



2019
Parish
Profile



The Church of the Advent

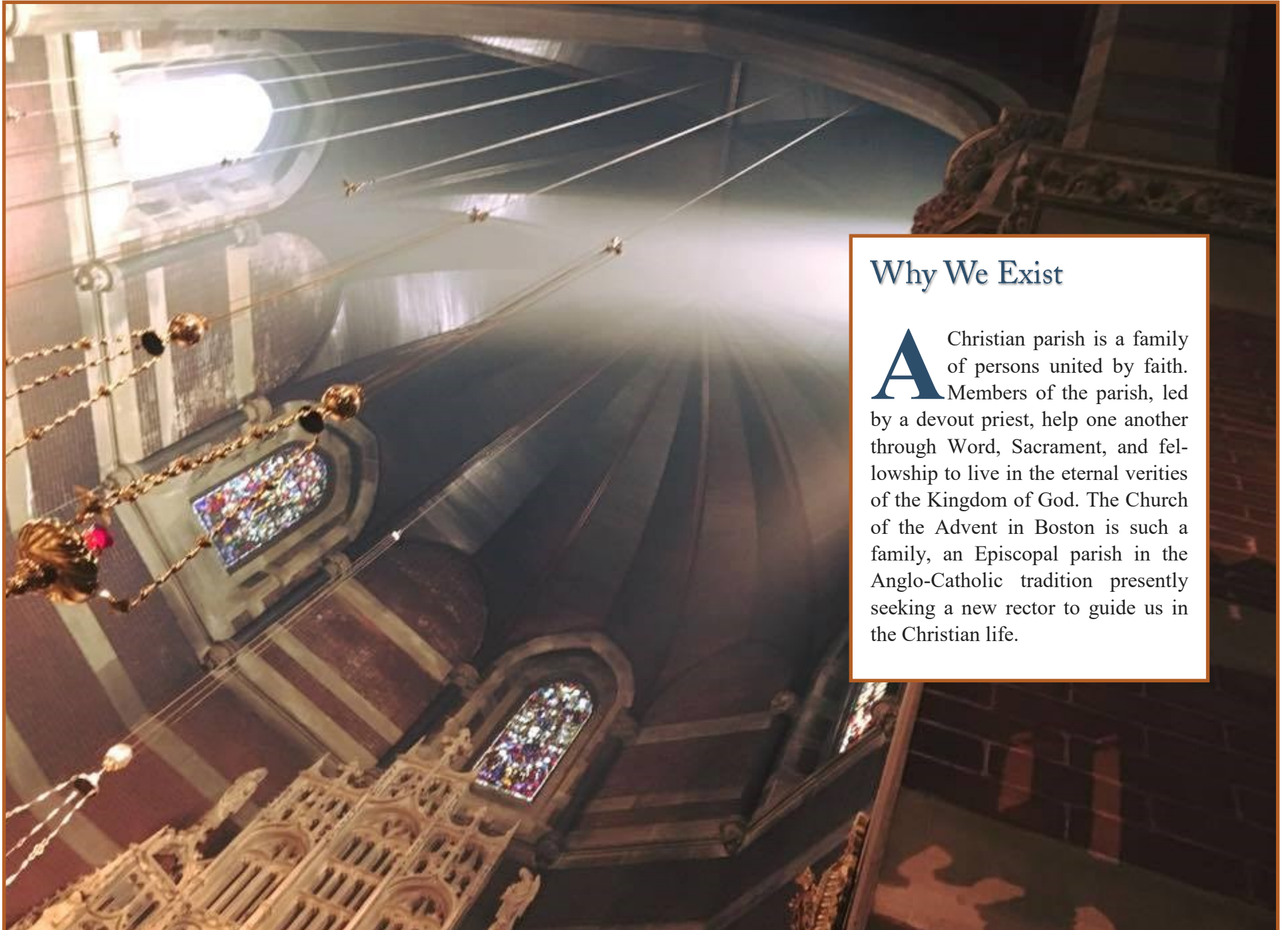
An Anglo-Catholic Parish Serving The City of Boston Since 1844



Most photos taken by parishioner Julianne Ture

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Why We Exist

A Christian parish is a family of persons united by faith. Members of the parish, led by a devout priest, help one another through Word, Sacrament, and fellowship to live in the eternal verities of the Kingdom of God. The Church of the Advent in Boston is such a family, an Episcopal parish in the Anglo-Catholic tradition presently seeking a new rector to guide us in the Christian life.

Looking To The Future: Calling A New Rector

In 1844 the Advent was founded to respond to the then contemporary challenges of narrow Puritanism and lack of charity. We perceive that the challenges to our future in the 21st century may lie in pervasive, enfeebling secularism. We therefore seek a Rector who will help us walk in faith, in the knowledge of the eternal verities, so that, paraphrasing Bonhoeffer, Christ may take hold of us in the center of our lives.

