



THE LOWER YELLOWSTONE CLUSTER  
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION AND EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MONTANA



December 16, 2018 – Third Sunday of Advent

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

First, please allow me to extend warm greetings to you and your family. The Third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday, which comes from the Latin word for “rejoice.” On this day we are called to change tone from the rest of Advent and take a moment to rejoice for all that God has given us. In that spirit, I write today filled with joy and excitement about recent events.

On Thursday, December 13, Sharon Hatley, the Senior Warden and Treasurer of Emmanuel, and I travelled to Billings and met with the board of the Bishop Fox Company. As a reminder, the Bishop Fox Company is an organization that is responsible for administering funds that were gained as a result of the sale of property intended for a possible third Episcopal congregation in Billings a few decades ago. The Rev. Canon Gary Waddingham proposed to the board of Bishop Fox that the organization provide support to the churches of the Lower Yellowstone Cluster in the form of funds to help pay for the presence of a priest in both congregations. At the meeting on December 13, the board unanimously approved contributing \$1,000 a month for two years to help support the presence of a priest in our congregations. Before the meeting was over a check was provided for the first quarter of 2019. Many thanks for their kind words and support for our vital ministries and to Sharon for coming to the meeting and being a wonderful advocate for both congregations.

Given the joyful news just mentioned, Emmanuel is moving forward exploring options for renovations that would include adding a bathroom and creating a small meeting space. The president of the Standing Committee has already been in contact and asked us to provide detailed bids. They are quite supportive and are continuing the vision of Bishop Brookhart.

Services to celebrate the feast of the Nativity of our Lord and the beginning of the Christmas season will be held on Monday, December 24 with services at Emmanuel, Miles City at 4:30 PM with carols and organ music and service at 5 PM and at Church of the Ascension, Forsyth at 7 PM. Bring a friend!

Finally, as we approach the dawn of a new year, we must also begin preparations for our annual meetings. I would suggest a tentative date of Sunday, January 20, 2019 and encourage all to save that date. More information will follow... As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. For now, let us rejoice and give thanks to God for all of our blessings.

Joyfully yours in Christ,

Father Stephen