to the many wars and conflicts in the world. May we, by faith, be peace-makers and peace-keepers.
- Wisdom to be granted to all leaders, and especially our governments as they decide how to respond to the crises faced every day.
- The progress made in people's health made possible by wisdom, technology and creativity and God's recreative power, we give you thanks.
- The dignity of all humanity, created in your image to be honoured and respected.

### The Global Church

- All of us to be united together in and through the Grace of God the Father, the love of Jesus the Son and inspired for compassion by the Holy Spirit.
- All leaders of the church to hunger for God's truth in study and prayer.
- All followers of Christ to grow in faith and walk humbly, with you, our Lord and God.
- The National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, the Right Rev. Mark MacDonald and all the Indigenous people gathered today to worship in Canada.

### In Our Own Church

We pray for the following members of our St. Paul's community: Margo, Wade, Peggy, Hannah, Julia, Abodya, Winston, Phyllis, Bernadine, Howard and Teshema. We pray for your love, grace and mercy to sustain them.

### **Christmas Tribute Flowers**

Remembering a loved one with a Christmas tribute flower is a wonderful way to share in decorating the church for Christmas. If you would like to contribute, complete the information on the tribute flower envelope in the pew or at St. Paul's Central. Place it on the offering plate, or in the office mailbox.

Tributes begin at \$20 per entry. Envelopes must be submitted no later than **Sunday, December 17.**

### **The Flowers Today**

The flowers in the Church are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of:

At the High Table:

Harry & Blanche, Bernice & Mary, and the Very Rev. Harry Hobbs given by Rev. Canon Ebert Hobbs.

In the Chapels:

The Rev. Bill Ashby given by his family.



# What's Happening This Week

## Sunday, November 26

Pilgrim: The Creeds - 12:15 p.m. | *Room 106*  
Newcomers Lunch - 12:15 p.m. | *Cody Hall*

## Monday, November 27

GriefShare - 5:30 p.m. | *Library*  
ESL Cafe - 7 p.m. | *Great Hall*

## Tuesday, November 28

Winchester Group - 10:00 a.m. | *Library*  
Holy Communion - 12:10 p.m. | *St. Paul's Chapel*  
Christian Meditation - 1 p.m. | *Room 206*  
Divorce Care - 7 p.m. | *Library*

## Wednesday, November 29

Little Sunbeams Parents & Tots - 9:30 a.m. | *Nursery*  
Noon-time Alpha - 12:00 p.m. | *St. Paul's Chapel*  
Alpha Prayer Time - 6 p.m. | *St. Paul's Chapel*  
Alpha - 6:30 p.m. | *Cody Hall*  
Youth Group - 7 p.m. | *Youth Room*

## Thursday, November 30

CBS Women's Bible Study - 9:30 a.m. | *Music Room*  
Choir Practice - 6:30 p.m. | *Music Room*  
Young Adults Movie Night - 6:30 p.m. | *Youth Room*

## Sunday, December 3

Pilgrim: The Creeds - 12:15 p.m. | *Room 106*

# Every Sunday

## Worship Services

8:15 a.m. | *Chapel of the Good Shepherd*  
9:30 a.m. **the bridge** | *Sanctuary*  
11 a.m. | *Sanctuary*

## Nursery

beginning at 9:15 a.m. | *2nd Floor*

## Children's Ministry

9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m. | *2nd Floor*

## Youth Group

9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m. | *Youth Room*

## Prayer Groups

10:20 a.m. | *Room 7*  
10:50 a.m. | *St. Paul's Chapel*

## Community Lunch

12:15 p.m. | *Great Hall*  
*\$8 per person*

# Next Sunday's Preaching Passage

Luke 1:5-25

Topic: The Birth of John  
the Baptist Foretold



## You're Invited to a Christmas Potluck Dinner!

St. George the Martyr (SGtM) became of mission of St. Paul's Bloor Street this past summer. Located at 197 John Street, this church ministers to a local community at the south end of Grange Park between the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD).

As the Christmas season approaches, SGtM invites the St. Paul's Community to their annual Christmas Potluck Dinner on **Saturday, December 9th at 5:30 p.m.** There will be festive caroling, entertainment and lots of good food. If you would like to be part of this annual event, please RSVP to Sonya Dykstra at [sonya@sinkingship.ca](mailto:sonya@sinkingship.ca). Everyone is welcome!