

Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church
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Advent - Christmas - November - 2004

Home for the Holidays

Holidays are times of renewing and rebuilding relationships. People spend time and money traveling, sometimes great distances, in order to be "home for the holidays." Most of us have, at one time or another, done this. It is important for us to renew our relationships face to face. Letters, phone calls and email help us maintain relationships, but visits in person are usually best and necessary. Good relationships take effort and time and money.

The same things that are necessary for our human relationships are also necessary for our relationship with God/Jesus.

Much of what we hear about religion both before and during the holidays is sentimentalism with various secular distractions. To avoid this intrusion into our relationship with God/Jesus, we can make the effort, take the time to focus on who God is in our life.

God is the person who creates us, sustains us, loves us, forgives us and draws us into an eternal relationship. One sign of this relationship should be our willingness to share what God has blessed us with. During the holidays there are many special needs that we can help meet by the giving of money to various organizations.

This holiday season, come "home for the holidays;" come home to God/Jesus. Make the effort, spend the time and money necessary. Build your relationship with God.

Fr. Ned

Preparation

In the early church, there was no Advent. There were two fasts each year, the Spring fast was called Lent (which means "Spring") and had no relationship to Easter. The Fall fast was known as St. Martin's Lent ... and the liturgical color for both was black! However, vegetable dyes being what they were then, the color faded to purple or blue. St. Martin's Lent was to prepare for the Second Coming, the Endtimes; the lessons were all about preparing for one's death. As the Christian year evolved, the two fasts were pushed up against the two nearest feasts; and we gain the season of Advent. If you look at the lessons during Advent, you'll find that they are split between lessons about the endtime and lessons about the coming of Christ into the world the first time.

So, Advent has become a "kinder, gentler" time in the modern age. A time of quiet anticipation, prayer, fasting and preparation.

In our worship, we count the four Sundays with our Advent Wreath. Each Sunday, we light a new candle, until on the Fourth Sunday of Advent (December 19 this year) all four are lit. Then we are ready to celebrate Christmas. We'll decorate the church in the morning and go caroling that evening at 7. Be sure to join us for this wonderful season and for the celebration to follow on Christmas Eve with a carol sing at 10:45 and a Festival Eucharist at 11 p.m.

Rusty Baritone Bishop Says: Sing Anyway

Bishop Paul V. Marshall

Diocesan Life, October 1999

[Editor's note: I am reprinting a slightly edited version of this column, especially for those of you hesitant to sing ... to remind you to sing anyway!]

Neither of my children ever had a singing class in public school -- that's in two states, one school district rich, the other poor. They had computer classes and other practical studies, all of which is very good, but the basic human skill of singing was left out. That they can sing (better than their father, I assure you) is a result of their going to church and of their joining voluntary singing groups at school and in the community. Keep those junior choirs going! I say this for more reasons than one.

There has been a steady disconnect with singing in our country throughout the second half of this century. People are more withdrawn than ever. From the Christian point of view, this is regrettable because even the most shy, quiet, and private person finds his or her soul drawn out when we sing the praises of God together. When I look out over a congregation and see the people who not only do not sing, but aren't even following along, I wonder what other means they use to express or discover the depth of their joy in the Lord God.

My reason for bringing this up is not to make non-singers feel guilty, but to introduce a fact that amazes me. A hundred years ago, even in the Episcopal Church, people would write about the "social use of hymns."

When I first encountered the phrase I had to do time in the library to find out what it meant. Many of what we would call gospel, folk, or informal hymns, as well as the old standards, were routinely sung in families or after dinner with friends, and so on. People praised God and sang about their religion for fun - without being members of the choir. Normal people just sang.

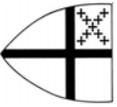
If I were concerned about professional sound, I would never open my mouth, but that's not what God is listening for; so I praise my maker while I have breath.

Singing connects us to God. You may also be surprised by how much singing connects us to other people as well. It's natural: breathing together, making the same sounds, matching each other's pitches, all seem to create a sense of unity. In this country we might think of "candences" sung by recruits marching or running in the dawn light.

One thing that makes Japanese industry so effective is that factories start the day with everyone, from the CEO to the newest line-worker, together singing the company song. The videos I have seen of this ritual are fascinating. I just cannot imagine the same thing at a large American plant. But I can imagine it in Church. This cannot be entirely explained by pointing out that singing produces chemicals that make us feel good, although that certainly is the case. Those who have ever taken part in contemplative singing, such as the chant we do when the names of the dead are read at Convention, know that there is more here: singing can be a tool of the Holy Spirit.

The earliest secular references to Christianity for the most part mention the Christians as singing. It comes with the territory, as the Psalms say many times over. Until our own time, I know of very few Christian groups that did not sing, whether in or outside of the liturgy. There simply has to be something essential here -- if not part of the essence of the faith, certainly part of the complete experience of the faith. Ours is in some ways a troubled church. I was astounded recently by the perception of one well-intentioned group seemingly firing olive branches from howitzers without discussion. When all that starts to get me, I find that about the only effective medicine is song. Singing to the Lord and in the Lord.

