

THE MAGDALENE



From the Desk of Fr. Neil...

Advent: The Season of Preparation & Anticipation

Advent put simply, means the arrival of something of someone. For example, we live in the age of the *advent* of the cell phone, the personal computer and other high-tech electronic devices. They were invented and have arrived in our lifetime. For the Christian, the word *advent* has an even deeper meaning. Advent signals the end of the Church calendar year and the beginning of a new year. Advent begins approximately four weeks before Christmas, the coming of Christ....so, Advent is the coming of or the anticipation of the coming and arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Advent is a time then, of eager anticipation and yet patient waiting. It is a time of expectation but also accepting. We anticipate the coming of

the Lord Jesus a second time, when He will come to receive us unto Himself. Yet, it is also a time of patient waiting, because the time of His arrival is not clear and has never been revealed to us. Advent is a time when we expect the coming of Christmas and all of the joyous events surrounding this Holy Day, and yet we must accept the fact that Christ's second coming may not occur in our lifetime.

This does not mean that He *won't* come back, because we know He *will*, but it does mean that we will have to continue in this fallen world with its mixture of joys and sorrows.

But despite this mixture of emotions, there is definitely a detectable need for preparedness either way. Whether Christ comes tomorrow, or a thousand years from now, we should be prepared.

Let's look at what Jesus said about His return. "But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore *you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*" (Matthew 24:43-44 ESV)

John Chrysostom, c. 349-407, archbishop of Constantinople wrote about this passage this way: "He [Christ] does not reveal the day, so that they [we] will remain vigilant and ever ready; and he declares that he will come at the hour they least expect, so that they will remain constantly prepared for battle and dedicated to virtue. This is what his words ultimately mean: if men knew the time of their death, they would

St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church
 205 So. Glassell Street
 Old Town Orange, CA 92866
www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org

Rev. Fr. Neil Edlin, Rector



Sunday Services:
 8am Mass
 10am Choral Mass &
 Children's Sunday School

Wednesday Service:
 9am (except Christmas Eve)

prepare for that hour in every way and with the greatest effort. That their fervor might not be limited to that day, he reveals neither the day of universal judgment nor the day of particular judgment; they will thus be *always fervent and in constant expectation*. This is the reason he leaves the end of every man's life in a veil of uncertainty. It seems to me that he also intends to rouse and confound the lazy, whose souls do not manifest the same concern as those whose riches instead lead them to fear the raids of a thief."¹

With all of this uncertainty that Chrysostom speaks of on the one hand, we see, on the other, many things that are certain. The return of Christ. Our own death and judgment. The judgment of the world, and especially our own inability to understand and properly handle the knowledge and details of His second coming. Revealing things such as the day and hour of Christ's return, or the day and hour of our own death would alter the way in which we would prepare. Chrysostom's point should be considered. If we knew the hour of our death, or the hour when Christ was coming, then we would most likely, knowing our nature, put off any kind of preparation until the last moment. Chrysostom says, that these things are *not* revealed to us, so that our fervor might not be limited to that day. We would be so consumed with that one event that all other concerns would take a back seat. We might just sit back and wait. We might completely panic and fear that event more and more as it approached.

But look at what Paul writes about this same thing. "Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains

come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 ESV)

Here is a very balanced approach to the immanent Second Advent of Christ. Yes, the Lord's Second Advent will come like a thief in the night without warning, but we also should notice here that Paul says, we are "children of light." "We belong to the day." And, maybe the best of all, "God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

So Advent preparedness would seem to include us being aware of the imminent return of Christ at some undisclosed time, and us being ever watchful for that great and glorious moment, and yet on the other hand, Advent means a lifetime of daily preparedness in the form of prayer, encouraging one another, being always ready to share our faith with others, being always sober in mind and body, living a life of faith and love, and always remembering the certainty that Christ is for us. God is for us, and that through our preparedness, His Second Advent will be welcomed by us with great anticipation and joy.

¹ John Chrysostom. Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew.

“And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.” (1 John 2:28 ESV) +

An Interesting and Important Survey

Earlier this year, para-church organization Ligonier Ministries, partnered with LifeWay Research in an effort to gauge the American landscape on its theological awareness and beliefs. I found the following study to be eye-opening and disturbing. Over the next few issues, we will look at some of the findings of this important study. Here is the first installment of some of their findings. – Fr. Neil.

