

December 7, 2009

Dear Villa Academy Families,

As many of you know, yesterday was the second Sunday of Advent and the focus in the religion classes and the school as a whole is squarely on the four weeks which lead up to Christmas. It is a time of hopeful and patient waiting as another Liturgical year begins anew. Advent is a time of great joy and anticipation, a time of preparation for the celebration of Christ's arrival in Bethlehem as an infant. However, the four weeks of Advent are often thought of as symbolizing the four different ways that Christ comes into the world:

- 1) At his birth as a helpless infant in Bethlehem
- 2) At his arrival in the hearts of believers
- 3) At his death
- 4) At his arrival on the Day of Judgment.

At school and in the classrooms we consider the arrival of Advent as the coming of a new season, a cause for celebration and a matter of the heart. We seek to celebrate the seasons of Advent and Christmas in a spirit of openness and love and encourage you, as you are comfortable and in light of your own traditions, to reinforce this most special season at home in your families in simple ways.

How can I celebrate Advent at home? Through candlelight, music, prayer, art, an Advent calendar or Advent wreath and a spirit of thankfulness and generosity. Let it come from the heart. Encourage the children to help set the tone and lead the way. For those of you who may be interested, Family Celebrations: Advent and Christmas, Jane Beaton, Wanda Doppler, Greg Gallagher, and Betty Hardy, available from The Liturgical Press, is a possible resource. The Episcopal Bookstore on Stone Way in Wallingford is usually a wonderful source of resources for your perusal.

God Bless you in these days of hopeful waiting,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Polly Skinner".

Polly Skinner
Head of School