

MAGNIFICAT

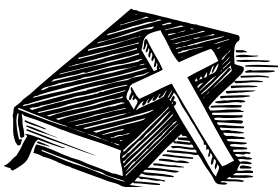
PARISH NEWS FROM THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY
EPISCOPAL CHURCH DECEMBER 2007 – JANUARY 2008

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FROM THE RECTOR

Advent is a special time of year for me for one simple reason. At this time of year, the sun rises and shines through the windows of the church just in time for our Sunday eight o'clock Eucharist. When I see the sun shining through the windows, I am reminded of the hope that offsets the dark mystery surrounding Advent waiting, and it sets the tone for me that lasts through Epiphany. I guess I look at it like the rainbow in the story of Noah. God journeys with us in our sojourn on earth. God does not save us from the plight before us, but creates new situations whereby we are partners in our salvation.



The message of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany is one of God calling people to be a part of the salvation story. That story continues with us in our daily living. God comes to us and becomes one of us in order to show us how to be truly human. So the life that Jesus lives becomes incredibly significant as a guide for how we should live. Jesus shared our experience and redeemed humanity not only by saving our souls, but also by showing us life from a perspective of God's values, and then calling us to participate in this God-driven way of seeing and being. Theologians call this redeeming the human condition:

“In an age which offers a variety of escapes from the human condition, Christians are more than ever a sign of contradiction. They continue to believe that the search for God must begin with the acceptance of the human. They believe this because it is in the stable of humanity that God has come in search of us.

In the human experience of Jesus, God became available to us as the depth of human life. Thus, a Christian believes that the experience of ultimate meaning comes not from a leap out of the human condition, but a journey through its dark waters.”

-John Heagle

A Contemporary Meditation on Hope

In Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, we are called to be human. Not just the human

animal but the soulful, compassionate beings that Jesus calls us to become. For me, this is what I hope and pray to become in the midst of my own condition. For me, this is what the light on Sunday morning does for me: it reminds me that I am more than a breathing animal. God has created a way for us to be more than what we are, and illumined a path for us to find our way. His name is Jesus. He calls us to heed Him and forms us with love so that we might bring peace to the hearts of all. I believe this to be possible and I believe it is the reason we are called into partnership with God.

See you in Church.

Fr. Clyde+

FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

One of my favorite prayers is The Prayer of St. Francis. Here it is:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

*grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled
as to console;*

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to

Eternal Life. Amen.

That's a great prayer! But, if I had the chance to sit with St. Francis and discuss it with him, I'd ask him to reconsider the fourth line.

Throughout the prayer there is a wonderful back and forth of opposites, but I would submit to the good saint that "doubt" is not the opposite of "faith." At least I hope it's not. I love my faith and cherish it, but I question it on a regular basis. I challenge it. It's fun and it makes faith stronger.

If I were to give a suggestion to St. Francis, I would say he should substitute "doubt" for "fear." Fear is truly the enemy of faith. Fear makes me retreat. Fear paralyzes me. Fear causes me to lash out at others. Fear tricks me into thinking that I'm all alone. THAT is the opposite of faith.

So, as the angel said to the shepherds, "FEAR NOT!" Even if you're not exactly sure where God is, please remember where WE are. You are not alone. You've got us.

-Maggie Attiyeh

Diocesan Convention: An Inspiring Experience

For the past two years I have had the privilege to participate as a delegate to the Diocesan Convention, and the experience has been moving and uplifting. The fellowship with so many devoted Episcopalians and the opportunity to gain greater understanding of the issues that face our church send me home renewed in my faith and motivated to try to help enrich our faith experience here at Annunciation.

This year the experience was especially exciting as we prepared to elect the 12th Bishop for the Chicago Diocese. I felt a solemn responsibility to evaluate each candidate as carefully as possible, and I was particularly aware of the significance of our

decision in light of the issues facing the wider church.

The convention began as it did the previous year, with a service followed by a single learning opportunity. I chose to attend a session about the differing ways that clergy and lay people approach finances in their parish, and there were presentations about experiences in the Middle East and the resolutions we would discuss later in the day. There were only a few resolutions the delegates were asked to decide, including requests for confirmation of clergy benefits and permission to develop special liturgy for the death of a companion animal. Most notably, the delegation voted to reject General Convention B033, in which the Bishops agreed to exercise restraint by not consecrating any Bishops whose lifestyle challenges the larger church. Most remarkably, even during the discussion of this controversial resolution, the participants were, without exception, courteous and respectful of each other. I felt proud to be part of a faith community which can face very difficult issues with such honest, thoughtful and considerate deliberation.

