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St. Christopher's *e-Traveler*

Issue #50

DECEMBER 2016

From the RECTOR

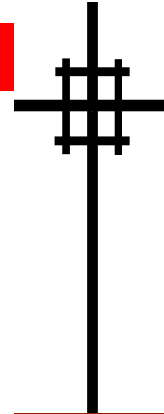


The Rev.
John F. Dwyer
Rector

God of the keen blade,
which cuts to roots of arrogant power:
you raise
voices of promise
in the dry lands of our desire,
children of faith
from stones of the earth;
make us ready to receive the Spirit
and the fire of love,
wild and fierce and free;
through Jesus Christ,
the one who is to come. Amen
*From Prayers for an Inclusive Church
Advent 2A*

Happy Advent and Christmas, St. Christopher's!

Advent is that first season of the church's liturgical year that so often gets lost, over-looked because of the cultural-based-insanity that overtakes our world in the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Christmas trees and decorations have been up in the stores since the day after Halloween (if not before). All of us can get caught up (or perhaps fed up) with the push of the season. It seems to me that is one of the benefits of having this short Season of Advent - where we are reminded: to breathe deep, to reflect often (if only momentarily), to pray. To remember that there is something more important than that perfect gift or card...To remember that Jesus' birth that we prepare to celebrate is the center of this season, not us. And re-orienting ourselves in



Meet
Christ
Be Christ

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

2300 Hamline Ave N
Roseville, MN 55113
651-633-4589
stchristophers-mn.org

VESTRY:

- Mary Pendergrass,
Sr. Warden
- Jeff Jensen,
Jr. Warden
- Ann DePadis-Jones,
Clerk
- Suzanne Hitchcock,
Treasurer
- Kathy Ackerman
- Darlene Cross
- Harold Danley
- Jan Fillmore
- Elizabeth Grayden
- Christopher Lacher
- Becky Lucas
- Mike Sirany
- Barbara Swanson

STAFF:

- Ruth Thillen,
Parish Administrator
- Chad O'Leary
Youth Director
- Marion Hunner,
Children's Ministries

that direction can help us put other things in perspective.

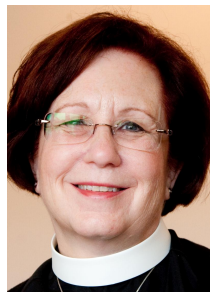
There are a number of events this month here at St. Christopher's that can help us keep that perspective, that focus. Participating in the Gifts of Hope collection that began last Sunday, and will continue for the next ten days is one. We are truly changing this season for those individuals for whom we are buying gifts, and that generosity, in turn, changes us. There is the *Service of Lessons and Carols*, this year on Sunday, December 18th, returning to its historic time of 4 PM. And there is also the *Service of Hope and Remembrance* that returns to us on Wednesday, December 21st at 7 PM. This is a service meant to give all of us a place to pause and remember, to center ourselves, to remember, to let ourselves be vulnerable, to hope, to find strength and courage, to escape, to be reborn.

When I am able to breathe deeply, reflect, and pray, being reminded to put Jesus at the center, I can't help but give thanks for the clarity that bestows on my entire being. I think about the very great abundance that suffuses all that we do here at St. Christopher's. I see the abundance of: love and support, of respect and dignity, of faithful effort and caring service. And that focus, with Jesus at the heart of that motivation, allows me to better balance the challenges that can distract me from all that abundance. I hope and pray that all of us can find that balance, that clarity, that pause this holy season calls us to, allowing a more balanced, healthy, and healing walk through this time.

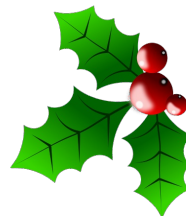
A Blessed December to all.



The Deacon Discusses



The Rev.
Janet MacNally,
Deacon



The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment. ~ Fredrick Buechner

It is that time of year once again. We have had the "official" holiday season kick-off with turkey, football and massive, crowded shopping. The world is now ready to move into the CHRISTMAS SEASON! It is true, the world that surrounds us is suddenly festooned in all things red, green and white and Santas and reindeer and elves and occasionally a crèche set or two are on

Karla S. Cole,
Director of Music
Rev. Mary Rowe,
Assisting Priest
Rev. Janet MacNally,
Deacon
Rev. John F. Dwyer,
Rector

Our PROGRAM YEAR Schedule

Sunday:

8:00 AM

Holy

Eucharist

9:00 AM

Fellowship

9:00-9:25 AM

Archangels

-Music Room

9:30-10:20 AM

Children's

Education

-Room 107

9:30-10:15 AM

Youth Education

-Youth Room

9:30-10:15 AM

Adult Education

-Chapel

(1st & 3rd)

10:30 AM

Holy

Eucharist

11:30 AM

Fellowship

Wednesday:

12:15 PM

Holy

Eucharist

-Chapel

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday

9 AM - 4 PM

**Hear the Twin
Cities Gay
Men's
Chorus!**

display. We are consumed as we consume. But the words of Fredrick Buechner remind us that the extraordinary thing that we and this season is about is about to celebrate, hasn't quite happened yet. And still there is something equally extraordinary although still and quiet that is happening here and now. Advent is that wonderful season of preparation and meditation that is in Buechner's words the name of that wonderful moment of expectation that we as a faith community honor each year.

