



The Trinity Tidings

DECEMBER 2007

Holy Trinity's Mission: Building an open community that connects people to God and their ministries.

Advent: the liturgical season commemorating the coming of Christ into the world



photo by Chip Harman

Advent Event - here at Holy Trinity, Sunday education hours during the liturgical season when parishioners of all ages celebrate by creating religiously focused projects



December 2 Marks New Lectionary Use by Rev. Mariann Babnis, Assistant Rector

Advent marks the beginning of the Liturgical Year on December 2 and the arrival of a new lectionary to help us plan that liturgy. What's a lectionary you ask? Well it's the book with all the Bible readings – Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament, Gospel – that we read each week. We've moved from the Episcopal Eucharistic Lectionary to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL).

The RCL is an ecumenical lectionary with text selected by a group of 17 denominations, including the Episcopal Church. The General Convention approved it for trial use in 1997. In 2006 the Convention directed that it be used as the official lectionary of the Episcopal Church beginning the First Sunday of Advent 2007.

The major principle behind the lectionary is that on a Sunday members of a congregation should be able to hear the voice of each writer week by week, rather than readings being selected according to a theme. Thus, in any given year the writer of one of the first three gospels will be heard from beginning to end.

See RCL, page 6



HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Michael Arrington - Music Director

Michelle Upton - Secretary

Fritz Miller - Bookkeeper (Tues, 10 AM to 2 PM)

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite I

9:30 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II
(w/Children's' Chapel 2nd-5th Sunday
- Parish Hall)

10:45 AM – Fellowship & Education,
Sunday School, Youth Group,
Discussion Hour, and Adult Bible Study

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

(September -May)

10:15 AM – Holy Eucharist, Rite II

THE TRINITY TIDINGS

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through 2008: Craig Ryan – Junior Warden

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A Little Something Else for December by Rev. Bruce McPherson, Interim Rector

There's wishful thinking; there's optimism; and then there's hope. Advent is about hope. Wishful thinking occurs when our silliest ideas about what might be pleasing are out of touch with reality. Optimism is the belief that people and events are inherently good, evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. Hope exists at the intersection of our heart's desires and our expectation of fulfillment. Advent is about hopeful expectation.

Sometime in the mists of so-called Dark Ages, when the Vandals were sacking Rome and the a variety of nomadic peoples were ravaging northern Europe, a small group of refugees fled to Ireland sometime in the 5th century encouraged by a chant which was written by one of their number. It began this way:

“O Wisdom, which camest out of the mouth of
the Most High,
and reachest from one end to another,
mightily and sweetly ordering all things:
Come and teach us the way...”

In all, there were seven antiphons, which came to be known as the “O” antiphons. The others began “O Root of Jesse,” “O Key of David,” “O Sacred Lord,” “O Day-spring,” “O King of the Nations,” “O Emmanuel...” These were among the darkest days in the history of the world. Nothing was orderly or predictable; no place was safe. And yet, these refugees were somehow buoyed up and strengthened by this chant – a prayer meant to be sung.

In our day, we have it much too easy. Advent, with its calendars and practice of counting down the shopping days, leads to a predictable pageant, stockings hung by the chimney with care and the like. Now, I'm not against Christmas. My stocking will be hung there too. But what I do wish is that our Advents could be more hopeful and more expectant, instead of being like a well-remembered play. Christmas might then take root in our soul.

We still sing that chant from the 5th century. It has been modified some and a refrain added. The refrain goes like this:

See *EMMANUEL*, page 6



Thanksgiving with Gratitude by Marcy Cathey, HTEDS Head

The School's chapel theme for the month of November was Thanksgiving. As Chaplain John pointed out one week, we give thanks in many different ways; we give thanks to those we know and sometimes to those we don't know. Here are a few thanksgivings I will share with you from the School.

Students in all three divisions collected canned foods for two different area food banks. As I learned while visiting a small community in West Virginia, 70% of all those who use a food bank are working families. Our contributions to the area food banks will directly affect the Bowie/Glenn Dale community. Our giving thanks to our neighbors will have a great impact on our overall community; this is a thanksgiving to them.

Additionally, Chaplain John had asked for donations of new and gently used books to take to Children's Hospital where he gives comfort and aid to seriously ill children. Our books will bring joy to those who need it and sharing our bounty with them will bring smiles all around; so we are giving thanks to our local community.

Lastly, our students talked about prayer and about how prayer was a form of Thanksgiving. We pray each week that God will help our school community as well as all the other school communities around the globe. We pray for our local fire and police professionals, for our politicians, and for our brave service people who are protecting us and defending our freedom. These prayers give hope to all.