In keeping with the priorities and values of the parish, described in detail in this document, we seek to call a Rector who has demonstrated the following qualities:

- Immersion in the Scriptures made evident in holiness of life and in powerful, inspirational, and informed preaching of the Gospel faith that is consistent with the Nicene Creed and the other creeds and historic formularies of the Church.
- Deep knowledge of, appreciation for, and commitment to the ritual worship of our Lord Jesus Christ according to historic, reverent, and solemn liturgical and devotional practices embedded in the Anglo-Catholic tradition; an understanding that such practices are a living expression of our faith, to be celebrated joyously; and the ability to explain and defend such practices to the curious and questioning.
- A welcoming spirit that embraces a dynamic future for our tradition and expounds its virtues to newcomers, the young, and the uninitiated, while serving others through outreach to the Greater Boston community,
- An ability to administer and manage the staff of a large, well-educated urban parish, and to work in an engaged and cooperative manner with those serving on the vestry or in other lay leadership roles.

Drawing upon an extensive parish questionnaire, discussions with clergy, lay leaders, and officers, and further commentary from the congregation (including a series of open forums and discussions among the lay leadership), the following materials have been prepared to describe our parish more fully. It is our hope that the profile communicates a clear sense of our perceived strengths and weaknesses, as well as our aspirations and concerns as a parish family, and that it provides additional context to the above requirements for rector of the Church of the Advent.





Mindful of Our Past: A Brief History of the Advent

The Church of the Advent was established in Boston as an Episcopal Church in 1844, coincident with and influenced by the ideals of the Oxford Movement, which was then in its initial flowering in England. The founders desired to re-affirm their membership (and that of all Anglican Christians) in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church; to assert and teach its age-old truths as reflected in the traditions of Scripture, doctrine, and theology; and to celebrate and observe the Church's historical liturgical heritage. The Anglo-Catholic

movement, as it came to be called, grew to become one of the three great strands of the Anglican tradition (along with the broad church and Evangelical strands), reflected in the Episcopal Church as in other parts of the Anglican Communion. The constitution of the parish states that the purpose of the parish shall be “to secure to a portion of the City of Boston the ministrations of the Holy Catholic Church, and more especially to secure the same to the poor and needy, in a manner free from unnecessary expense and all ungracious circumstances”—



these latter being the pew rents then widely exacted. Pew rents provided income for churches but also effectively excluded those who could not afford them, thereby enforcing social distinctions contrary to the essential nature of Catholic Christianity and deeply repugnant to the founders of the Anglo-Catholic movement, including the founders of the Church of the Advent.

Because of the strong anti-Catholic sentiments prevailing in New England in the mid-nineteenth century, the second article of our constitution established a self-perpetuating corporation to govern the parish according to the principles on which it was founded. This legal entity comprised the rector and other parishioners totaling no fewer than twelve and no more than twenty. With the passage of time, the broader Episcopal Church and the secular community became more understanding of the Advent's faith and practice and the value of its traditions in the practice and perpetuation of Anglicanism. Likewise, the desire of the communicants for a more normal and representative form of parish governance, consistent with that found in other Episcopal parishes in this Diocese, increased. Matters came to a head in 1993, and after several years of conflict, the parish governance was reorganized along lines consonant with the governance of other parishes in the Diocese of Massachusetts and the Episcopal Church.

The highly successful rectorship of the Rev'd Allan B. Warren III followed these events, and upon his retirement after 20 years' service, the parish is more unified, vibrant, and financially sound, providing a strong platform on which to build our future. Today the Church of the Advent continues as a prominent witness to the Anglo-Catholic tradition in the Diocese of Massachusetts, the wider Episcopal Church, and the world at large. Our mission is to call a rector who will lead us on the walk of faith as we carry this witness into the future with new opportunities for a new age.

Worship: The Center Of Our Common Life

Worship of the Triune God is the center of life at the Advent. A former rector described the Advent as a thin place — that is, one where the barriers between the material and spiritual worlds are attenuated. Parish worship emphasizes the traditions of the Advent’s Anglo-Catholic practice and belief. It is a “shrine church” to which people commute from far and near. At the center of its parish life is liturgical spirituality; this particular community gathers for the celebration of the Holy Mass and is bound together by it. The Advent has always striven to witness in its worship to “the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty.”

Every day, Morning and Evening Prayer are offered, with mid-day Low Masses on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday; a healing Low Mass on Wednesday evenings; and a morning Low Mass on Saturday. Major feasts such as Ascension Day, Corpus Christi, saints’ days, and Michaelmas are celebrated with evening Solemn Masses, and a very full schedule of services is offered for Lent, including Stations of the Cross and Benediction and the full Catholic rites for Holy Week and the Triduum. It is the custom of many parishioners and visitors to set aside the Triduum at the Advent to observe the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord. Eucharistic adoration is offered regularly in Sunday evening services of Evensong and Benediction, and Compline ends the day’s observances on other Sundays. Confessions are regularly heard on Saturday mornings and by private appointment. Services of Lessons and Carols for Advent Sunday and New Year’s Eve are well attended, including by many members of the community who are not regular congregants.

