

# Hearing God's Call at Advent

We have reaffirmed for 2015 the goals we adopted last year. We believe they respond to where we hear God calling us as a faith community. They help us, as individuals and a community, to grow spiritually and to reach out to others.

## 1. Bible Reading Challenge

The Bible is at the core of Christianity. This challenge encourages us to hear anew the stories and declarations that are the foundation of our faith. Instead of a single challenge, this year's Bible challenge recognizes that there are different ways to read the Bible; different levels and perspectives. Some have less time; some more. Wherever you are, our faith grows and our understanding is nourished if we make time regularly to read scripture.

## 2. Spiritual Growth with the Labyrinth & Prayer in the Garden

Our labyrinth represents a long tradition of spiritual practices and techniques that have enriched the lives of the saints. It has already become a spiritual tool not only for members but also for people in our community, visitors, and passers-by. The team works to keep the walk and surrounding gardens lovely and welcoming, especially for those who need spiritual nourishment but may feel uneasy attending formal worship.

## 3. Stay Connected

So many of the stories and parables of Jesus are about relationships! So many passages in the Epistles are advice to the early Christians about how they should relate to each other! Indeed we are a church precisely because we want (and know that we need) to be connected to each other and to be welcoming to all who visit or live in our community. This year we will seek to develop and strengthen these bonds. One emphasis will be to nourish the small groups that already exist and make sure no one feels excluded or forgotten. Another will be to explore how, in a world of tweets and earphones, we can encourage genuine, caring relationships.

## 4. Local Home Building and Repair Projects

We will partner with Rebuilding Together (RT), renovating homes in Alexandria for resale to low-income residents. RT periodically purchases homes and needs volunteers to clean and repair them. This is one concrete way we can witness our faith, while building relationships among ourselves and with the larger community.