



THE MESSENGER



Parish News of St. John's Episcopal Church, Saginaw, Michigan

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4
WEEKS
ADVENT
5
EVENTS



IN THIS ISSUE...

Saint Nicholas Party ♦ Christmas Outreach Baskets ♦ A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols ♦ Christmas Flowers & Music ♦ Visit a Living Nativity ♦ Former Warden, Herb Spence, Reflects on Advent

Christmas Traditions Past, Present, and Future...

When I think back over the half century of Advent seasons I have enjoyed at St. John's, many wonderful memories come to mind. Many of them revolve around the preparations for St John's version of our Christmas Pageant, which was originally written and directed for many years by my Grandmother, Bunny Holmes.

Knowing that my mother, in her high school years, starred in the earliest performances of the same pageant that, later, featured my siblings and me and, eventually, my children, makes those memories very special, indeed. I felt so tied to this St John's tradition that I volunteered to direct the pageant, myself, for about eighteen years or so. Every year had its own precious moments of joy, beautiful music and, of course, comic relief from curious, wandering Littlest Angels and Wisemen (or "Wise Guys", as we affectionately called them) who loved to make the Curtain Angels giggle.

I am pretty sure those past Christmas Pageant seasons, filled with pageant rehearsals and performances, also probably bring many wonderful memories to many of those now grown-up kids, as well as the proud parents and other parishioners who enjoyed watching them. And I am sure those of you who were part of other parish families during past Advent seasons enjoyed your own wonderful traditions. Although I, like probably many others, may miss some of these past traditions and memories, I am very grateful for the new traditions and memories we are currently making together at St John's. One example is how so many parishioners are involved in bringing smiles to the faces of our neighbors in Rosien Towers, as they receive their Christmas baskets from St John's.

This Advent season our parish looks forward, not only to the coming of Christmas, but to many exciting new things, from the completion of our more welcoming and accessible facilities to our search for a new Rector. And, although (not unlike most of the past Christmas pageant rehearsals I can remember) these new endeavors are not without some hard work and anxious moments, I have faith that they will all be well worth the effort in the long run. Thanks to all of you who continue to give your time, talent and treasure to St John's ministries and for making our new and future traditions and memories possible.

Herb Spence III



Happy Birthday!

- 2 Paul Ilkka
- 2 Tanya Brown
- 4 Samantha Barshaw
- 4 Olivia Corcoran
- 5 Herb III Spence
- 6 Herb IV Spence
- 8 Ellen Redfield
- 8 Jane Vondrasek
- 9 Benjamin Donaghy
- 15 Myrna Endean
- 16 Dennis Thom
- 21 Derek Cittel
- 21 Gerald Lockhart
- 22 Paige Cittel
- 22 Jean Ramet
- 23 Christopher Corcoran
- 24 Tyler Rump
- 26 Laurie Seibert

Happy Anniversary!

- 13 Susan & Dennis Daugherty
- 18 Christine & Paul Schaub
- 26 Betsy & Dennis Greenwood
- 27 Tanya & Jim Brown
- 31 Sonni & Jim Magyar

Vestry Members:

- Keith Birdsall, Senior Warden
- Burris Smith, Junior Warden
- Marcia Hoffman, Treasurer
- Janet Cosenza, Clerk
- William Frederick
- Constance Grantham
- Susan Marquardt
- William Scharffe
- Dennis Thom

Thank You

Thanks to everyone who helped make our Holidays in the Heart of the City concert run so smoothly including: **Ellen Redfield, Mark Mahlberg, Tim & Judi Braun, Jack & Sue Luxton, Dave Humpert, Drew Christensen, Sharon Kaylor, & Marcia Hoffman.** You shared St. John's with nearly 250 people! Great Job!

A HUGE thank you to the Finance Committee for your many hours and firm commitment including: **Jerry Young, Marcia Hoffman, Ellen Redfield, Bill Vlassis, Herb Spence, Burris Smith, & Keith Birdsall.**

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the C.A.N. Council Hats & Mittens including: **Edith David, Susan Ludwig, Virginia Warner, Mary Spence, & Kathy Judd.** You knitted and crocheted nearly 100 items!

Is there someone in our parish who has gone above and beyond? If you would like to offer thanks, please call the office

Good Samaritans:

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------|
| Nov. 14 - Dec. 11 | Lou Smith | 799-5583 |
| Dec. 12 - Dec. 25 | Michael Keenan | 790-8712 |
| Dec. 26 - Jan. 8 | Sue Luxton | 684-9169 |

WHEELS WANTED:

St. John's is looking for a new set wheels... well, an old set would work just fine, too.

