

The Voice

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Rector's Reflections

Dear Parish Family,

One of the beauties of the Episcopal denomination is trying to keep things in perspective. We frequently teach that our church is built upon three understandings: scripture, reason and tradition. We are grounded in the teachings of the Bible. It is balanced against reasonable assumptions and expectations, all steeped in the traditions that have served our faith for centuries. What this says to me at this time of year is honor the traditions that have served us so well. In practicality, it means, let's honor Thanksgiving, which leads us into the church season of Advent, preparing us for Christmas and beyond. I know many of us share the frustration that Christmas is introduced as early as October. There is a lot to be said for recognizing and enjoying Thanksgiving, Advent and the entire 12-day season of Christmas.

Thanksgiving has been so embellished and romanticized that sometimes we only are reminded of pilgrims and turkeys. In actuality, Thanksgiving is a harvest festival and an opportunity for us to pause to appreciate the numerous blessings we enjoy. We are so fortunate to have ample foods to sustain us and for those less fortunate we literally act on our calling to be servants by offering Thanksgiving meals to others.

The Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend (November 30th) is the first Sunday of Advent. Our

liturgical or worship year begins on Advent I. I like to joke that it is New Year's Day on our worship calendar. The season of Advent is four weeks long, it is marked by the color purple in the church and the season emphasizes our preparation for the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Historically, Advent was akin to a shorter Lenten season as indicated by the same purple hangings in the church, renewed self-discipline and added study to be fully prepared for Christmas. We do a lot of preparation for Christmas during Advent, but now-a-days that often means shopping, decorating homes and Christmas trees. Too often it feels as if we are celebrating Christmas in Advent and by the time Christmas arrives, people are already taking down their decorations.

In keeping the tradition of a holy Advent, and in keeping with a recent Good Shepherd tradition of teaching during Advent, Fr. Wiley and I have planned an instructive Eucharist series. Last winter, our Wednesday evening adult formation class did an investigation of our prayer book. We looked at the services of Morning, Noon Day, Evening prayer, Compline and worked our way through the prayer book up to the Holy Eucharist. During the four weeks of Advent, Sunday sermons will divide the Eucharist into four components. The first portion known as the "liturgy of the word" includes the opening acclamation through the sermon. The second week we



will look at the creeds of the church, prayers of the people or "The prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church" used at the 8:00 service, the confession and peace. Week three will include "The Great Thanksgiving" or what has been referred to as "The Canon." The final Sunday will take us from the Lord's Prayer to the closing blessing.

Advent is a time of preparation, as the Sunday lessons will emphasize. Advent may not be as austere as it has been and that is understandable with some pre-Christmas parties and decorations, but there is merit in upholding a season of preparation to fully appreciate the impact Christmas has on our faith and in our lives. Let's not rush through these important times and traditions in our lives. They bring balance and perspective, which is a welcomed change from the rush of what we experience during the rest of the year.

Sincerely and faithfully,

Fr. Jeff



Trunk or Treaters

Christmas Worship Opportunities

Our worship plans for Christmas include our traditional family Eucharist at 5:00 on Christmas Eve. Our youth choir with assistance from the Chancel Choir will lead this service. Our youngest children will also sing a couple of songs during the service. At 10:30 pm that night, we will have Christmas carols by the choir, then at 11:00 pm, our festal Christmas Eucharist.

On Christmas Day, Rite I Eucharist will be said at 9:00am, and will include a few hymns.

On Sunday, December 28th, Good Shepherd will offer a service of Lessons and Carols at 10 am. We encourage you to attend one or more of these worship opportunities to experience the true spirit of Christmas.

The Shepherd's Tree

The Shepherd's Tree is a tradition for us; over the years it has grown and made a special difference in the lives of the needy children in our community. Last year we delivered over 100 gifts to children. This year our tree will be in the narthex on the First Sunday of Advent, November 30th. Some of the tags will be filled out with a child's wish gift and others will be blank; you can complete them with the name of a child and their gift wish. **Please**

take a tag or two and make a difference in a child's life this Christmas!
Our schedule for the Shepherd's Tree:

Tree with tags in Narthex Sunday, November 30th –Sunday, December 14th

Get tags and return wrapped gifts—November 30th-Monday, December 15th Remember to attach the tag to your gift! Gifts will be delivered Monday

and Tuesday, December 15th-16th

If you have questions, please contact Susannah Sands at 228-0815 or susannahsands@hotmail.com

Once all the tags have been selected, the Shepherd's tree will become a Christmas tree and move to the front of the nave. Parishioners are invited to bring an ornament to decorate the tree.



Riverside Avondale Luminaria

Mark your calendars: Riverside Avondale's beloved Luminaria celebration will be here soon! The traditional lighting of the lanterns at sundown will occur Sunday, December 21st. Luminaria is one of RAP's biggest fundraisers and is a wonderful community-building event that celebrates the season. The hope is that the lights will guide the spirit of the Christ child to one's home.