The majesty and solemnity of the Mass are heightened by the Advent’s eastward-facing altar, backed by a magnificent reredos donated by long-time parishioner Isabella Stewart Gardner. The Mass is celebrated three times on Sundays. Low Mass is said at 8:00 a.m. in the Lady Chapel according to the traditional Anglican Missal liturgy. At 9:00 a.m., a Rite Two Sung Mass, assisted by a corps of young and adult acolytes, is cele-





brated at the High Altar using the same ceremonial as other Solemn Masses at the Advent. During the 9:00 a.m. service, a choir combining volunteers and professional singers offers an Anglican chant or plainsong psalm, an offertory anthem, and a communion motet. Then, at 11:15 a.m., the Solemn Mass is sung using Rite One. This Anglican High Mass is celebrated with three Sacred Ministers, including a lay subdeacon, and a corps of acolytes. All three of our Masses include many enrichments from the 1662 and 1928 Books of Common Prayer, the American and Anglican Missals, the Roman Missal, the Anglican Service Book, and the 1928 Coverdale Psalter.

At our Masses, the finest possible music is offered by our choirs. The Mass settings are of the Western Rite with the Credo usually sung by the congregation in English. The minor Propers—Introit, Gradual and Alleluia, Offertory, and Communion—are sung to plainsong from the English Gradual in a version prepared from the Graduale Triplex according to the three-year lectionary cycle. After the Old Testament Lesson, the choir chants a psalm using an Anglican chant or a Gregorian psalm-tone setting. The subdeacon reads or chants the epistle, and the deacon chants the gospel in the midst of the congregation after a proces-

sion from the sanctuary. An offertory anthem and a communion motet related to the lessons of the day are sung. In addition to several hymns and the plainsong Creed, the congregation sings numerous responses and the Lord's Prayer in the familiar plainsong version. On feast days, a Solemn Procession or Solemn Te Deum is added. Orchestral Masses are offered on certain special occasions, and the Great Litany is sung during Lent and on Rogation Sunday.

Support for this varied and intense worship is provided by a dedicated altar guild, the guild of acolytes, a rota of lectors, skilled volunteer flower arrangers, and a corps of ushers directed by the Verger, who with the entire music program staff and volunteers, combine to make the liturgy as meaningful and beautiful as possible. All of this is planned a year in advance and fine-tuned in monthly meetings of the clergy, Acolyte Wardens, Sacristan, Flower Guild Director, parish administrator, and Music Director. The preaching is Christ-centered and gospel-based, gladly "unoriginal" in John Keble's sense of the word. A former rector of the parish, the Rev'd Andrew Mead, stated that the ideal of Anglo-Catholic worship is to be a combination of Catholic liturgy and gospel preaching, and this is the combination to which all our effort is devoted.



Music Is An Integral Part Of Our Worship

[Listen to the Advent Choir](#)

In the context of our tradition of worship described above, the spirit of music at the Advent is one of an offering back to God of the best we have and can do. From the founding of the parish, psalms and canticles were sung to Gregorian chant. Even during those early years, the music program was widely known and esteemed on both sides of the Atlantic. That fine tradition has been deepened and enriched up to the present. The parish currently supports two choirs: a professional choir, usually of about two dozen

choristers, which sings at the 11:15 a.m. Solemn Mass and on holy days, and a largely volunteer choir that sings at the 9:00 a.m. Mass. Both choirs are led by our organist and choirmaster, Mark Dwyer, and his assistant, Jeremy Bruns. The music is chosen from a repertoire of more than 130 Mass settings and countless motets and anthems spanning the last 600 years of liturgical composition, with an emphasis on Renaissance polyphony. Numerous recordings, CDs, and tapes, and the inclusion of the Advent in the BBC's Evensong series, have brought the music of the Advent to a world-wide audience.

The fact that Boston is a city of musicians, teachers, and students gives the Advent an additional vehicle for evangelization, and our congregation includes several composers of liturgical music. The position of assistant organist and choirmaster has served as a placement for both accomplished senior musicians, as well as a training ground for talented young musicians.

The Advent takes seriously its responsibility to train musicians in, and to propagate, the standards of reverence and excellence in music that are fitting to our liturgical tradition.

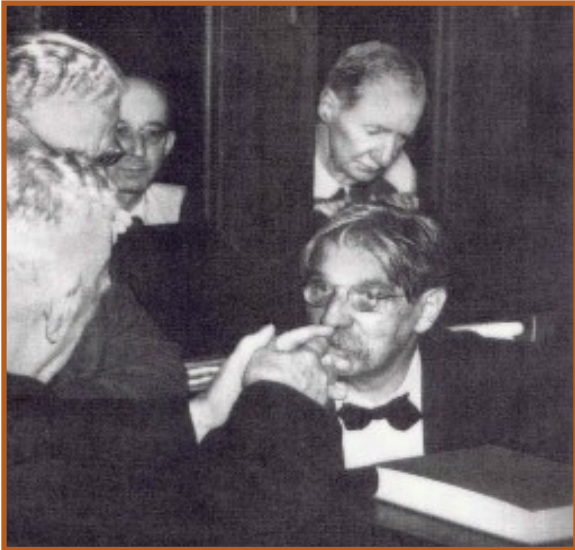


Our Building

Since its founding in 1844, the Parish of the Advent has had several homes. In 1894, the parish moved into its present magnificent Gothic Revival building on the flat of Beacon Hill, designed by John Hubbard Sturgis with a Lady Chapel and Great Rood by Ralph Adams Cram. The dedication of this building was presided over by the great Bishop Charles Chapman Grafton, former rector of the Advent, co-founder of the Cowley Fathers, missionary, and Bishop of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

In 1936, G. Donald Harrison donated our extraordinary Aeolian-Skinner organ. The rectory, a full, traditional Beacon Hill brownstone house, is attached directly to the church building on Mount Vernon Street. On the opposite side of the church is a large building housing office space, rooms for church school and clerical offices, and a large hall used for fellowship and meetings, Moseley Hall, which opens out onto an impressive courtyard and garden.

