



t h e CATHEDRAL MESSENGER

The biweekly parish newsletter of The Cathedral Church of St. Stephen, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

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December 7, 2003

The Run-Up To Christmas; A Cacaphony of Competing Demands

As much as we put into Christmas, the Feast of the Incarnation, it is not, strictly speaking, the heavy hitter of the Christian year. That honor goes to Easter. History tells us that the Puritans didn't celebrate Christmas for fear that somebody might have fun! It really wasn't until the 19th century that the popular observance of Christmas began to reach its present immensity.

But knowing these sober facts doesn't help us; we swim in the strong currents of popular culture, and the run-up to Christmas is, for many good people, a cacaphony of competing demands. The tug, sometimes even the conflict, between the "merely urgent" and the "really important" poses some tremendous challenges to us.

It is simply impossible to live in our culture and not experience the rush of America. Like a plague, it sweeps across our land touching almost every home. And we have all bought into the myth. We brag to one another about our busy lives, equating busyness with productivity, with liveliness, even with success. But isn't busyness over-rated? One could almost claim that it is the greatest sin of the 21st century. Busyness allows us to run from ourselves and, more importantly, from God.

In a nation of fast food, dry cleaning "in by 10, out by 5", loan approvals and pizza pickups in 20 minutes . . . our culture sees speed as a valuable commodity. Then comes **Advent** . . . like an unwanted guest, an overdo bill, a phone call from a telemarketer during dinner. The word "advent" means coming. Advent begins the church's liturgical year and the four Sundays of Advent are always the four Sundays before Christmas Day. Advent is all about waiting for Christ to come. Advent is a season of waiting.

But who wants to wait these days? Time is money, we say. Whenever we are forced to wait, it means that the service must be poor, that there must be some sort of problem. Waiting is a sign of failure. The faster something is produced, the better for our convenience. No one wants to wait in a traffic jam. No one wants to wait when someone is late. No one wants to wait.

We wonder why life has to take so much time, why it must move forward step by step, moment by moment. Life has its own time to keep, its own unhurried pace to set.

"We wait for everything that is really worth having.

We wait to be born. We wait for love to touch us.

We wait for life to grow. Till the very end, we wait.

We even wait for God." {Anthony Padovano}

Peace,

The Very Rev. Malcolm H. McDowell, Jr.
Dean

WEEKLY LITURGIES AT THE CATHEDRAL

Sunday:	Holy Eucharist, Rite II	8:00 a.m.
Sunday:	Holy Eucharist Rite II, with Music	10:15 a.m.
Wednesday:	Holy Eucharist, Rite II	7:00 a.m.
Thursday:	Holy Eucharist, Rite II	12:10 p.m.

News and Events

2004 Episcopal Liturgical Calendars

Great gifts for parish ministry and home are now available at the Bookstore. \$5 each.

Health Hint

Have you ever wished that Christmas and the Holiday season could be filled with the real meaning of Christmas instead of the stress and consumerism that really does engulf us? Here are some suggestions on how your family can avoid this and have a healthy and holy time.

1. A Birthday Gift for Jesus: "When we celebrate a birthday, we are careful to give what the person really wants or needs. Is there any doubt what Jesus wants from us? He insists that in order to give to Him, we must find Him in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the imprisoned. How about decreasing the purchase of gifts for the family members and giving Jesus a birthday gift through providing food, shelter, clothing and gifts to those less fortunate within the church or community. Take advantage of the "Alternative Christmas" on December 7th, in which to do this.

2. A Gift to our "Special Active Aging" members: Take time to send them a Christmas greeting. Have your children draw them a special picture to enclose in your greeting. Pray for each of them to know the joy and love of God's son, Jesus as He was given to us as a gift from God. A visit to them would be such a special blessing to them and also to you. A list of their names and addresses are available on the "Health Ministry" shelf in the Narthex.

3. God's "Perfect" Gift: Who would imagine that our God, who is not limited by time and space, would humble himself in the form of a person so that He could live among us and experience what it is like to be human? Now God not only knows our joys and happiness but also our struggles, pains and fears. John 3:16 tells you how to accept this gift.

A blessed Christmas to each of you,
Liz Fite, Parish Nurse

Own A Unique Piece of our Church's History!

Looking for a Christmas present for that special loved one who has everything? Just can't think of what to get? Purchase an organ keychain! Key chains made from our old organ's drawknobs and coupler tabs are now available in the Cathedral Bookstore. For \$25 you can buy an interesting, yet functional conversation piece which will benefit the Cathedral's Capital Campaign. Come early for the best selection!