See Thanksgiving, page 6



**The Trinity Tidings,
Assisting in the Service
and Selected Sermons**
are now available online:

<http://holytrinitybowie.edow.org/>

Rector Search Update

by Steve Esmacher, Search Committee Chair

The Search Committee narrowed the search for our next rector to 5 wonderful finalists. We visited these candidates at their churches to continue the interview process in person and meet members of their congregation and family. With the Holy Spirit's help we are now discerning who our final 3 candidates will be. These will be forwarded to the Vestry before Christmas for final selection.

Please continue to keep the Search Committee in your thoughts and prayers.



Building and Grounds Events by Harold Sandy, Buildings and Grounds

Thanksgiving is still in the air! Thanks to all who helped rake leaves, our annual event. Leaves have been recycled to the woods. Thanks to Bob Gatling, one of our Boy Scout Troop leaders, for helping to cut down dead trees along our one-and-a-half mile long nature path through the woods. Thanks to Sally Gilbert for the beautiful new River Birch tree (with its triple trunks) that now graces the lower rectory lawn. And thanks for the Rectory Maintenance Fund which allowed us to scrape and repaint the white trim on the rectory's front porch. Like lipstick, it won't last long (because of roof and gutter leaks), but it will look nice for a while!



Holy Trinity Episcopal Day School Fall Open House by Karen Sharp

The Day School held its Fall Open House for prospective parents on Monday, November 12, 2007, from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM at both campuses. Tours for parents interested in grades 1-4 were held at the Lower School while those for parents interested in preschool/kindergarten and/or grades 5-8 were held at the Daisey Lane campus. Admissions Director Rosalyn Cruz-Williams stated, "We were pleased to welcome 125 visitors to the Annual Open House and so glad that interested parents resolved to attend in spite of the inclement, rainy weather that day."

Audrey and Nelson Denison Retire with 30-Plus Years of Service **as Holy Trinity Foster Child Coordinators** by Karen Sharp

How can anyone adequately thank Audrey and Nelson Denison for their steadfast service as Holy Trinity's Foster Child Coordinators for the Christian Children's Fund?

Over the last 30+ years, the Denisons have coordinated this program for 6 foster children. Their retirement comes as Holy Trinity's current foster child Cristy Sencio, a 16 year old recent high school graduate whom Holy Trinity has sponsored since age 5, has embarked upon her first year of a 3 year computer operations and programming course.

As Audrey and Nelson withdraw from this role they assumed so tirelessly, we welcome parishioner Christen Wehrenberg who will now oversee Holy Trinity's Foster Child program.

Nelson did allow that although he and Audrey had relinquished their role with Holy Trinity's foster child, he will still be the shipper of boys' clothing for the El Hogar mission in Honduras, as he has to keep busy!!



Thank you, Janice Vettel, RN, and Carl Vettel by Karen Sharp

For the third year in a row, Registered Nurse Janice Vettel brought her flu clinic to Holy Trinity through Passport Health. What a wonderful service she and husband Carl, who coordinates filling out all the paperwork and collecting the vaccine fees, render to Holy Trinity parishioners! During this year's clinic, 52 vaccines were given. Having this opportunity at Holy Trinity makes getting the shots for flu and pneumonia almost painless.



John Daniels Named Youth Minister
by Rev. Bruce McPherson, Karen Sharp & Laykin Zarro

John Daniels, the Chaplain at Holy Trinity Day School, was called to the position of Youth Minister by the Vestry at its October meeting. John, a native of Seattle, Washington and a 2007 graduate of the Virginia Theological Seminary, is married to Lori and the couple have three children. As Youth Minister, John is responsible for working with the youth of the Parish and supporting the adult volunteers. Journey to Adulthood is the curriculum which currently serves as the backbone of the youth program.

John, as a recipient of the 2007 Arthur F. McNulty Jr. Memorial Internship, previously worked with the homeless and at-risk youths in Pittsburgh through an interfaith organization that is made up of faith groups from the downtown area. Daniels has also served as the on-call chaplain for the Children's National Medical Center, Washington, DC, and the Virginia Hospital Center, Arlington, VA. His experience includes mission trips to the Diocese of Louisiana for Katrina Relief and a HIV/AIDS pilgrimage to the Diocese of Christ the King, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The Vestry is excited about the experience and ideas that John brings to this position as Holy Trinity works to rebuild the Youth Program.

Holiday Stewardship
by Tom Lackey, Stewardship Ministry Chair, and Evelyn Kirby

With late Fall comes the "Holiday Season:" Halloween, All Saints' Day, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, wonderful times to slow down our hectic lives and reflect on the many blessings that we and our families have received.