Riverside Avondale will once again be turned into a Winter Wonderland with light parades, block parties, bike rides, and church festivities. Good Shepherd will participate by setting out luminaries along Park, Stockton and Forbes streets. Volunteers are needed to prepare the luminaries after the services on December 21, to help set them out and light them at 5:30 that evening and to help pick up the bags the next day. Please call the parish

office to let us know you are willing to help.

Anticipation and Excitement

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High God will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.” -Luke 1:35

Advent is the season in which we prepare for the coming of Christ, the incarnate Word, the incarnate Son, the incarnate God. This season deserves all of the attention of Christmas. The challenge is trying to celebrate and yet wait. The paradox of Advent in the liturgical church is that we should be so very glad that our culture appreciates the *magic* of Christmas, and are tasked with reminding everyone of its *miracle*. This season of celebration is about family, and we see family in such a larger sense than the people who may be gathered around the table on the Feast of the Incarnation.

Christmas is a reminder that, in the words of our eucharistic prayers, God “gave Jesus Christ to be born for us.” St. Paul reminds us in Romans chapter

8 that God gives us a “spirit of adoption . . . in which we cry ‘Abba’, Father.” Our sense of family is one that not only includes those who belong to us by blood but also those who belong to us by faith, for it is by faith alone that we all belong to one Father. The incredible miracle of the season is that God came down to become one of us, “to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to [God].” This reconciliation makes us all family—the family of God. We gather as brothers and sisters, adopted of God, heirs of the Kingdom to celebrate his coming to us and making us one. All this I think we understand. The waiting is the hard part. What are we waiting for?

Waiting I think is something easy to miss, even when we devote an entire season to the waiting. We already know the end of the story. For most of us, this will not be the first manger we have seen, the first vigil we have prayed, the first

carols we have sung. Our scripture leads us into this season at the end of the season of Pentecost, and sets a good ground for what it means to live into Advent. Christ has come, but our waiting is for Christ to come again. We are in a, thus far, 2,000 year long season of Advent. As you prepare your table, your house, or your luggage this season, take time also to prepare your heart. Christ has come in the manger, but the bridegroom may come at midnight. The thief may come in the night. What does it mean for you to welcome Christ into heart and home as messiah instead of as a babe in a manger?

Fr. Wiley



Fr. Wiley and his “Dia de los Muertos” trunk display

December Birthdays

Mia Edgar (1)
Jeanne Moomaw (1)
Fran Wulbern (1)
Gunnar Miller (4)
Jennifer Keen (5)
Griffin Lasch (5)
Steve Gillick (7)
Ted Centerwall (8)
Henry Dillard (10)
James Garrison (12)
Izzy Allerton (14)
John Walters (17)
Hannah Allerton (18)
Julie Humphress (18)

Jonathan Ubl (18)
Tish Stoneburner (19)
Raymond Norville (20)
Kevin Doyle (21)
Jackie Illingworth (21)
John Conder (22)
Lysa Hofmann (23)
Grey Medill (23)
Brian Russell (24)
Gregg Conner (25)
Liam Edgar (25)
Gray Lindsey (25)
Jody Poulos (29)
Steve Wilson (29)

Von Draper (30)
Bette Mackoul (30)
Mary Loftin (31)



Trunk or Treat

Pool News



Preparing Thanksgiving meals

One of our learn to scuba teachers has landed a new program with the Wounded Warriors. At this point, the scuba classes will happen every other month for military retirees with mental and physical disabilities, including amputees. We're hoping to see an increase in frequency once the current program proves successful in enabling and encouraging our wounded warriors.

The Infant Swim Resource program is up and running with teacher Sonya Collins at the

Pool five days a week. The typical course through the ISR program requires a ten minute lesson, five days a week for four to six weeks. Since it's new, the program has slots open now; don't wait until the spring to get lessons for your children or grandchildren as we expect those slots to disappear.

Your Pool has begun preliminary discussions on a learn to swim program for Special Needs mentally challenged and mentally disabled children and adults. If you know someone

who might benefit from this, please let the Pool office know, as we're trying to gauge the degree of need for such a program in this area.

Similarly, your Pool has begun planning for a possible program to train lifeguards this spring for area pools. Many young people in this area find summer employment as lifeguards. If you know someone who might be interested as a student, please let us know.

Dave Callen

What Does Pearl Harbor Day Mean to You?

For some, it marks the event that impelled the United States into World War II. For others, it's a date – **December 7, 1941** – to be memorized for a history quiz. Still others see it as an ugly mark on an otherwise gorgeous Hawaiian Island. But for a few of us, it is a pivotal date in our personal history, an event when place plus program plus pair equaled Potential Progeny (i.e., Yours Truly).

Therefore, on Sunday, December 7, 2014, seventy-three years to the day (yes, in 1941, December 7th was a Sunday also) after Pearl Harbor Day,

some of the children of Charlie Scruggs and Eleanor Law Scruggs, who met at Young People's Service League at the Church of the Good Shepherd just hours after the other world-altering event of that date, invite you to a reception after the 10 o'clock service in honor and remembrance of that day and its consequences. You are further invited to remember and celebrate your own individual ancestry and to join us in celebrating our shared heritages. Of special note: Ellen Scruggs Sheppard, who was blessed with a whammy of a confluence

of musical genes and practices parentally while growing up befogged in the delicious hymnody and pervasive musical excellence of the Church of the Good Shepherd, will be in concert on the hammered dulcimer during the reception. Ellen recently released her first album of dulcimer music, which features many of our best-loved hymns – part of that shared heritage we'll be celebrating.