An Adult Education Opportunity

Bishop Michael Creighton will join us in a weekday Forum to share his insights into the current challenge of our church and reflect with us on ways we might move toward reconciliation and faithfulness. We'll meet in the Uppercroft at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evening December 10th for coffee, light refreshments and some time with Bishop Mike.

YOUR STEWARDSHIP CO-CHAIRS REMIND YOU:

Please . . . PLEASE . . . PLEASE:

RETURN YOUR COMPLETED PLEDGE CARDS

Thank you,
Mary Jane and Gerry

Leave your Mark at the Cathedral on an Engraved Brick!

Take a look at the new Cloister area between the Cathedral House and the Cathedral. YES, your name (or a friend or relative) can be inscribed on a brick for \$100 per brick. Forms are available in the back of the church. Think "Christmas Gift"!

St. Stephen's Youth Trip to Washington

SAVE THE DATE - Saturday, February 7, 2004. More information to follow soon.

Enneagram Workshop

Deepen your understanding and explore your own spiritual awareness through this intriguing personality tool presented by Mildred Lorch, the parish spiritual director of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Lancaster. We'll meet from 1:00 til 4:30 p.m. on Saturday December 13th in the Uppercroft. Join us!

The Gathering

Our December selection is All That's Holy: A Young Guy, and Old Car and the Search for God in America by Tom Levinson. A Jewish Harvard Divinity School graduate reflects on his 3 month road-trip-turned-spiritual-pilgrimage. Borrow or buy this book, read it and join us to chat together about it on Tuesday evening December 9th at 7:00 p.m. in the Sherman Library. It promises to be an entertaining journey of faith and hope!

"DO ADVENT"

Again this Advent we will be joining forces with the Salvation Army in the city and assist with the packing of Christmas Baskets for those in need. The date is: Thursday, December 11, 7:00 p.m. at The Salvation Army, Cumberland and Green Sts. This is intergenerational — bring the whole family.

Sunday Forums continue through Christmas

December 7

Alternative Christmas. Find gifts of love for all your friends and family making donations to ministries here in Harrisburg and around the world. Reduce your buying of “stuff” and share Christmas blessings with those in need.

December 14

“A Cup of Christmas Tea”. Judith Smitely, a local storyteller, will inspire and entertain with her Christmas story.

December 21 and 28

“Mothers and Sons” The Rev. Gary Harke will draw us to look more closely at two special and holy women, Mary and Elizabeth, and the miraculous births of their sons.

Gifts for the World

Once again the Cathedral will offer you the opportunity to Give the World a Present this Christmas. What will it be? Food for the hungry? Peace? Warm homes and healthy living conditions? St Stephens is making it easy for you to give such a gift. At 9:00 a.m. on December 7, you can shop among booths offering contributions to charities the Cathedral supports. Offerings so far include the Heifer Project, Downtown Daily Bread, the El Hogar project, the Ugandan Aids Project, Habitat for Humanity, St. Stephen’s School, or you can leave your mark at the Cathedral on an engraved brick. After you select your gifts, you can make a gift card for your friend or family member to indicate the very special nature of the gift you are making this year.

Jane Bartholomew

COME TO THE DEDICATION SERVICE

**Celebrate the new space . . .
celebrate its transformation**

**It’s all “Fitly Framed Together”
Sunday, Dec. 7, 2:00 p.m.**

Christmas Flowers

The Cathedral is transformed with beautiful floral decorations at Christmas for which memorial flower donations are being received. A list of those loved ones, honored and remembered, will be published in the Christmas bulletins as long as the parish office receives your names by Sunday, December 21st.

Choir Memories . . . the Tradition Continues!

How can I best describe this scene?

Midnight Service on Christmas Eve has done its magic again, and I am finally swept away in the amazement of the season. My racing mind of cards, food, presents, decorating, all the details, has suddenly vanished as I ask God to center me on the moment and the meaning of Christmas. The boys, Derrick and Danny, left the house hours ago, and have already sung the first service as I watch them process in a long line of purple and white gowns and cottas. And, later, when the lights dim and the candles shimmer, a lone chorister sings Silent Night. That’s when my Christmas really begins!!

No longer is there that long line of young choristers, but the tradition of music at the Cathedral continues. My boys stopped singing long ago, but after at least 25 years as a soprano, I continue to sing Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter, and every Sunday in-between. At times I am torn between singing and wanting to sit with my family, but singing is a gift that I have been given to share with my faith community.