Parishioners were invited by the Stewardship Ministry to have breakfast in the Parish Hall on Sunday, November 11. The Hall was filled with people who came to "slow down," socialize and feast on a variety of breakfast casseroles, bagels, cereal, drinks and fruit. A special "thank you" goes to all the people who supplied food and helped set up the Hall for this wonderful annual tradition.

It is also time for Holy Trinity members to look forward to and prepare for the future. If you have already given your financial pledge for 2007, thank you very much. If you have not yet done so, please try to do so as soon as possible. Many members are hard at work drafting a budget for 2008. The sooner we have all pledges in, the better will be our ability to project how our finances can be used to further God's work through Holy Trinity.

See STEWARDSHIP, page 6

RCL, From page 1

Because the cycle is three years long, only three of the Gospel writers – Mark, Matthew and Luke – are given a year. Likewise the rest of the New Testament is heard, in some cases virtually in total.

The treatment given to the [Old Testament](#) provides a further qualification to the first principle. Because it is so much longer than the New, it is inevitable that a smaller proportion of the material will be included. In Year A the focus is on Genesis and Exodus; Year B focuses on the Davidic narrative and Wisdom literature; and Year C has the Prophets.

If you are interested in getting a copy of the Revised Common Lectionary you may do so through the Episcopal Church website, www.episcopalchurch.org, or talk to Mariann Babnis.

EMMANUEL, From page 2

“Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.” This haunting refrain speaks to our hopes like no other. This year in the warmth of the church and of our homes, it might be well to remember those ancient refugees who sung of their hopes in a world in which life was utterly hopeless. Advent is about hopeful expectation – the expectation that the audacity of our heart’s desire might be met in mystery of the night sky, the shining of a remarkable star and cries of an infant child. Christmas is that time when “the hopes and fears of all the years” are met. It is the advent of the possibility of a truly peaceable kingdom, when, as Dr. King famously said, “men (and women) of the most recalcitrant bent will be transformed. And then we will all be in God’s Kingdom.”

Have a hopeful Advent and a blessed Christmas.

THANKSGIVING, From page 3

I hope that your Thanksgiving was full of giving thanks for those near and far, healthy and sick, and those known and unknown in need. Please know how thankful we are for you, our parish church. The faculty, staff, and students, and I wish you the very best for this holiday season. Have a safe and wonderful Christmas.

STEWARDSHIP, From page 5

Pledge forms are available in the back of the church. They can be placed in the offering plate on Sunday or left at the Church Office. Alternately, you can pledge on-line by visiting the Holy Trinity website, <http://holytrinitybowie.edow.org/pledge.html>!



Christmas Worship Services

Monday, December 24, Christmas Eve

5:00 PM Christmas Pageant

10:00 PM Festival Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, December 25, Christmas Day

10:00 AM Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December, 30 (one service only)

9:30 AM A Festival of Lessons and Carols

The Work of Christmas

by Rev. Susan Russell, Senior Associate, All Saints Church, Pasadena, CA

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When the star in the sky is gone,
When the Kings and Princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost
To heal the broken
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner
To teach the nations
To bring Christ to all
To make music in the heart.
— Howard Thurman

It is not only my favorite Christmas verse – this poem by Howard Thurman – it’s also my Christmas life preserver. It’s what I pull out and put on when I find myself floating in the vast sea of all there is to do, find, buy, wrap, bake, cook, plan and finish as the clock ticks down to the Christmas event.

It’s hard to keep your head above water when the culture is crazed, the media relentless, the pressure to “get it right” is everywhere. Ironic, isn’t it, that the very season that offers the message of “Peace on Earth, Good Will to All” brings instead “Stress on Earth, Bad Temper” to many!

And so – every year – Howard Thurman reminds me that the real work of Christmas isn’t about trees and tinsel but about peace and justice. “The Work of Christmas” calls us to resist the greatest temptation of all this blessed Christmas season: to “put Christ into Christmas” only to leave him there — to receive with joy the gift of the Word made flesh on this Christmas Eve and fail to live as the Body of Christ the other 364 days of the year.

And so as we celebrate the Christmas miracle of our brother Jesus born of our sister Mary — with all of its beloved trappings and traditions — may we also be given the grace to bring the hope of Christmas alive in the year ahead.

May we be given the courage to refuse to leave Christ only in Christmas but to follow in his footsteps by doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God “in season and out of season.” And may we be given the energy and imagination to ask “what child is this” of each and every member of God’s beloved human family as we go out to do the work of Christmas.