Over the years, the maintenance of this architectural and instrumental heritage has been an important task for the lay leadership of the parish, and this work continues today in skilled and dedicated hands.



Albert Schweitzer at the Advent's world renowned Aeolian-Skinner organ



Who We Are As A Parish

Our Self Study

In November 2018, in anticipation of our search for a new rector and the preparation of this profile, we began a process of self-study. A questionnaire was sent to all pledging members of the parish. It included two types of questions: specific demographic questions, and open-ended questions meant to elicit opinions on strengths and weaknesses of the parish as well as feedback on what might best be maintained or improved. Two hundred and eight replies were received, a response rate of over 75%, including replies from nearly all who might be described as regularly involved or highly involved with the parish. In January 2019, the vestry and the Search Committee began a series of discussions about all aspects of the parish’s life. This included several forums where members of the parish had the opportunity to speak, ask questions, and openly discuss matters they saw to be of importance and

concern. These discussions were important not only for their substantive content but also because the practice of open discussion of contentious and challenging questions is something we are still learning to do better as a parish.

The vast majority of the responses to the questionnaire were written with much care and in detail. Likewise, the forums provided the opportunity for open and good-faith sharing of views. Regardless of the many differences revealed by the responses and forums, several clear themes were consistent for all parishioners: a deep love of the Advent; a desire to keep its Anglo-Catholic traditions of worship, education, and service as our special mode of witness to the Risen Christ; and an enthusiasm for and dedication to the future of the parish.

Below we share some of the demographic information highlighted by the questionnaire, followed by a discussion of several themes that reveal parishioners' perceptions of the Advent's strengths and weakness, and our (in some cases conflicting) hopes and concerns.

Demographic Information

- **Relatively Youthful:** 25% of the Advent's members are under 40 years old, and 40% are under 50, which is a remarkably robust younger membership, especially in light of the demographics of the wider Episcopal Church or of a typical urban Anglo-Catholic parish. Further, considering that there are more than 50 children registered in the Sunday School (not included in the number of just under 300 or so adults), it is evident that the Advent is a place with a flourishing community of younger members and families. With about 35% of the membership between 50 and 70, and another 25% 70 or older, the Advent happily has representation from all age groups, and this makes for a wonderful multi-generational Christian family.
- **Devoted:** With 60% of the membership having been at the Advent for more than 10 years, and 40% more than 20 years, the parish has a large core of stable parishioners. There are also many who cycle through and move on, as would be expected in an urban parish with many students and young professionals.
- **Highly Educated:** While 95% of us have a bachelor's degree or more, which is perhaps not unexpected in an Episcopal Church, at the Advent over 60% have master's degrees and a quite astounding 25% have doctoral degrees. This is a remarkable percentage, and highlights the Advent's strong interest in thoughtful, theologically rigorous, and historically aware preaching and teaching.
- **Geographically Diverse:** With 75% of the membership traveling more than 20 minutes to get to the Advent, a third traveling more



The Annual Parish Picnic in the church garden

- than 40 minutes, and nearly 10% traveling over an hour and a half, it is clear that the Advent is not a typical neighborhood parish. The fact that so many parishioners are willing to travel so far and so long to worship at the parish calls out the uniqueness of the Advent and the vibrancy of its Anglo-Catholic liturgy and teaching for those who make this parish their church home.
- Half of the congregation is married. Members are 60% male, 40% female. Half are in full-time work, a third retired, and the rest students (our proximity to great educational institutions — more than 50 degree-granting schools within a 10-mile radius — gives us a student population with unique vitality).
- Our parish family also includes many gay men and women — married, partnered, and single and of all age groups — who are fully integrated into the parish's life and leadership.
- Across the three Masses, the Advent averages 250 communicants every Sunday. This number has remained stable over the last decade.



Advent volunteers packed up 10,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger

Key Themes From Self-Study

Responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire revealed strong and consistent themes. Parishioners indicated that they attend the Church of the Advent, often making significant effort and traveling great distances to do so, because it is a unique and vital parish with a strong, Anglo-Catholic tradition of orthodox and Christian faith, presented in a reverently and joyfully offered liturgy, together with Scripture-centered and learned preaching that is supportive of continuing spiritual formation. Many respondents underscored that the new rector should be able to continue to lead the parish in accord with its Anglo-Catholic heritage, be a strong preacher, and be well-educated with a warm, welcoming personality. Comments in forums and open discussions were consistent with these themes.

At the same time, parishioners noted and welcomed room for more open discussions of issues of collective concern, including hopes for improvement and growth in many areas of the Advent’s corporate life.