Executive Summary

Anecdotal evidence has shown an increasing lack of theological understanding in America, both outside and inside the church. Ligonier Ministries commissioned a research study by LifeWay Research to measure the theological awareness of **adult Americans**. Ligonier Ministries identified specific doctrines and heresies that they wanted to test. LifeWay Research helped refine these questions and to conduct a survey of 3,000 Americans. Questions focused on seven key doctrinal areas and included a number of specific areas where Americans differ from historic and orthodox views.

Methodology

The Theological Awareness Benchmark Study was conducted by LifeWay Research. The objective of the study was to quantify among a national sample of Americans indicators of theological understanding today. The project was designed with a large sample to allow for comparisons between groups within Christian churches and those outside the Christian faith. The project was commissioned by Ligonier Ministries to ascertain the state of theological

awareness and belief among Americans, including several subsets of Americans (particularly Evangelicals).

The quantitative survey of American adults was conducted using a large, national online panel. Quotas were in place to ensure the sample was demographically balanced on gender, age, ethnicity, education, census region, and religious preference. Completion rates among non-Christians were effected by the tremendous number of theology questions outside their beliefs. However, slight weights were used to balance religion and gender and to remove constant raters. 3,000 surveys were completed between February 25–March 5, 2014. The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed +1.8%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. Ligonier Ministries identified specific doctrines and, in some cases, beliefs historically considered Christian heresies, it wanted to test. LifeWay Research helped refine these questions to ensure the following principles were followed throughout the questionnaire:

- Multiple questions were asked on each topic
- Each doctrine or heresy was tested by stating it as fact and asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement,
- Phrasings that can introduce bias were excluded,
- Questions in which the desired response is agreement and questions in which the desired response is disagreement were mixed throughout the survey,
- The questions used words that would be understood by the typical American.

Beliefs about God

While the majority of Americans believe God is perfect, the answers reveal that Americans want God on their own terms. Some results reflect healthy thinking, but many of the results show the lack of orthodox thinking about God. This is

especially true of questions related to the Trinity.

- 1-in-5 Americans deny that Jesus is the God-man.
- One third of Americans think the Father is more divine than the Son.

The member of the Trinity that is the least understood in the United States is the Holy Spirit.

- Nearly two thirds (63%) think the Holy Spirit is a force and not a person.
- 63% of Americans agree “God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake.”
- Two-thirds of Americans (66%) agree “God continues to answer specific prayers.”
- 6-in-10 Americans (60%) agree with the doctrine that says “Jesus is fully God and has a divine nature, and fully man and has a human nature.”
- 19% of Americans agree “Jesus is the first creature created by God.”
- More than two-thirds of adult Americans (68%) agree “Biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. This event actually occurred.”
- 69% of Americans agree “The Holy Spirit indwells every true Christian.”
- More than 6-in-10 Americans deny the doctrine of the personhood of the Holy Spirit. 64% agree “The Holy Spirit is a force, not a personal being.”
- One quarter of adults in the U.S. admit they are not sure about the heresy “The Holy Spirit is less divine than God the Father and Jesus”

Beliefs about Goodness and Sin

One of the most troubling findings in the survey is the lack of understanding Americans have regarding sin and the total depravity of human

beings. Actually, the majority of Americans perceive goodness to be a better description of people.

- Only 16% agree with the doctrine that says “People do not have the ability to turn to God on their own initiative.”
- Instead of acknowledging depravity, the majority of Americans believe the good in people can outweigh the bad.
- 67% agree “Everyone sins at least a little, but most people are by nature good.”
- 4-in-10 agree “God loves me because of the good I do or have done.”

GUILDS, GROUPS & EVENTS

MEN’S GROUP CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP GATHERING

While the women of the parish are celebrating Christmas this year together, all of the men of the parish are invited and encouraged to attend the Men’s Christmas Party on the same day; Monday December 3rd. We will meet at Lou Carlson’s Rec. Room at 7:00pm. See sign-up sheet in the narthex for details on location, directions and what to bring. Please prepare to bring \$10.00 to help pay for food.

WOMEN’S GUILD CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

The Guild Women cordially invite all our women to attend our Annual Christmas Party with Gift Exchange on Monday December 3rd at 7:00pm Violet Younis’ home this year. The more the merrier so please plan on attending and bring a friend or family member. Look for a sign-up sheet for this as well in the narthex for details for directions and what to bring.

WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL

All ladies are encouraged to start the Advent season at the **December 7th** Women's Devotional where our topic will be **Mary & Martha**. In addition to sharing and prayers we will study the two sisters and what the Bible tells us about them that relates to us during the busy season. **We have a new 1st floor location** in the room off of the sacristy. No more climbing the stairs! We meet after the first service at 9:00am and we end at 9:50. Don't forget to bring your Bible, ladies.

MEN'S CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The Men's Christian Fellowship Group meet on the First Sunday of each month at 9:00am in the Parish Hall for 30 minutes of Bible study, devotional, prayer, coffee and donuts. At 9:30 we break for Morning Prayer. All men are encouraged to join. We are studying the Book of Proverbs. Bring your Bible or borrow one from the church. Our next meeting is December 7th.

The MCF meeting on the second Sunday of the month after second service is an executive meeting where the men plan for upcoming events and discuss other business items. Questions? Call Lou Carlson or the Church office 714-532-2420.

MEN'S BREAKFAST & WORK PARTY

Men, it's that time again to help get the Church Narthex and Sanctuary ready for Advent and Christmas. We will be meeting at the Church on Saturday December 6th, and walk over to Kimmie's Coffee Cup for breakfast and then back over to the church, all fueled up, to set up for Christmas in the Narthex and Parish Hall. We will set up the Crèche, Advent Wreath, and other decorations for the season. Please try to

be there. The more help we will have the easier the job will be.

TREE TRIMMING

Well, it's that time again and everyone is asked to help trim the Church's Christmas tree after the 10:00 service on **December 7th**. The Guild will be serving a wonderful selection of Christmas food treats for those who stay to decorate and enjoy each others company. Grab a cup of coffee or a hot cocoa, a Christmas cookie and join your Church family in the Christmas festivities.

ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS CAROLING THROUGH THE ORANGE CIRCLE

Do you feel like a good old fashion Christmas? Join us in the Narthex at 12:00 on **December 14th** as we begin our stroll through Old Town Orange singing traditional Christmas Carols to merchants and shoppers. Be sure to wear your favorite Christmas scarf and good walking shoes. We will be singing for about an hour. You are welcome to bring a friend or just collect one on the way to sing along with.

Fr. Neil will be brown bagging it in the Narthex at 11:30am if you would like to join us before our stroll.

BIBLE STUDY & EVENING PRAYER

Those attending our Bible Study are currently enjoying a robust discussion on the Book of The Acts of the Apostles. Bible study meets every Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm, except the 2nd Wednesday. Evening Prayer follows at 8:00 in the church.

Please note that there will be NO BIBLE STUDY through the month of December.

REMINDERS

MEMBERSHIP

All persons, eighteen years or older, who are baptized and confirmed, regular attendees and communicants in good standing for at least three months are considered members of the church.

Your MEMBERSHIP paper must be in order to be eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting in January. Please stand up and be counted. Contact Fr. Neil for details on how to transfer your paperwork and to apply for membership

MAGDALENE NEWSLETTERS AND SERMON'S ONLINE

On the St. Mary Magdalene website, every sermon text is posted, along with the Calendar of Events so you can read what you have missed and also see what's coming up in the near future. The Magdalene Newsletter is also posted as soon as it goes to print. Tell your friends about our website and invite them to see all of the things we do here at St. Mary Magdalene Church.

Amazon Smile

Amazon Christmas shoppers don't forget the next time you shop online, just go to www.smile.amazon.com. Register and a small percentage of every purchase goes directly to St. Mary Magdalene. It's simple and quick. Put

in St. Mary Magdalene's name at the checkout. Add www.smile.amazon.com to your favorites and every time you shop online you can do it through SMILE with one click. Smile makes a difference!

DATES TO REMEMBER

COFFEE HOUR TREATS

December

7 – Mercado 14 – Guild
21 – Morsk 28 – McMahan

2014 Treat Roster Is Located on the Back Page

Please plan on setting out treats at 8:30am and cleaning up after the 11:15 fellowship time. Be sure to switch with someone else if you are unable to take your Sunday.

ALTAR FLOWERS / SANCTUARY LIGHT DONORS FOR NOVEMBER

Altar Flowers

9th – Jim & Shauna Bell/Thomas & Julie Pence
16th – Jenefer Luckey & Cecily Gates
23rd – Jim & Shauna Bell

Sanctuary Light

30th – Peter & Kay Tucker

If you are interested in "giving" one of these for a future Sunday, please sign up in the Flower and Candle binder in the narthex of the church. **Our suggested donation is \$30 for flowers & \$12 for the light**, but feel free to give what you are able. Mark flowers / candles on your check and place it in the offering plate during mass.