(continued on page 4)



Trinity Episcopal Church - December 2004

Advent
Christmas

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>Trinity Prayer Cycle</i> 12/5 Ray, Nancy, Rachel, Ray Jr. and Haley Bressett 12/12 Chris and Rachel Brewster 12/19 Marie Bubniak, Mary Ann Burke 12/26 Joe, Laura, Peter and Tim Cama; Rachel and Peter Cama-Lekx</p>						
		<p>Christmas at Trinity Greening of the Church, morning, Caroling Party, Evening on 12/19 Carol Sing and Festival Eucharist on 12/24</p>				
<p>5 2nd Sunday of Advent 6 9:45 Church School 10:00 Holy Eucharist II 11:00 Coffee Hour</p> 	<p>7 Barbara Cole</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9 Heather Hunsinger Hazel Hunt Fr. Ben Lentz</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 Bishop's School, Grace, Kingston Ed Gilbert</p>	
<p>12 3rd Sunday of Advent 13 9:45 Church School 10:00 Holy Eucharist II 11:00 Coffee Hour</p> 	<p>14 Anglicans Around the World 12/5 The Episcopal Church in Puerto Rico, the Rt. Rev. David Adres Alvarez-Velazquez; 12/12 The Church of Venezuela, Rt. Rev. Orlando Guerrero-Torres; 12/19 The Church in Cuba, Rt. Rev. Jorge Perera Hurtado; 11/26 The Anglican Church of Ceylon.</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 Bishop's School, Grace, Kingston Shelley Barry</p>	
<p>19 4th Sunday of Advent 20 -----Vestry Meets----- 9:45 Church School 10:00 Holy Eucharist II 11:00 Greening the Church 7:00 Caroling Party</p> 	<p>21 St. Thomas the Apostle</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ 10:45 Carol Sing 11:00 Festival Eucharist Kay Bennett</p>	<p>25 Christmas Day </p>	
<p>26 Christmas I 9:45 Church School 10:00 Holy Eucharist II 11:00 Coffee Hour Don & Beverly Barton's 50th!</p>	<p>27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist Jason Barry</p>	<p>28 The Holy Innocents</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 Kajio Keji, 12/5 Oluwa Refugee Camp; 12/12 Keyo Refugee Camp; 12/19 Alere & Agojo Refugee Camp; 11/26 Bishop Manasseh, Stephen Tomor and all who work to support the Diocese of Kajio Keji. The Diocese of Meath and Kildare, Richard Clarke, Bishop.</p>	

Diocesan Prayer Cycle 12/5 The ministry of AIDS Outreach of the Lehigh Valley at Grace, Allentown, Linda Gallagher, executive director; Monica Lewellis, client services coordinator; Gloria Irizaray, volunteer coordinator. Pray for persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, friends and caregivers; 12/12 St. Thomas, Morgantown, The Rev. Eleanor Hart, rector; 12/19 The Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, the Very Rev. William B. Lane, dean and rector; the Rev. Canon Anne Kirch, canon for Christian formation; the Rev. Canon Joel Atkinson, canon missionary; the Rev. Canon David Jones, pastoral assistant; the Rev. Joseph Leo, pastoral assistant; the Rev. Henschard Gossai, scholar in residence; 12/26 St. Stephen's, Whitehall, Mr. Douglas Moyser, senior warden; The Rev. Mark Lewis, curate; the Rev. John Wagner, priest associate

Home Communion

It's often hard for some of us to get out on Sunday mornings. As winter weather approaches it can be even more difficult. Fr. Ned, Trula or Carla are happy to come visit you and bring you communion after church on Sunday, or when it's convenient for you. Please call the office at 888-5715 to arrange a visit.

Food Pantry

The first Sunday of each month is when we bring donations for the Food Pantry ... non-perishable foods in unbreakable containers.

This is an important part of our outreach ministry, so please make a note on your calendar each month to either buy a few extra items at the store or go through your pantry.

Thank you, Patricia Gurney, for volunteering for this ministry, taking over from the Becks, who have retired.

Coffee Hour Hosts

Sign up to host a coffee hour at 11 on Sundays. There's a clipboard in the parish hall kitchen. Pick up a coffee cake or donuts and share them with us. Coffee will be made already, all you need to do is set out the food. Plenty of folks will be around to help you clean up. And Thanks! Coffee hour is a good time for all.

Get connected

Point your browser to <http://trinityathens.baka.com> for our calendar, pictures and a .pdf version of our newsletter.

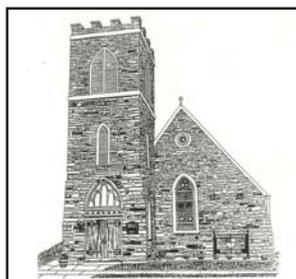
Point your browser to www.diobeth.org to read a wealth of articles, sermons and news. You can join the diocesan mailing news list or interactive discussion, or check links to many sites with wonderful information.... from the Daily Office to the worldwide Anglican Communion.

[*Sing Anyway!* continued from page 3]

Words are usually about information. Music by itself is usually about feeling. A hymn or song of praise brings these two powerful aspects of the human experience together in a way that has to be experienced to be believed.

Please sing with your children. You will give them treasures that will pay dividends all their lives. If one or two people who do not sing now, but try it after reading this, and discover a new dimension of joy, this will be ink well-spilt.

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Advent and Christmas at Trinity