Several themes in parishioners’ comments are worth specifically noting, as in some cases these themes reflected conflicting hopes and concerns about the future of the Advent. While we have had, and will continue to have, many discussions of these issues in parish forums, we expect that our next rector will be a pastoral leader and guide as we continue this process.

Both the parish questionnaire and the forums revealed that parishioners hold differing sincerely held and considered views about the service of ordained women at the Advent. The first ordained woman to serve on the regular parish staff is the Rev’d Daphne Noyes, a vocational deacon. Her ministry at the Advent began in 2006, and many respondents noted the great success of her work in the Parish and the great affection and regard in which she is held across the Advent family.

In addition to Deacon Noyes, we have had many other ordained women — both priests and bishops — participate in our worship and parish life, including many notable preachers. We have also sponsored women for the priesthood discernment process. The Advent has not, however, had a woman celebrate Mass. This is the most challenging and contentious of the issues that have arisen in our self-study.

It is impossible to summarize a “consensus view” of the parish. In part, this is a function of the fact that views on this issue are strongly held. But it also reflects that this question has not been discussed in an open, parish-wide way. The transition process, including the questionnaire and open forums, has thus presented an opportunity for us to discuss this issue (and many others as well) openly as a family. That work will continue as we proceed through our search process.

It should also be noted that a great many respondents to the questionnaire and in the forums did not raise this issue.

While women have long taken senior leadership roles at the Advent, many of those responding to the questionnaire also indicated a need for



The Easter Vigil

more women in leadership roles at the parish. We are sensitive to the need for more intentional cultivation and encouragement of the many talented women in the parish to take positions of leadership.

Fostering an open and collaborative relationship between the rector and the vestry is another issue of particular importance to those who serve in lay leadership and on committees. We continue to learn how the lay and clerical leadership can work together in a way that draws on the wide range of talents and experiences of our congregants. Many respondents also indicated a desire for enhancement of pastoral activity and care. In addition, the need for improvement in the administration of the parish was a concern among parishioners. This latter need has been anticipated by the vestry’s appointment in mid-2018 of an administration committee.

We are thankful to God and to the good work of Fr. Warren and our other clergy for the vitality of our current congregation, and we know that there is always room for growth in membership, which should be a future focus. One important way of attracting more parishioners may be the enhancement of our media capabilities. Our liturgy and music are potentially unique offerings on the internet, and we are beginning to explore opportunities for more extensive and robust outreach and a stronger presence on social media and other modern forms of communication through which we are likely to encounter many of our future parishioners, particularly in younger demographics. Similarly, Boston is a city filled with students at all levels of education, and many parishioners regard an increased outreach to this large and often unchurched population a significant opportunity for fruitful mission. We anticipate that a strong commitment to outreach will be an essential responsibility of the next rector.



The Commissioning of Church School Teachers & The Blessing of The Backpacks

Christian Formation At The Advent

Christian formation is an area that the Advent has particularly emphasized in its programming for several years and continues to be a focal point for parishioners. We live in an age when the culture around us is not supportive of our corporate identity as worshipping Christians, and indeed does much to challenge it. The Advent is responding by deepening its commitment to forming its members according to the living Word of God at every stage of life and the task of instructing its members in the Scriptures and in the tradition of the Catholic and Apostolic Church throughout life. This is a central concern of those that make the Advent their parish home, and

we as a parish know that we must continually seek new ways to transmit the gospel message to the next generation.

Just as the life of the Advent is centered on the Mass, so our educational programming is geared toward preparing children and adults for participation in and deepening understanding of the rite at the heart of our shared sacramental life.

Education at the Advent is structured from Baptism, to preparation for First Communion, on through Confirmation to adult formation. We use the Godly Play curriculum to introduce young children to the stories of the Bible, ongoing education to instruct older children and prepare them for Confirmation, and we continue to teach younger and

older adults in the Scriptures and theology — through programs like Entr’acte, Theology on Tap, and the recent, well-attended Anglo-Catholic conferences, each described in more detail below — with a view to ever-increasing maturity in the Christian faith.

The parish’s formation program aspires to shape all our members into faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, making progress at every stage of life toward the lifelong goal of closer conformity to the example of Our Savior. We seek not only to inform but to transform; from the church school to the advanced intellectual work that goes on at the Anglo-Catholic Conferences, the Advent strives to play a leading role in shaping comprehensive, relevant, and practical wisdom for Christian living.

Formation For Children

The Advent Church School

The Advent Church School registered over 50 children for the 2018–2019 school year. There are four different curricula, structured for different age groups, within the church school. Beginning with infants through age three, we use Beulah Land, a Bible-based curriculum, to introduce Christian concepts to our youngest. For children aged three through six, we use Godly Play, a Montessori-based Christian education curriculum designed to help children explore their faith through story, to become familiar with religious language, and to enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play. For children aged seven through ten, we use the program Weaving God’s Promises, a comprehensive three-year curriculum prepared exclusively for the Episcopal Church. Our junior-high classes train our young parishioners to think critically and to use the tools provided by our Anglican heritage, in particular the Prayer Book. They learn how the Mass works and experience how liturgy is a vehicle that enables their personal worship of God. Our high-school class explores the weekly lectionary readings and prepares students for Confirmation.



