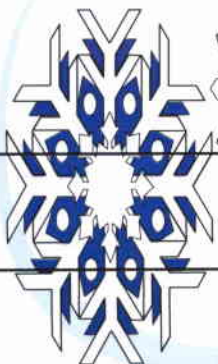
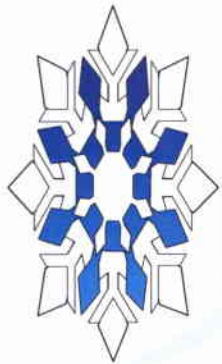
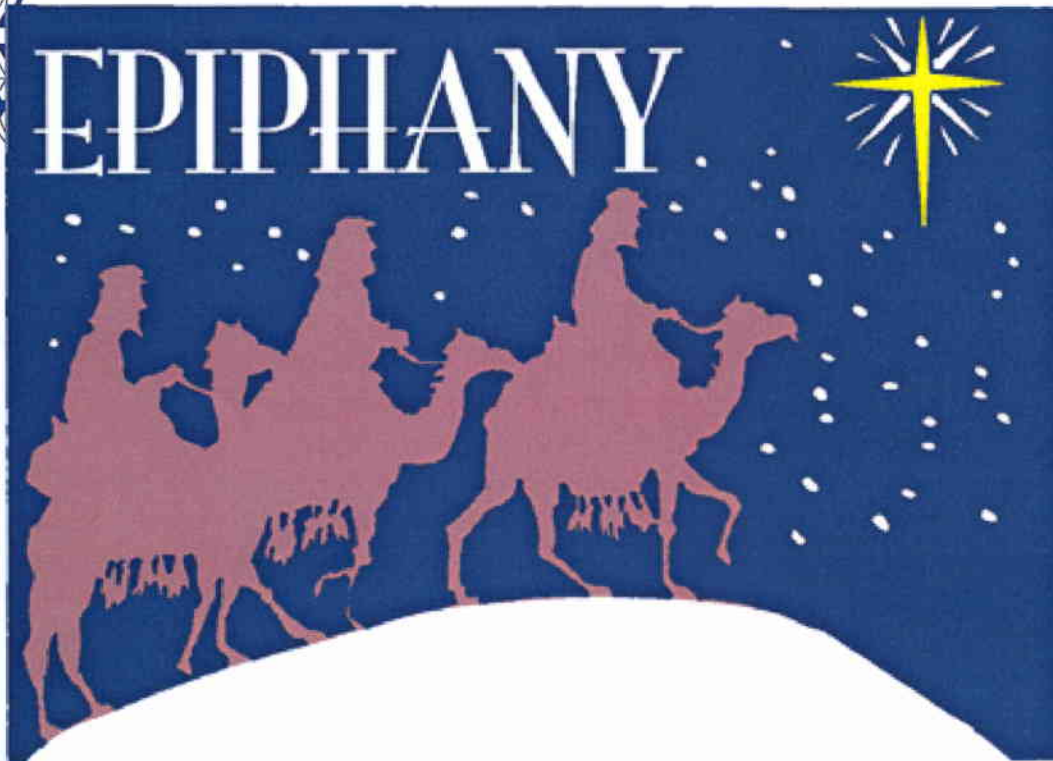


Letters From St. Nicholas'



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The Rev. James E. Liggett, Jr.

Vestry

Dr. Will Morris, Sr. Warden
Christian Ed Committee Liaison
Mr. Nathan Williams, Jr. Warden
Physical Plant Committee Liaison
Emergency Preparedness Liaison
Ms Mary Rogers, Clerk
Fellowship Committee Liaison
Ms Marilyn Bassinger
Worship Committee Liaison
Mr. Jim Brown
Finance Committee Liaison
Dr. Michael Jordan
Outreach Committee Liaison
Mr. Scot Marter
Fellowship Committee Liaison
Mr. Pool Webb
Publicity Committee Liaison

Deacon

Deacon Tom Burns

Parish Staff

The Rev. Dr. Bob Bonnington
Pastoral Associates
Mr. Bob Poer
Parish Administrator
Mr. Darryl Knapp
Organist / Choirmaster
Lay Ministries Coordinator
Mr. Bobby J. Crues
Treasurer
Mr. Corby Considine
Chancellor
Ms Elvira Sebian
Sexton

Several years ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury offered the following as his Christmas letter to the Anglican Communion. I was moved by it then, and offer it to you now.

One of the great treasures of the Christian world is the great heritage of Christmas songs and carols in the English language from the Middle Ages. Modern composers still want to set these beautiful and often surprising words. Some will have heard the carol beginning 'There is no rose of such virtue as is the Rose that bare Jesu' - which picks up the ancient tradition of describing Mary as the rose blossoming from the wintry earth of human history. But the important words come in the second verse: 'For in this Rose contained was Heaven and earth in little space'. Jesus in the womb of Mary is already the one 'in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily', in St Paul's wonderful words in Colossians. The eternal Son of God is not contained by the universe; he is what surrounds and sustains it all. Heaven and earth live by the gift of life from him ('in him was life', says St John's Gospel).

And here, in the 'little space' of Mary's body, divine fullness is alive; when Jesus is born, 'the fullness of him who fills all in all', to quote Paul again, is wrapped in cloths and tucked into a feeding trough. After the crucifixion, the fullness of God's life is locked away in the tomb. God's way with us is not to overwhelm us with majesty but to live his life 'in little space' and to speak there the quiet words that summon us to faith.