In the spirit of Accessibility, St. John's would like to add a wheelchair to our tool box of what we can offer our visitors. Have one your not using? It could find a good home at St. John's. Contact the parish office or Burris Smith with questions. Thank You!



Cottage Meeting Update:

Perhaps the most important step in the process of calling our next rector is listening to the many voices of the parish. Through a series of three Cottage Meetings, we asked each of you to answer the following question: What are the most important characteristics, skills and dispositions that you want in our next rector? For those who couldn't make a meeting, surveys were sent, either by email or US Post.

In general, it's clear that two areas are most important to the congregation: Leadership and Worship. Regarding worship, sermons that are understandable, inspiring and related to our lives are a critical need. A leadership style that is open, inclusive and caring was high on the priority list. We heard also that a strong commitment to increasing membership and championing youth programs was important. These and many other ideas will become a major part of the profile of St. John's as we move into the next steps in our search.

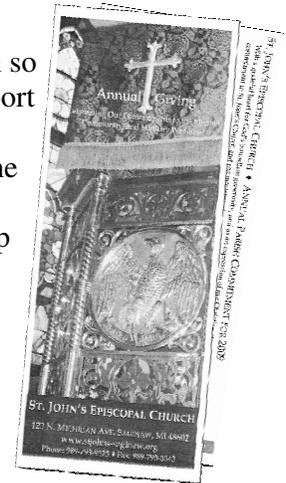
We asked for your thoughts and ideas and we got them! Thanks to each of you who contributed; your efforts will make our search that much more meaningful and inclusive.

Burris Smith,
Junior Warden

Stewardship Update:

Thank you! Your commitment and the ministry we share has made it possible in so many ways to continue turning St. John's around towards a new day! Your support helps make a real difference financially as well as in our fellowship and the care, service and programs we offer. As you know from your own involvement and the news we, as a parish, have shared physical enhancements and repairs, but even more importantly, fiscal improvements and program enhancements have been top priorities. St. John's will continue to prepare and embrace a bright New Year. We can only do this through the commitment of every member of the parish like you who continue to share their time, talents and treasure.

Your pledge is important as we work towards the completion of our 2011 budget. If you would like to return a pledge card but have not yet, they are available in the Community Room or as a PDF download from our website.



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You're Invited to
Lessons & Carols

St. John's Episcopal Church

is hosting a service of Lessons & Carols **December 19th, at 7:30pm.**

This service is an Anglican tradition that started in 1918 at King's College as a way to bring new life to worship. It is full of scripture readings and music that tell the Christmas story.

Guest Choir, *Exultate Deo*, is made up of singers from around the Tri-Cities, and will lead our celebration. Why not make this Anglican Tradition part of your Christmas tradition?



| | Christmas Eve Family Service with Holy Eucharist | Christmas Eve Festive Choral Eucharist (Choral Prelude, 10:30-11:00pm) | Christmas Day |
|----------------------|---|---|----------------------|
| <i>Service Time:</i> | 6:30pm | 11:00pm | 10:30am |
| <i>1st Lesson:</i> | Isaiah 9:2-7 | Isaiah 9:2-7 | Isaiah 62:6-12 |
| <i>Psalm:</i> | 96 | 96 | 97 |
| <i>2nd Lesson:</i> | Titus 2:11-14 | Titus 2:11-14 | Titus 3:4-7 |
| <i>Gospel:</i> | Luke 2:1-20 | Luke 2:1-20 | Luke 2:1-20 |
| Usher/Greeter | Nancy Birdsall | Connie Grantham | Barbara Roberts |
| Usher/Greeter | Paul Ilkka | Tom Grantham | John Roberts |
| Usher/Greeter | Ray Ilkka | Jack Luxton | |
| Usher/Greeter | Berney Jones | Dennis Thom | |
| Usher/Greeter | | Virginia Warner | |
| Usher/Greeter | | Jerry Young | |
| Lector - 1st: | Barb Ilkka | Bill Scharffe | |
| Lector - 2nd: | Keith Birdsall | Burriss Smith | |
| L.E.M. | Betsy Greenwood | Drew Christiansen | Tom Lynes |
| L.E.M. | Herb Spence | Burriss Smith | |
| Acolyte | Jim Magyar | Tom Donaghy | |



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Christmas Giving Tree & Outreach Basket Project

Come be a part of a great tradition that makes a difference!

The St. John's Christmas tradition of preparing, packing and delivering gift boxes to the residents of Rosein Towers has become a way of meeting and greeting our neighbors. One of the true gifts of giving our time, talent and treasure is the opportunity to meet face to face. The people who participate in the lunch bag program feel the same way.