The Christmas Pageant

The Children's Sermon and Child Care at Mass

Most Sundays during the school year, a parent volunteer dedicates his or her time to deliver a “sermon” or teaching designed for pre-schoolers and early elementary-aged children. This happens during the sermon occurring in the 9:00 a.m. Mass. A resource called the Sunday Papers provides a lectionary-based source for these times with the children, along with other story-telling resources that relate to the lectionary reading. In addition to our church-school programming, each Sunday during the 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Masses, as well as during all of the evening and special services, a dedicated group of professional caregivers is present to care for our youngest church-goers, from infancy to age five. They provide a safe, warm, nurturing environment for these children so that their parents may attend the Masses without worry.

Formation For Adults

Entr'acte

The principal structure for adult education in the Parish of the Advent is Entr'acte, our instructional series held during the academic year between the 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Masses. This popular program affords the opportunity for parishioners to explore more deeply issues and topics relevant to the Christian faith. Recent series have been devoted to the term homoousios in the Nicene Creed, the theory and practice of the Daily Office, traditional Christianity and the sects that deviated from it, the epic stories of the patriarchs in the Old Testament, the Pauline epistles, the Sermon on the Mount, and Anglo-Catholic practice and theory. Entr'acte is very well attended, as our intellectually oriented parishioners are eager to avail themselves of the opportunity to explore more deeply the Word of God and its practical outworkings in an accessible Sunday morning setting.

Theology On Tap

The Advent hosts Theology on Tap, a very popular program geared toward young adults in their 20s and 30s that meets periodically in a local



Fr. Hanson and parishioner John Ferrillo lead a discussion of Fleming Rutledge's "The Crucifixion" in our Lenten Entr'acte series

pub. Invited speakers present on theological questions of relevance to the life and work of young Christians and inquirers from within the parish and from across the city of Boston. The program is designed to attract as many young people as are interested to study some aspect of Christian thinking in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Recent speakers include Vassa Larin, host of the popular web series “Coffee with Sister Vassa”; Yale historian and memoirist Carlos N. M. Eire; author and celebrated preacher the Rev'd Fleming Rutledge; The Atlantic journalist Peter Beinart; First Things editor R. R. Reno; and Berkeley Divinity School dean the Very Rev'd Andrew McGowan. Theology on Tap has a mailing list of over 1,000 active email addresses, cultivated



Derek Olsen presents a paper the full visible unity of the Catholic Church at our Second Annual Anglo-Catholic Conference

over many years of programming. Response to these events is always enthusiastic, and Theology on Tap attracts a large and committed group of culturally engaged and intellectually reflective Christian young people from within the Advent and from other local churches. This program is one of the jewels of the parish's outreach and a centerpiece of our ministry to young adults.

Anglo-Catholic Conferences

The Advent now sponsors an annual academically oriented conference devoted to careful study of our Anglo-Catholic heritage. The conference presents a singular opportunity, as this nation's flagship parish in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, for the Advent to hoist its banner and take its place at the forefront of the Oxford Movement as it is being given ex-

pression and carried forward today.

The first Anglo-Catholic conference (2017), devoted to uncovering the historic roots of the Oxford Movement, was a great success; 120 participants attended, double the projected number. Such an enthusiastic response demanded further, subsequent events, the next of which took place on All Saints' and All Souls' Days this past year (2018). The second theme was the full visible unity of the Catholic Church, and future conferences will be devoted to a celebration of the Advent's 175th anniversary and American Anglo-Catholicism more generally (2019) and liturgy and society (2020 — the centennial of the first London Anglo-Catholic Congress). Conference speakers have included Derek Olsen, Katherine Sonderegger, Bishop John Bauerschmidt, George Westhaver, and Christopher Wells.

Mission And Outreach

In keeping with the purpose of historically Anglo-Catholic parishes, the Church of the Advent understands its mission to be making a living witness in the wider world to the saving presence of the Crucified, Risen, and Ascended Christ, and bringing all souls to him.

The Advent's outreach is to the immediate neighborhood, the city of Boston, the Diocese of Massachusetts, the Episcopal Church, and the world. Our outreach to the immediate neighborhood and the city of Boston is witnessed not only by the celebration of a daily Mass and the public praying of the Daily Office, but also by other Christian works to the community. Our weekly Community Dinner has served free meals to anyone wishing to attend for more than four decades. Volunteers set up, prepare, serve, and clean up a family-style dinner for eighty to one hundred people each Tuesday evening. Four times per year, ten to fifteen parishioners of all ages volunteer with Common Cathedral. This program provides a worship service and a meal on the Boston Common each Sunday. Our parishioners participate with staff members from the Cathedral and other parishes around the Diocese.

Each year a number of parishioners volunteer to walk or run in the Walk for Hunger to help raise monetary support for many programs in the greater Boston area designed to help feed the hungry. Our own Community Dinner is supported by the Walk for Hunger.