Only when we are very quiet can we hear. Only when we stand still can we give him room. Faced with the fullness of God in the embryo, the baby, the tired wanderer in Galilee, the body on the cross, we have to look at ourselves hard, and ask what it is that makes us too massive and clumsy to go into the 'little space' where we meet God in Jesus Christ.

It may be our wealth and security; it may be our ambition; it may be our images of ourselves as powerful or virtuous or godly. The world - and the Church - are still fairly full of people (like you and me) who walk around surrounded by inflated ideas and pictures of ourselves that crowd out others and push away God. We need at Christmas above all to remember what Christ says again and again - that there is no way in to his little space without shedding our great load of arrogant self-reliance, bluster, noisy fear and fantasy.

And when we have set this aside, we find that it is only in the little space that there is room enough for all of us - forgiven, welcomed, made inheritors of the divine fullness of life and joy that God longs to share with us. Behind the low door of the stable is infinity - and more, an infinity of mercy and love. No straining our eyes to see a distant God; but a God whose fullness dwells in that space we are not small and simple enough to enter.

+Rowan Cantuar

A Joy to Behold

One of the highlights of my time just before Christmas was watching all the preparations for the various parish activities. It has been a joy and a delight to watch St. Nicholas' prepare for our celebration of the birth of our Lord. The amount of love, care, and plain hard work that goes into this preparation is overwhelming. Many, many thanks to Darryl and the St. Nicholas' Choirs; Linda Jordan and the helpers with Blue Christmas; Kathy Marugg and the Altar Guild; all the volunteers who helped clean and decorate the Church; Alison Porter, Kristen Maguire and all of their patient helpers with the Pageant and Sunday School programs; those who participated in our Christmas caroling; the Acolytes, Readers, Eucharistic Ministers and others who helped with the services; and to the many, many others who contributed so much toward a glorious celebration of Christmas.



Since 1908 the octave including the Feasts of The Confession of St. Peter and the Conversion of St. Paul (January 19th to 26th) has been designated the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It was founded by the Reverend Paul Wattson, an Episcopal priest and Mother Lurana White, co-founders of the Society of the Atonement, a small group of Franciscan Sisters and Friars. This week is designated a time for prayer and study for the unity of Christian churches around the world.

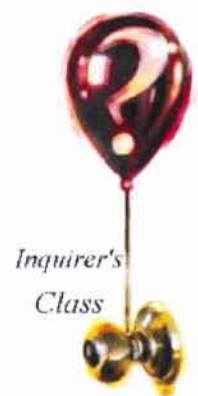
This year, the community-wide service of prayer for Christian unity, sponsored by the Midland Association of Churches will be at St. Nicholas' on Thursday, January 22nd at 7:00 PM. I invite everyone to join with Christians around our community for prayers that our Lord's desire that we all be one can come to pass through his grace and our cooperation.



There will be an organizational meeting for our next Inquirers' Class on Monday, January 12th at 6:30 in the Parish Hall. Inquirers' Classes are for adults, age 16 or older, who wish to know more about the ways and teachings of the Episcopal Church.

The classes can be used as preparation for Confirmation or Reception into the Episcopal Church, as a basis for preparation for Adult Baptism, or simply as a refresher course for people who have been Confirmed or Received. Many Episcopalians have a habit of sitting in on one Inquirers' Class from each Rector of their parish.

If you are interested in being a part of this class and this day and time are a problem, please let the Parish Office know soon, and we will find a way to work for everyone to get together.



2009



Our adult Christian Education for 2009 will begin on Sunday, January 11th. On Sunday mornings, Bob Poer will lead a three-session class on icons. The class will include an overview of icons, the process for 'writing' or drawing icons, and a survey of some of the most well-known icons.

Wednesday evenings will be an assortment of programs including presentations from our Parish Nurses, the Salvation Army (on the 30-degree project) and video programs.

Christian Education for children and youth will also resume on the 11th.



Speaking of January 11th, on that afternoon, at 3:00 PM, we will host a Board Games time for all ages.

Everyone is invited to come, bring your favorite Board Game for children or adults (or both, I'm looking forward to some good chess matches) and join us for a relaxed time of fellowship and fun.



One of the more fascinating (to me, at least) projects of Christian art in this century is the development of the St. John's Bible. Commissioned by Saint John's Abbey and

University in Collegeville, Minnesota, the Saint John's Bible is a contemporary work created in the tradition of handwritten medieval manuscripts.

The artistic director of the project, Donald Jackson, is one of the world's foremost Western calligraphers and scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Crown Office at the House of Lords.

During the past nine years, Jackson has worked in rural Wales, with scribes and artists to write and illuminate the Saint John's Bible entirely by hand, using quills and paints hand-ground from precious minerals and stones such as lapis lazuli, vermilion, malachite, silver, copper, and 24-karat gold.

First Presbyterian Church will host an exhibit of facsimile pages from this wonderful work from January 22nd to February 24th, and I encourage you to visit it. We will devote a Wednesday night in January to learning about this project, and will work toward some ways of sharing in the exhibition.

For more information about the St. John's Bible, visit their website at www.saintjohnsbible.org.

Remember the Church in your will.