Just as important as helping our community... we have FUN. Outreach is important and vital, but that doesn't mean it has to be serious and glum. Although the holiday season tends to be difficult for many, for different reasons, one of the best ways to cope is to get out there and concentrate on others, and let others up-lift you! We have many folks who participate by collecting items, packaging the boxes, and *delivering* the gifts and we couldn't do this without them. However, we also need you! Please give this some prayerful consideration, and feel free to ask more questions of vestry or staff.



Dates to Know...

| | |
|---------------|---|
| December 5th | Giving Tree is up and ready for plucking! What will you give? |
| December 15th | Giving Tree items are due. |
| December 19th | Baskets are assembled following the 8:00 & 10:30 services. |
| December 20th | Baskets are delivered! |

Items to Donate...

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Red Envelope: | <i>Monetary Donation</i> |
| Green Tag: | <i>Non-Perishable Food</i> |
| | Canned Fruit |
| | Canned Vegetables |
| | Plastic Jar of Peanut Butter |
| | Canned Soup |
| | Box of Crackers |
| | Cereal |
| Yellow Tag: | <i>Personal Items</i> |
| | 3-Pack Bar Soap |
| | Shampoo |
| | Hand Cream |
| | Toilet Tissue (4pk.) |
| | Facial Tissue (box) |
| | Paper Towels (2pk.) |



Saint Nicholas Party

December 5th, join us for a **parish potluck** and celebration of the Advent season! We will gather together following the 10:30 service for food and fellowship. Some of the afternoon's activities will include:

- reading of the Saint Nicholas story
- decorating our Christmas Tree
- kicking off our Christmas Outreach Basket project

Last names beginning with A-L please bring a dessert to share and last names beginning with M-Z please bring a hot side or salad. If you will be joining us for the first time today, please be our guest!



Living Nativity Outing

After the St. Nicholas Party why not join the pilgrim throng on its way to Bethlehem to be counted, listen to the shepherds recount the angel's message, hear the prophets, and experience the nativity story for yourself with a visit to the Living Nativity in Frankentrost.

A group from St. John's will be leaving from church at 5:15 on December 5th to carpool to the event. Contact Pam Renna for details.

Special Services at St. John's!

Lessons & Carols

December 19th. 7:30pm

This service will be full of scripture readings and music that tell the Christmas Story. Come and listen to *Exultate Deo*, a guest choir made up of singers from around the Tri-Cities who will lead our celebration!

Christmas Eve - Crèche Service

December 24th. 6:30pm

Our 6:30 service will be a family oriented crèche service filled with the music and symbols of Christmas, including the completion of our nativity scene and Holy Communion.

Christmas Eve - Musical Prelude

December 24th. 10:30pm

Join us for our 10:30 Musical Prelude as one of the finest church choirs in Saginaw prepares us for worship! Their selection of time honored music will stir the soul and prepare the heart for joyful worship on Christmas Eve!

Christmas Eve - Festive Choral Eucharist

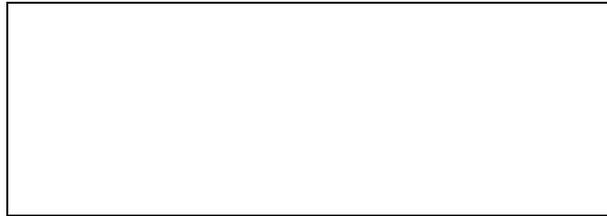
December 24th. 11:00pm

The 11:00 service will be a traditional Choral Eucharist.

Christmas Day - Holy Eucharist

December 25th. 10:30am

Our Christmas Day service will be a traditional Eucharist with carols and homily.



What are you doing for Christmas?

St. Nicholas Party
 Dec. 5 - 11:45am

In addition to worship, the day will include:

- Parish potluck
- Kicking off of our Christmas Outreach Project
- Decorating
- Reading of the St. Nicholas Story



Lessons & Carols

December 19th
 7:30pm

This service will be full of scripture readings and music that tell the story of Christmas.

Come and listen to guest choir *Exultate Deo!*



Christmas Eve

December 24th

Crèche Service - Our 6:30 service will be a family oriented crèche service filled with the music and symbols of Christmas!

Festive Choral Eucharist - The 11:00 service will be a traditional Choral Eucharist with homily. Join us at 10:30pm for a musical prelude.

Christmas Day

December 25th

Holy Eucharist - Our Christmas Day service will be a traditional Eucharist with carols and homily.