On Saturday, we registered as voting delegates in the election of the Bishop. We started with a moving Eucharist for over 600 attendees. To my surprise, none of the candidates were present during the election and there were no speeches or discussions of the candidates. The opportunity for us to meet them and study their qualifications had occurred with the candidate visits and distribution of candidate materials prior to the convention. Once the first ballot was submitted, the enthusiastic youth at the convention kept the delegates busy and smiling. The results of the first ballot gave us a good indication of the ultimate

result, and it was not a big surprise when Bishop Persell announced that we had elected a Bishop on the second ballot. The outstanding moment in the afternoon occurred when Bishop Persell reached Bishop-elect Lee in Seattle and broadcast to the assembly the offer of the position and Bishop-elect Lee's acceptance to enthusiastic applause in the hall.

It is not every year that we have the opportunity to elect a Bishop, but the atmosphere of fellowship and cohesion with so many people who share my faith experience is something I will never forget.

-Deb Gallinger

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT

At two Adult Forum sessions in October we discussed the Millennium Goals. The MDG's are an ambitious plan introduced by the United Nations. They represent a cooperative effort to make a significant reduction in global poverty in the first part of the new millennium. 191 nations throughout the world, including the U.S., committed themselves to this effort. It is not only nations, but also organizations such as churches and individuals who must join in working to achieve these goals. The Episcopal Church has asked that dioceses, parishes, and individuals make a commitment to donate .7% of their income to efforts to reduce poverty. This can be efforts in the local community, but the focus is on global poverty, especially in poorer areas of the world such as Africa.

The first step for all of us in this process is to develop our awareness about the MDG's and poverty in the world. One of the things that we will do at Annunciation is to include the specific needs addressed by the MDG's in the Prayers of the People, beginning in Advent. Each Sunday, our prayer for those in need will mention one area. There are eight goals, so we will use an eight-week cycle for the prayers.

Another step is to become informed and knowledgeable about the MDG's themselves. As an aid to that process, here are the eight goals:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
- Achieve universal primary education for children.
- Promote gender equality and empower women.
- Reduce child mortality.
- Improve maternal health.
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
- Ensure environmental sustainability.
- Create a global partnership for development.

Ambitious, of course. But this is, I believe, something that we must do.

-Deacon Sue

SOJOURNERS IN SPIRIT

Our parish women's group met on the third Monday of the month for some great discussion about leadership. The "Woman Who Dared" – the person we focused on to begin our discussion – was Queen Elizabeth I, founder of the Anglican Church and leader extraordinaire. If you missed November's

meeting, mark your calendar now for January 21st and plan on lively discussion, plenty of laughs, and another "woman who dared."

-Maggie Attiyeh and Rev. Kate

SUNRISE MINISTRY

Want to spend a half-hour on Sunday morning making a huge difference in someone's week? Join one of the teams below in offering a brief service at 9:15 at the Sunrise Assisted Living facility. See Linda Lutter for details.



1st Sunday Group

Carol Eades
Linda and Tony Waynick
Carol and Dan Sluga
Sandy and Dale Sander

2nd Sunday Group

Ken Peterson
Elizabeth Danos
Elizabeth Potochnik

3rd Sunday Group

Jan Harastany
Pat Donegan
Cindy Pullinger

4th Sunday Group

High School students
Maggie Attiyeh
Elizabeth Danos
Linda Lutter

5th Sunday Group

Linda Lutter

... and anyone else who would like to join her

PARISH LIFE

The end of another year is fast approaching. It is a marvel how much our committee was able to do in 2007: Mardi Gras, the Golf Outing, Ravinia Night, the Garden Walk, the Church Picnic, the Ice Cream Social, the Spaghetti Supper, the Wreath Sale and the Craft Fair. Some are long time traditions and others are newer activities; but each is an opportunity for us to grow together as a church family.

How does this happen? We benefit by working together, whether it is bussing tables, baking or running the dishwasher. We also benefit by simply attending and being served. God uses each of us to minister to one another. And you thought it was just a dinner!!!! It is so much more. When we work together on behalf of God and others, He is able to use us to further His plans. We may think we are just making coffee, but there is always more. God may be teaching you patience at that moment or looking for a chance to plant an idea in your head or using you to comfort or inspire another person. We invite God to come into our midst and think he won't be there??? Anyone who has worked in the kitchen at Annunciation knows of miracles great and small.

The gatherings put on by Parish Life are a way to get to know each other better. God wants us to know Him better, and He wants us to share His love with each other and bring more people into the circle. This is the mission of Parish Life: to create events that draw people to minister and to be ministered unto and thereby experience God's love.

It takes work to put on events, so each time you sign up to set up tables, clean up, or bring food, you are contributing for the benefit of all. It takes time and it takes money. As the committee worked on preparing the budget request for 2008, we were amazed to see how much we actually did and how much it actually costs. Some of our events are "free" and others are paid for in part by selling tickets. After the stewardship drive, if we do not get the full amount we have requested, we will have to look at trimming back some of the activities we have provided in the past.