When I first came to St. Christopher's, I shared that my favorite Advent tradition/memory is the fact that our son, Andrew, had decided at around age 6 that the Baby Jesus should not be placed in the family crèche set before Christmas Eve. We found out about his rather strong feelings on the issue when the Baby Jesus went missing, and Andrew remained silent as we questioned out loud where on earth Jesus could have gone. We went to the early evening church service that year, and while everyone else was busy getting things ready for dinner, Andrew slid off, retrieved the Baby Jesus, and placed Him with the other figures as he announced "Now Jesus can be born!" It was a tradition that long passed childhood and went into college and law school. I miss the ceremonial disappearance and celebratory placement of that little figurine. And I wonder if he will teach his own little daughter to do the same thing?

I share that story, because it never fails to remind me not to rush too quickly into the wonder that is Christmas. Nature, with its ever shortening days and cold weather seems to call us home, where there is light and warmth and quiet, to dwell in the mystery that is about to happen. It is often a mighty struggle to fight the onslaught of the world outside our doors at this time of year, but when we do, when we take the time to respond to the natural rhythm of the season, our lives are richer and our joy at Christmas that much greater.

My invitation to all of you, my sisters and brothers in Christ, this Advent season is to at least metaphorically remove the Christ Child from the center of things for the next few days and weeks, move with the rhythm of the seasons, draw yourselves in and find time to read or meditate or simply be, with the expectation of what is about to happen. And then on Christmas Eve, after we have all celebrated with great joy at the extraordinary event that has (finally) happened, place the babe in the manger and in your hearts.

Blessed Advent to you all
Deacon Janet

Music Notes

Karla Cole,

Music Director

Ten complimentary tickets are available to St. Christopher's folks to hear **TCGMC's Gay Holiday Spectacular!** with special guests *Copper Street Brass (and other surprises!)*, Friday, Dec. 9, or Saturday, Dec. 10, at 8pm, or Sunday, Dec. 11 at 2pm, at Ted Mann Concert Hall on the U of M Campus. Subject to availability, please claim yours **BY NOON MONDAY 12/5**, by calling the office.

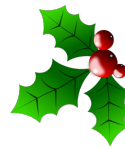


DECEMBER Calendar Highlights

- 4 8 AM Holy Eucharist**
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist
- 7 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist**
-Chapel
6:15 PM Youth Group-Youth Rm
7:15 PM Parish Choir-Music Rm
- 8 1 PM Knitting-Library**
- 11 8 AM Holy Eucharist**
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist
- 12 5:30 PM Finance Comm.**
-Parish Hall



Usually, I'm highly annoyed by the encroaching commercialism of Christmas. And so far this year, I've been adept at ignoring it. Just busy or distracted, I guess. It's certainly everywhere you go just now, and you have to work pretty intentionally at keeping Advent in the face of the cultural Christmas creep. It's hard to get into a quiet, prayerful Advent mode when all around you are people



putting up their decorations and playing boisterous carols. Every weekend seems to be jam-packed with Christmas themed events, and you must get the presents bought and the cookies baked. Now you might think that it's easier for those of us who work in the church to manage a thoughtful celebration of Advent, but I began mulling over Christmas music last July and all the choirs start working on their Christmas music in October, so Christmas has been a part of my mental baggage for quite a while now. Perhaps that's why Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. Just gratitude, no gifts.

Despite all of that, Christmas really is coming and now it's time for me to invite you to attend the annual **Festival of Lessons and Carols**. This year, it will be held on **Sunday afternoon, December 18th at 4:00**. Even if you don't usually attend our extra services, I would really encourage you to come out for this one. The service is in the traditional Anglican form with the readings from scripture alternating with hymns, carols and anthems. This year's music comes from all over the world. It's an interesting mix of styles, with plenty of familiar carols as well as some that likely will be new to you.