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

DECEMBER EVENTS		
Women's Guild Christmas Social – Younis House	12/3	Wed-7pm
Men's Group Christmas Fellowship Gathering – Carlson House	12/3	Wed-7pm
Men's Breakfast & Set up for Christmas	12/6	Sat 9am
Men's Christian Fellowship - Proverbs	12/7	9:00am – 9:25am
Church Family Tree Trimming	12/7	After 10:00 Mass
Vestry Meeting	12/10	7:15pm
Christmas Caroling	12/14	12:00pm Caroling
Christmas Eve Services (Wed)	12/24	5:30pm (said mass) & 11:00pm (high choral mass)
Christmas Day Service (Thurs)	12/25	8:00am (said mass)

JANUARY EVENTS		
Men's Christian Fellowship - Proverbs	1/4	9:00am – 9:25am
Women's Guild Meeting	1/11	After 10:00am Mass
MCF Meeting - Christmas Teardown Party	1/11	After 10:00am Mass
Vestry Meeting	1/14	7:15pm
Craft Guild	1/18	After 10:00am Mass
Annual Meeting & Brunch	1/25	After 10:00am Mass

FR. NEIL'S VISITING HOURS AT THE OFFICE WILL REMAIN THE SAME THROUGH ADVENT.

Monday 2pm – 4pm
Tuesday 1pm – 3pm
Thursday 12pm – 2pm
Friday & Saturday the Office is Closed

ST. MARY MAGDALENE TREAT ROSTER 2015

KELLY MCMAHON IS OUR TREAT ROSTER CONTACT PERSON (phone or email). PLEASE LET HER KNOW IF YOU HAVE TRADED YOUR SUNDAY WITH SOMEONE ELSE OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOUR PARTICIPATION. IF YOU CAN NOT REACH HER, THEN CONTACT ANNE PETERSON.

PLEASE BRING TREATS FOR BOTH SERVICES (equal to 3 - 4 doz donuts). TREATS CAN BE ANYTHING. FRUIT AND VEGGIES ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. YOU CAN EITHER DROP THEM OFF ON FRIDAY OR SET THEM OUT ON SUNDAY BY 8:30AM.

IF YOU ARE AN 8 O'CLOCKER, AND ARE UNABLE TO CLEAN UP, CONTACT KELLY SO SHE CAN MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS. CLEAN UP CONSISTS OF RINSING OUT THE COFFEE POTS, PUTTING THEM AWAY AND WIPING OFF THE COUNTERS.

ODONOHUE, M	1/4	YOUNIS, I & V	7/5
OSBORN, T & MJ	1/11	BELL, J & S	7/12
PAUL J & J	1/18	PATRONAL BBQ CELEBRATION	7/19
GUILD FOR ANNUAL MEETING	1/25	GUILD	7/26
PENCE, D & L	2/1	BORG, B & G	8/2
PENCE, T & J	2/8	BURGESS, M	8/9
PETERSON, A	2/15	CARLSON, L & K	8/16
ROGERS, B & S	2/22	COYKENDALL, E & W	8/23
ROBERTSON, C	3/1	DI FILLIPO, A	8/30
SAMMONS, K & S	3/8	DUKE, A	9/6
SMITH, R & K	3/15	EDLIN	9/13
SMURTHWAITE, P	3/22	FOSS, J & J	9/20
SNEDDON, E	3/29	GATES, C	9/27
SOSA, P & S	4/5	HATFIELD, D	10/4
TALLEY, M & S	4/12	HICKEY, R	10/11
TALLON, T	4/19	HOLMES, J & C/FULLER, D	10/18
TAYLOR, B	4/26	LEE B & B	10/25
TAYLOR, T	5/3	LEVAN, M & S	11/1
TUCKER, J & M	5/10	LUCKEY, J	11/8
TUCKER, P & K	5/17	MAUZEY, A & R	11/15
GUILD FOR MEN'S CHILI COOKOFF	5/24	MCMAHON, H & K	11/22
VON MIZENER, Y	5/31	MENEES, E	11/29
VON MZENER, M & X	6/7	GUILD	12/6
WEEKS, D	6/14	MERCADO, D	12/13
WICKETTS, S	6/21	MORSK, R	12/20
WOLF, T & J	6/28	NEMCHICK, M & M	12/27

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN HELPING US TO MAKE COFFEE HOUR A GREAT TIME FOR FELLOWSHIP!

11/18/14