Getting enough money is critical, but so is having enough people. Our committee is hoping to bring on board some new folks in the coming year. Please, if you have some fresh ideas and would like to help us, talk to anyone on the Parish Life Committee (Cheri Johnson, Marge and Chuck Hocking, Ginny Bosserman, Terry Kline, Tom Crafton, Bob Coates, Molly Shumate, Marian Hauschild, or Carol Anderson) or Fr. Clyde or Rev. Kate. Our door is always open.

TEN THOUSAND THANKS

Thank You to all who came and made our Ten Thousand Villages event a huge success. Every item you purchased helped someone – a mother, a family, a group of women working together, an artist, a village – in the Third World have a better life and be more independent.

When a Ten Thousand Villages representative agrees with an artisan on the price of an item to be delivered at a later date, the artisan is given 50% of the total cost. That allows the artisan to get the needed materials without stealing, begging, or borrowing. When the product is delivered, the artisan is paid the remaining 50%. At that point, Ten Thousand Villages takes on the cost of shipping, storing, distributing, etc at a cost of about 10%. Gary Reimer, who did the computations, says that is a relatively low corporate expense.

Because our local store is totally independent, we depend on sales and donations to meet our needs. We have two paid staffers and many volunteers. We are always looking and asking for new volunteers. We accept donations of money and in-kind services and

materials. If you are a member of a group who would like a special event, please see me. Our normal hours are 10:00 to 6:00 Monday thru Saturday. Thank You again for your support.
-Anita Murrens

ATRIUM NEWS



Since we are in a time of being thankful, I would like to start by thanking Kristy Gallaher, Linda Lutter, Clarissa Mellen and Gerry Kempe for donating such beautiful Christmas cards. I am putting them to good use as prayer cards at our prayer table. A big thank you to Beth Hagan for her amazing help with our collage supplies, and a special thanks to all the parents and other friends who have volunteered in our atrium on Sundays

This last month we have introduced geography materials including the globe and topographical map of Israel. These materials help the children understand where Jesus walked on this earth. For Advent we will change our prayer table drape and our seasonal banner to reflect this time. We will also learn about the Prophecy of the Light, the Prophecy of the Names. The children will also be introduced to the Annunciation. It is an exciting time in the atrium.

To be like children, we must live in each moment and value time spent doing nothing but being in God's presence. The work of building faith is not outcome based – it cannot be seen or measured. It is about the attitude of the heart turned toward God, which we can glimpse in the child who is filled with joy and contentment while being absorbed in some work in the atrium.

-Mary Oesterlein

SAVE THE DATE

On December 8th we will host an Advent Day of Reflection. Please clear your calendar for this timely opportunity to learn and engage in quiet meditation before the hustle and bustle of the holiday season gets ahead of you.



SUNDAY MORNING F.A.Q.S

Q: What's the meaning of the different colored candles in the Advent Wreath?



A: Depends who you ask! Here's a useful description from a Lutheran website www.kencollins.com. (Since the Advent Wreath has its origins in 16th century Germany, Lutherans may rightly claim to be the founders of the custom.)

Historically, the candles have no more meaning than a countdown. That is, they originally stood for 4, 3, 2, and 1 weeks until Christmas. However, people like for things in the church to have symbolic meanings, so the candles have gradually acquired meanings: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Still, the meanings are so new that they aren't completely standardized.

As for the colors, in some churches all four candles are purple or blue. In other churches, the third candle is pink; in still others, the fourth candle is pink. At Annunciation, we use three blue candles, since the liturgical color for Advent is blue, and the white candle in the center is lit on Christmas Eve, when the liturgical color is white. So that explains the

colors of the blue and white candles—they just match the liturgical decor. But what about the pink candle?

The pink candle is becoming more and more popular, but it has a strange origin. Long ago, the pope had the custom of giving someone a rose on the fourth Sunday in Lent. This led the Roman Catholic clergy to wear rose-colored vestments on that Sunday. The effect was to give some relief to the solemnity of Lent, so this was a very popular custom. Originally—before shopping malls—Advent was a solemn fast in preparation for Christmas, so the custom was extended to the third Sunday in Advent to liven it up a little bit, too. Somewhere in there, the third candle of the Advent wreath turned pink. Meanwhile, Advent is no longer solemn and the pope no longer has the custom of giving out roses. It is kind of odd to think that an Episcopalian would put a pink candle in a Lutheran Advent wreath because the Roman Catholic pope used to have the custom of giving out roses, but sometimes we're a little more ecumenical than we realize!

FROM THE WEB

Hello everyone. I want to let you all know about a great web site. www.freerice.com is a new site that tests your knowledge of words and their meaning. For each word you get right, they donate 10 grains of rice through the UN to help end world hunger. FreeRice has two goals: Provide English vocabulary to everyone for free. Help end world hunger by providing rice to hungry people for free. This is made possible by the sponsors who advertise on this site.

Check it out and tell your friends. I just did.

-Matthew

Oesterlein

