



“Why an *Advent* Lessons and Carols Service?” “Why not focus on *Christmas* instead?” I’ve been asked those questions more than once over the past few years. I wanted to take some time to give a thoughtful answer to those very good questions.

During the summer, I spend time at Delaware’s beaches. On my way home, I usually make a pit stop at the Christiana Mall (for those of you unfamiliar with the area, that mall is located in Northern Delaware where Route 1 meets Interstate 95). My last trip home is generally around August 26<sup>th</sup>. Each year around that time, I see a very frightening site: Christmas decorations.

Now don’t me wrong, Christmas decorations are wonderful! I love decorating my house: trimming the tree, hanging each ornament with care, freezing while I put the lights up outside—it really is “the most wonderful time of the year.” In December.

Seeing Christmas decorations in August, on the way home from the beach seems almost sacrilegious. Okay, that might be stretching it, but you get my point. Everyone seems too quick to get to the secular Christmas season. When I was a kid growing up in Wilkes-Barre (when did I start talking like my grandfather?!?!), you didn’t see Christmas decorations until after Thanksgiving. Fall holidays came in order: Halloween, Thanksgiving, and then Christmas. Now we see Christmas trees in August and the Easter Bunny hopping around in January!

One of the great aspects of our Catholic faith is that we get the opportunity to celebrate the Season of Advent. While the rest of the world runs with ever-increasing speed towards December 25<sup>th</sup>, the church gives us four weeks to prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. I find it so refreshing to walk into church in early December and not see any Christmas decorations. It gives me time to reflect on the true reason for the season, and to cast aside the material, secular world in favor of a more prayerful and reflective attitude.

On **Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**, we’ll begin the Advent season with our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Lessons and Carols Service. You won’t hear Christmas songs and you won’t see Christmas decorations. We won’t have a manger with a baby Jesus and we won’t be exchanging presents. Instead it will be a time for us to reflect on our Salvation History: from the fall and Adam and Eve all the way to Joseph and Mary’s journey to Bethlehem. It will give us an hour’s respite from the onslaught of the secular Christmas season to prepare the way of the Lord.

Please consider this your personal invitation to Queen’s Advent Lessons and Carols Service. The Queen’s Choir and guest musicians have been working very hard to make this a wonderfully prayerful event. The music is an eclectic mix of old and new with selections ranging from *Awesome God* to *On Jordan’s Bank*. Children from our PREP program and Regional School will create a tableau of our Salvation History as they portray characters such as John the Baptist, Mary, and Joseph. This family-friendly event will run approximately one hour. We’ll have hot chocolate and cookies in the Parish Center afterwards.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to seeing you on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

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