Our Lessons and Carols service is really just a big party. We all get together and tell the ancient story through scripture and song, and we have yummy treats. It's a great opportunity to celebrate Christmas with our St. Christopher's friends before they all travel off to visit their relatives. It's a not-to-be-missed event, so you should put it on your calendar and join us!

Karla Cole

- 14 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist**
-Chapel
- 6:15 PM Bell Choir-Balcony**
- 6:15 PM Youth Group-Youth Rm**
- 7:15 PM Parish Choir-Music Rm**

- 18 8 AM Holy Eucharist**
- 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist**
- 4 PM Lessons and Carols**
-Reception follows!

- 19 6:45 PM Vestry-Parish Hall**

- 20 Meals on Wheels - Offsite**

- 21 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist**
-Chapel
- 6:15 PM Youth Group-Youth Rm**
- 7 PM A Service of Hope & Remembrance**

- 24 Christmas Eve**
- 3 PM Children's Eucharist**
- 5 PM Festival Eucharist**

- 25 Christmas Day**
- 10 AM Holy Eucharist**

- 26 Office Closed**

- 27 e-Traveler Deadline**

- 28 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist**
-Chapel



Footprints
December 2016



News from Children's
Ministries



Marion Hunner

Children's Ministries Director

Thank you to everyone who participated in the annual **Christmas Card Contest**. **Madeline Drake's** picture will appear on the front of St. Christopher's Christmas card, which will be mailed soon. All of the entries are displayed on the Children's Ministries bulletin board across from the Children's Library.

Suggested Advent prayers and activities for home - during this very busy season, I hope that families will be able to find some quiet time to prepare their homes and hearts for the coming of Jesus. Traditions that you begin when they are young can last a lifetime. I have posted several advent resources on St. Christopher's website under Resources/Family - please take a look. Also, if you would like a set of purple and pink Advent candles (tapers) for your Advent wreath at home, please let me know - I have a limited number of these available.

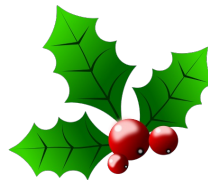
Gifts of Hope - The children did a wonderful job painting ornaments for our Gifts of Hope display. Please consider taking an ornament (or 2 or 3) and including your child(ren) in purchasing gifts for the families that we are sponsoring. The ornament is yours to keep to help your family keep another family in your thoughts and prayers during the holidays.

Sunday, December 18th, the Archangels will sing at the 10:30 liturgy. Moving forward, the Archangels will be on hiatus until we have more children to participate.

Lessons and Carols - All are welcome to this lovely service of music and scripture. It lasts about 1 hour, and there is a beautiful reception that follows the service.

Family Christmas Eve Service:

In addition to our 5:00 Choral Eucharist, we have a special family service at 3:00pm. This service will only be about 45 minutes long, and all are welcome. Children will be asked to bring forward the elements of the crèche as the nativity story unfolds, and everyone will have a star to contribute. Please see Fr. John or Deacon Janet before the service to get a piece of the crèche to bring forward - stars will be placed in the bulletins.



Holiday Sunday School Schedule

- We will miss two weeks of Sunday School for the holidays this year: December 25th, and January 1st. We will pick up our regular schedule on Sunday, January 8th to celebrate

6:15 PM Bell
Choir-Balcony
7:15 PM Parish
Choir-Music Rm

29 5:30 PM
Community
Dinner-
Parish Hall

Please note:

Outside group use of the building has not been listed here. Please note that we now have music lessons Monday through Saturday. Please check the calendar in the office before scheduling a meeting or event. Our weekly building-use calendar is quite busy!

Youth News



Chad O'Leary

Youth Ministries Director

YOUTH GROUP

We will be meeting on the following dates: December 7, 14, & 21 (6:15-8:00 PM). During this month, we will be practicing the glass harp & baking communion bread (12/7); having our pre-Christmas party (12/14); and supporting the Blue Christmas service (12/21). Please bring a wrapped white elephant gift (cheap gag gift) and an empty stomach to our party on Dec. 14 – there will be lots of games and food!

–

Much Peace on the Journey,
Chad O'Leary



Gifts of Hope: I wish I could be a fly on the wall...

By Marion Hunner and Keystone Community Services



We have all heard, and maybe even said these words before. Imagine for a minute, you are a fly on the wall of a family celebrating Christmas Day 2016. Kids squealing with excitement, running around with brightly wrapped presents asking, "Is it for me?" Shreds of wrapping paper litter the floor and adults are smiling, enjoying a day free of stress... free from the problems they face on a daily basis.

You may be on a wall in a home, an apartment, a homeless shelter or perhaps in temporary housing. The family you see is one of the many families that Keystone's case managers have been working with throughout the year to strengthen and stabilize their lives. This family is able to experience the joy and blessings of Christmas because of the kindness and generosity of Gifts of Hope sponsors.