The Advent also takes part in the international program Rise Against Hunger. We supply a space for volunteers from the Advent, and other parishes from around the Diocese, to create, pack, and ship thousands of meals that are in turn shipped to





The Blessing of the Feet for the Advent Walk For Hunger Team before they set out for a 20 mile walk to raise money for Project Bread. Project Bread helps to support our Tuesday Night Supper and our goal each year is to raise at least the amount of that support.

hungry people in other parts of the world. hungry people in other parts of the world.

The parish has a committee devoted to its outreach efforts, signifying the importance we place upon those efforts. In recent years, this Mission and Outreach Committee has focused more on the immediate needs of the local community. The committee members and other volunteer

parishioners have worked with those ministering to refugee populations, the homeless and other housing-challenged persons, and youth programs in the greater Boston area. The committee supplies volunteers to the above-mentioned Common Cathedral program. The committee helps to oversee several food drives and coat drives throughout the year. For the past two years, the Mission and Outreach Committee has been guided by the Pastoral Assistant for Mission and Outreach.



After a day of training in various roles at the Advent's first acolyte festival, young acolytes from around the Diocese gather before Mass.

The Church of the Advent also leads a pilgrimage every two years to places such as the Holy Land, following the path that Christ walked and taught, as well as other trips that follow the travels of St. Paul the Apostle in Turkey and Greece. These trips mainly include Adventers, but also welcome people from other churches and other faiths.

The Advent build team, a volunteer group from the parish with some construction skills and a willingness to help, has been involved in a va-

riety of projects, from refurbishing classrooms at the Epiphany School in Boston, to reconstructing homes in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina.

In 2017, the Advent hosted a well-received acolyte festival for young acolytes throughout the Diocese, with instruction on various roles and their meaning in our worship, culminating in a communal Mass with all participating.



Parish Financial Life

Philosophy And Theology

The Church of the Advent takes the principle of sound stewardship of its worldly affairs seriously because to fail in this regard would be to weaken a part — our particular part — of the Body of Christ. The idea that we, as part of the Body of Christ, are a perpetual and living entity, is central to the idea of stewardship at the Advent. In a time when some parishes find themselves drawing down their endowments and relying less on pledge numbers, the Advent has adopted a conservative spending policy for its endowment resources and continues to see significant increases in annual giving. Our goal is to be prepared financially, so far as we are able, to continue our parish life until the Lord returns, however long that may be. Sound stewardship of our assets and annual income enables us to be the best witnesses to him that we can be — to ourselves, to the wider Church, and to the world.

Our Treasurer has been known to say that, at the Advent, the dead (i.e., endowments) pay to open the doors of the place, but the living (i.e., contributions and pledging) pay for everything else — the ministries and life of the parish. This is generally consistent with the parish budget. It is our hope that the idea of stewardship continues to blossom yet more fully amongst all members of our church family, and it is our expectation that our next rector will see it as a pastoral priority to encourage the spiritual discipline of good stewardship such that “the living” provide ever more plenteously for the ministries of the Advent in the next rectorate.

Recent Financial History

The Church of the Advent entered the decade of the 2000s with a large annual budget deficit, which was promptly complicated by the 50% fall in the stock market from 2001 to 2003. Thus, the 2000s was a decade of great spending restraint for the parish. We all came together to find better and less expensive ways to do things, and to do without where neces-



sary. We established a rule of living within balanced budgets, which we have maintained now for almost 20 years without exception. We formalized the management of our endowments and property, and we set up a Finance Committee of deep knowledge and experience to advise the vestry on financial matters. As a result, we came through the decade spending no more at the end of it than at the beginning, despite cumulative inflation of 25% — quite an amazing feat given our high fixed costs.

This rigorous discipline, developed in adversity, left us in a relatively strong position to see our way through the 2008–2010 financial crisis without substantial upset to the operation of the parish. Further, it set

up the decade of the 2010s to be one of continued increased investment by the parish in its active ministries, with an especial focus on growing investment in Christian formation.

We believe that our experience over the last 20 years leaves us well prepared to navigate whatever financial circumstances we may encounter and provides a strong set of principles and precedents to guide our actions while doing so. All of the Advent — lay leadership and members—are now used to pulling together constructively, not only to keep things going, but so that we might thrive as witnesses to the Living God, whether in feast or in famine. We expect that, under the next rector, our tradition of strong and sensible stewardship of our great



patrimony will continue, and even go from strength to strength.

Annual Budget

The Advent has an annual budget of about \$1.65 million. Simply to turn the lights on, so to speak, and fund all the costs that must be paid before the active ministries of our church can be funded, runs at about \$900,000 a year, which can be broken down into three distinct parts. The first and most expensive is our church building itself, which costs about \$500,000 a year to run, including normalized capital expenses. The Advent views keeping its building in good order as an integral part of sound stewardship and allocates funds accordingly. Second, our administration expenses — office, treasury, accounting, and the like — are about another \$200,000. And third, the Diocese of Massachusetts assesses us for about \$200,000 — approximately half of which funds its administration, and the other half its various good works.