Come share a reflection or two –

Yours truly,
Ann Pridden



Romanian President Klaus Johannis and his wife in Worsham Hall

Through These Hallowed Halls

Although the theological argument is sound that every one of us who thrusts a sole (or his/her soul!) onto these sacred grounds is of paramount importance and very special in his/her own right (and in all of our rites!), sometimes it's fun to learn of some famous footsteps which have made landfall here at the corner of Park and Stockton.

Take Klaus Johannis, for example. All you newsies will be aware that he was elected the 5th President of Romania on November 16th. But did you know that on April 16th he was celebrating his godchild's Baptism right here at Good Shepherd? To clarify: the Baptismal rite took place at St. Anne Orthodox Romanian Church, but the celebration afterward took place in Worsham Hall.

(To further clarify: St. Anne's is a large community in a small building. Thanks to our parish administrator Alina Martinez's involvement in both groups, the Romanian congregation often shifts its larger gatherings to Good Shepherd's facilities. Celebrating a Baptism constitutes a larger gathering!) And President and First Lady Johannis were in the midst of the festivities.

Wednesday Night Advent Program

As you may have just read in the Rector's Reflections, our sermon series will not only be on Advent expectation, but also on the 'whats' and 'whys' of our liturgy. We have exciting studies coming up on Wednesday nights in Advent as well. The first week of Advent will conclude our in-depth look at C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. The finale of the book brings to light so many deep questions about the foundations of our faith. This will be a conversation not to miss.

The remaining two Wednesday nights in Advent, we will be focusing on Biblical prophecy. We say that Advent is a season of expectation, and on Wednesday nights we will be answering the follow-up question, "expectation of what?" Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) there are occasions where The messiah is foretold. We will talk about the texts that have been seen as prophecies of Jesus as messiah, and still some others that seemed to say something different about who the messi-

ah was going to be. For the non-believer, this is evidence against Jesus, for the believer, this is a sign of what Jesus' second advent will look like. Join us as we plumb the depths of the Hebrew Scriptures and learn exactly just what we think we're supposed to be waiting for.

Bring your brains. Bring your Bibles!

See you there.



Preparing Thanksgiving meals

Episcopal Children's Services honors JF Bryan

JF Bryan, IV was recently honored by Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) at their 9th Annual Children's Champions Awards Gala, held in the Terrace Suite at Everbank Field. He was awarded in the Children's Champion Volunteer/Philanthropic Category. Episcopal Children's Services views a children's champion as "someone whose work is sustainable, reaches far beyond their own community and creates a lasting, positive effect on

the lives of children and their families". Bishop Howard, a member of the ECS Board of Trustees said "JF Bryan is a wonderful humanitarian, sharing his talents and resources by making a difference in many people's lives in Jacksonville and beyond. He is very deserving of this honor."

Episcopal Children's Services was founded in 1966 and currently serves more than 27,000

children and their families from eight counties in northeast Florida. The ECS Early Learning Center at Good Shepherd still has openings for children ages one to five. They offer an early childhood program that helps families ensure that their children are ready to learn when they enter school.

2014 Contribution Statements

Contribution statements for 2014 will go out to parishioners in early December. Please review your statement and call Alina in the parish office to report any errors or discrepancies.

Contributions to be credited toward 2014 charitable giving should be received in the parish office no later than December 29th or placed in the offer-

ing plate on Sunday December 28th to ensure posting to the 2014 ledger.



Youth outing to Sun-Ray Cinema to see *Mocking Jay*



December Calendar

Every Sunday

8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I

10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II

Every Monday

7:30 am Chapel – Morning
Prayer II

5:30 pm Chancel – Children's
Chapel

Every Tuesday

5:30 pm Chapel – Evening
Prayer II

Every Wednesday (except Christmas Eve)

7:30 am Chapel – Morning
Prayer I

5:00 pm Choir room – St. Cecilia
choir rehearsal

5:30 pm Chapel – Holy Eucharist

6:12 pm Craig Lounge – Adult
discussion group

7:00 pm Choir room – Chancel
choir rehearsal

Every Thursday (except Christmas Day)

5:30 pm Chapel – Evening
Prayer I

Every Friday

7:30 am Chapel – Morning
Prayer II

Wednesday, December 10, 4:00
pm – Prayer Shawl Ministry

Sunday, December 14th, 11:30

am – Monthly Potluck Lunch

Sunday, December 21st 11:30 am
— Greening of the Church

Wednesday, December 24th, 5:00
pm – Family Christmas Eve Eu-
charist; 10:30 pm – Carols;
11:00 pm Christmas Eucharist

Wednesday, December 25th, 9:00
am – Christmas Eucharist;
Parish Office Closed

Friday, December 26th, Parish
Office Closed

Sunday, December 28th, 10:00
am – Christmas Lessons and
Carols

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