Although you probably cannot become a fly on the wall, you can make this scene a reality for a family in need this holiday season. By helping St. Christopher's with the families we sponsor, you can help change the way an entire family views this special time of year.

Keystone case managers have nominated families they feel would most benefit from this assistance. Through the generous support of sponsors, struggling families are given an opportunity to spend quality time together sharing memories and making new ones.

Our Gifts of Hope display, created by the youth and children, is in the Lower Narthex. There are ornaments with tags attached. The ornament is yours to keep - hoping that you will remember and pray for the recipient and their family. The tag gives information about a person and items on their wish list. Please take an ornament (or 2 or 3) and purchase an item for this person. Bring the gift (with the tag) to church **unwrapped** and place it in the box by Sunday, December 11th. Monetary gifts are always welcome- they should be placed in Marion's mailbox outside the main office or slipped under her office door. Monetary gifts will be used to purchase anything that does not come in, and/or wrapping paper. Checks can be made to "St. Christopher's," and please write "Gifts of Hope" on the memo line.

We provide the following for each family:

- 1 family functional item
- 1 family fun item
- 1 personal item for each adult
- 1 clothing item for each child
- 1 personal item for each child
- 1 toy/fun item for each child

Pulse of the Parish

Good Morning. I am on your Vestry. Today I am offering the Pulse of the Parish. The purpose of this brief update is to keep you informed of the actions taken by the Vestry at their meeting on Monday, November 21st.

- The monthly financial report was reviewed. Budgeted income is below expectations due to the kitchen not being used by renters. Our budgeted expenses for the month and year are below budgeted amounts. Our financial situation remains as has been budgeted. As a reminder, we ask that if you have not yet started participating in the automatic withdrawal payment program, that you contact Ruth Thillen, our Parish Administrator, to begin participating in that program. It allows for more reliable cash flow.
- The Vestry learned that the LED lightbulbs have been ordered with installation hoped for before Christmas.
- The Vestry reviewed and approved the program budget prepared and recommended by the Finance Team. A letter detailing the 2017 program budget will be sent to the parish in early December
- The Vestry discussed status reports concerning Nominations for Vestry, the Silent Auction, and the Mardi Gras fundraiser.
- The Vestry is pleased to announce a caterer has been retained to handle all funeral luncheons which families choose to host in our Parish Hall. The caterer's name is

Kathy's Kitchen. They offer a wide range of meals, both hot and cold, at a reasonable cost.

- The Vestry is looking for volunteers to organize and participate in the Roseville Parade in June of 2017. Please contact either Mary Pendergrass, our Senior Warden, or Jeff Jensen, our Junior Warden if you would like to be lead or participate in this important local event.
- The Vestry would like to recognize the following people in our "Shout-outs" for the work they have recently done for our parish:
 - All the volunteers who worked at the Voting Welcome Table
 - Everyone who worked on the Small Bites and the Silent Auction
 - The Flower Garden Team

Please be aware that the minutes of the November meeting will not be available to read online or in the library until after they have been approved at the Vestry's December meeting. I will be at coffee hour after the service. Please feel free to ask any Vestry member or me any questions you have about this meeting. Thank you for your attention.

Last Words

I hope you have enjoyed the December *e-Traveler*.

A couple of guys stopped by the office, and left again quite quickly to go off to see another part of the building. Our dear Lincoln, who was quite ready to greet them, was a bit bewildered when they didn't stay! But it gave me a great opportunity for a picture!



As always, I am looking ahead to the NEXT ***e-Traveler***, and a big item on THAT calendar will be the Annual Meeting on January 21st. If you are making a report to the parish that gets published in the Annual Report book, please note the deadline will be January 17th.

Sincerely,
Ruth Thillen, Parish Administrator

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December 2016 *e-Traveler* ADDENDUM

Hello, everyone! TWO things for this addendum:

First, my apologies to the Green Team for forgetting their article when I sent the *e-Traveler* yesterday! The article is below.

Second, the correct date for the Annual Meeting in January is the 22nd, not the 21st as stated.

Your Editor, Ruth

GREEN TEAM

Did you know that

Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday period than any other time of year? The extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage, or about 1 million extra tons per week! If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet. If every American family wrapped just 3 presents in re-used materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.

Consider making gift bags out of fabric that can be reused each year!

Visit http://bgm.stanford.edu/pssi_holiday_waste for more ideas.

****St. Christopher's will once again be collecting old strings of lights for recycling. Look for marked boxes in the lower Narthex.*****