The remaining \$750,000 a year we spend on our active ministries. About \$300,000 of this supports our clerical staff, not including their housing, which is largely provided by the church in properties owned by the parish, and about \$275,000 supports the music program, with its two organist/choirmasters and two choirs, one of which is entirely composed of paid professionals. About \$100,000 supports the many Christian formation programs, including a curate for Christian education and a church school director, and about \$75,000 is spent directly on alms and benefactions, including our Community Dinner for persons in need, which has been continuing weekly for nearly 40 years. We have also in the past provided financial support for specific projects of mission and service carried out by members of the parish and we wish to reinvigorate this mission in the future.

How do we pay for this?



Endowment

The Advent has been richly blessed over time by the loving gifts of many parishioners, leaving us as stewards of a portfolio of financial assets and some Beacon Hill real estate worth well over \$30 million. These assets are substantially held in trust and professionally managed, and the income from them covers about two-thirds of the Advent’s annual budget, making us reasonably dependent upon this income. Because we know well the problems that can arise from dependence on endowment income combined with substantial fixed costs — namely overspending, especially in financial downturns, which exhausts the inflation-adjusted value of the endowment — we run a conservative spending policy, which at present and including all costs of management is about 3.5% of principal per annum. We apply our spending rule rigorously, but with prudential discretion in economic and financial downturns, ensuring that we do not respond too reactively to changing circumstances. Similarly, we also are careful during upturns not to build in expenses we do not think we can maintain in leaner times.

Parishioners’ Giving

The Advent is also richly blessed today with a deeply generous membership. Our approximately 210 pledges, along with the occasional and welcome other contributor, fund approximately one-third of the Advent’s annual budget, or about \$550,000. Giving at the Advent is up from under \$200,000 twenty years ago and has risen about 25% from five years ago. We run an annual “every member canvass,” or stewardship campaign, each fall for the upcoming year. There is no one at the Advent who has not heard, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). Each year the goal of the stewardship campaign is to deepen every Advent congregant’s relationship with God; increased giving is the by-product.

For the 2019 canvass just completed, we saw a greater than 10% increase in pledged giving, a request made by the Wardens and the Stewardship Committee as a sign of our great faith in this year of transition, and it was lovingly and joyfully fulfilled by the pledges of many members.

Offerings Of Time And Talent

In the account above of our financial life, emphasis was laid upon sacrificial giving in our annual canvass — “The living should not be less generous than the dead.” As well as the offering of treasure, the gifts of time and talent in voluntary participation are essential to the life of the Advent, and they are given freely and bountifully. Answers to the questionnaire revealed that 95% of our parishioners participate in at least one voluntary activity or guild, with more than half involved in at least three, and 10% participating in as many as six or more.

A wide variety of guilds and activities are undertaken by parishioners at the Advent — a catalog of merely the formal ones would number several dozen. From the acolytes at each Mass, flower arrangers, coffee-hour hosts, Bible studies, community groups in various places, and the many outreach and alms activities undertaken by groups of parishioners either officially through the church or simply blessed by it, one might notice that the Advent acts much like a family living out its witness to God both “inside” and “outside” the house, so to speak.

The fellowship associated with these voluntary activities and guilds plays a vital role in the life of our parish, which is composed of members from a very broad geographic area — we are at present much more of a destination parish than a neighborhood one, and most of our members come to know one another within our walls, and then take those relationships out into their wider lives. From these interactions, we become a Christian family, and we learn to practice living like one.



Volunteers getting the church ready for Palm Sunday



Coffee hour after the 11:15 AM Mass

The coffee hours after each Mass are particularly important, as they are often the way newcomers meet parishioners, and existing parishioners deepen and broaden their relationships within the parish. We strive for a welcoming spirit, and often the conviviality after the Masses lasts for several hours and spills out into the garden, enabled by an often-groaning board and the occasional libation appropriate to any Sunday or

other feast day. For many parishioners, this is as it should be — Holy Mass and the familial conviviality following are the absolute highlight of the week. The beauty of the congregation is then on full display: as a good Anglo-Catholic parish, we echo the Canterbury Tales in having at least one of everything, united amidst all the differences in our common love for Our Lord and Savior, and by the desire to walk his narrow way.



Conclusion: A Future Full Of Promise

The Church of the Advent is a parish family seeking a new rector to guide us in the Christian life of Word, Sacrament, fellowship, and service to live out in this world the eternal verities of the Kingdom of God. We are mindful of our past and our rootedness in the tradition of Anglo-Catholic worship and practice. We are confident, with the Lord's help, of our future teaching anew the great Christian story of our redemption in fresh and vibrant ways for a new generation. In an increasingly secular age, we joyously express our confidence in Christ crucified, upon which rock all worldly wisdom is confounded, even as we plan prudently for the secular health of our parish through wise and conservative stewardship of our financial resources.

The Advent is a healthy, vibrant, young, intellectual, financially sound, and growing parish, and, with great thanks to those who have come before, including our recently retired rector of 20 years, we now seek the next leader of our community.

We hope you will come to visit us to witness the reverent beauty of our worship, the strong community among our congregation, and our thoughtful engagement with the ideas and problems of the current day from the perspective and in the context of a substantive and vital tradition.

As is written upon the lintel of our portal doors, in a message that no doubt adorns many churches, but which we believe speaks with particular resonance here, "This is none other but the House of GOD and this is the Gate of Heaven."