My year seems to be marked not by the months, but by the church calendar and its seasons. I look forward to the wonderful liturgy that has been set to music and that I have the opportunity to sing. It is a part of who I am.

As long as I have the voice to sing, I will praise the Lord with my music!

Judy Clemmer

Thank you from Organist and Choirmaster

To the Clergy and congregation of St. Stephen’s Cathedral . . .

Years ago, when I was a choirboy at the Cathedral, I had little thought of how I might continue to serve St. Stephen’s as I grew older. However, God had singular plans for me to continue in His service. The position of Organist and Choirmaster of the Cathedral has brought me a plethora of gratifying experiences and personal satisfactions . . . a closer relationship with Christ, the joy of praising the Lord through music and verse, mentoring youngsters and adults to serve God and sing His praises, creating a musical atmosphere for worship, and also the many treasured relationships which I have developed through my musical career. The icing on the cake is that I totally love what I do.

The plaque, which the Dean presented to me at the American Guild of Organists Recital on November 14, overwhelmed me! Knowing that I have your support and appreciation gives me a sense of well-being which denies description. I am blessed and humbled by your generous acclamation. May I offer my deepest gratitude to be included with other personages honored on the walls of St. Stephen’s Cathedral.

God Bless.
Michael H. Shoemaker



Cathedral Church of Saint Stephen
and Cathedral House
Harrisburg, PA

Visit our Web Site:
www.ststep.org

the CATHEDRAL MESSENGER

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. STEPHEN

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TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL

PARISH LEADERSHIP

Bishop	Michael Creighton
Dean	Malcolm McDowell
Canon Pastor	Daphne Killhour
Parish Nurse	Liz Fite
Deacon Emeritus	Paul Williams
Facilities Manager	Skip DeMarkey
Organist-Choirmaster	Michael Shoemaker
Office Manager	Sami Lytle
Bookkeeper	Donna Osborne
Senior Warden	John Dernbach
Junior Warden	Craig Wilson
Vestry:	Donna Burkholder
Gordon Arnold	Cathy Jones
Ann Elliott	Lynn Schadle
Mary Jane Forbes-Schmidt	Rosemary Webber
Gerald Garber II	Helen Delano
Warren Gillam	Bill Davis
Parish Treasurer	Paul Nickalls
Vestry Secretary	Jane Bartholomew
Worship Ministry	Chris Prior
Education Ministry	Pat Strohl
Evangelism Ministry	Betsy Howell, Bill Ilgenfritz
Outreach Coordinating Ministry	Helen Hendrickson
Parish Health Ministry	Mort Hendrickson
Property Ministry	Mary Jane Forbes-Schmidt,
Stewardship Ministry	Gerry Garber
Finance Ministry	Thomas Schmidt III
Environmental Stewardship	Jeff Spangler
St. Stephen's School	Carol Lopus
Acolyte Warden	Greg Penny
Church School Coordinator	John and Ellen Harles
"Seeds of Faith" Manager	Kathynn Corl-Rodeheaver
Altar Guild	Margaret Messner
Flower Guild	Sandy Strohl
Ushers	Michael Frascella

CATHEDRAL CALENDAR

December

7	THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
7	Blood Pressure Screening, 8:45 a.m.
7	Gifts for the World, 9:00 a.m.
7	Coffee Hour, 11:15 a.m.
7	Dedication of New Facilities, 2:00 p.m.
7	Helping Hands, 4:00 p.m.
8	Seekers Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.
8	AIDS Community Alliance Dinner, 5:30 p.m.
8	Arts and Drama Committee, 6:30 p.m.
9	Outreach Coordinating Committee, 6:30 p.m.
9	The Gathering, 7:00 p.m.
9	Eakin Trio "Home for the Holidays" Concert, 7:30 p.m.
9	Property Committee, 7:30 p.m.
10	Forum with Bishop Creighton, 7:00 p.m.
11	DO ADVENT - Salvation Army, 7:00 p.m.
11	Finance Committee, 7:30 p.m.
13	Enneagram Workshop, 1:00 p.m.
14	THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
14	Coffee Hour, 11:15 a.m.
14	Helping Hands, 4:00 p.m.
17	Downtown Clergy, 8:00 a.m.
18	Vestry, 7:00 p.m.
20	Diocesan Commission for Youth, 9:00 a.m.
21	THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
21	Coffee Hour, 11:15 a.m.
21	Greening the Cathedral, 12:00 p.m.
21	Christmas Concert, 4:00 p.m.