

The Grapevine

January 2012

Dear Friends,

There are great days ahead.



If you've hung around for church long enough, you will have heard that Christmas is an entire season, not just a day. The season of Christmas extends for 12 days (the 12 days of Christmas are the days after Christmas – not the 12 days before, as some sale ads would have us believe!) There are many holy days in time after Christmas that often get looked over.

December 26th is the commemoration of St. Stephen, deacon and martyr. He is held up as both one of the first deacons of the church and also one of the first martyrs of the Christian church. On the 27th, the church celebrates St. John (the apostle and evangelist). December 28th is known as Holy Innocents' Day – a day I never heard about in the church when I was growing up. It's no wonder. Holy Innocents is a day that commemorates the ruthless slaughter of all male children under two in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas. (It's hard to make that one "*family friendly*"!) This was Herod's grand attempt to protect his own power upon hearing of the news of the birth of the "King of the Jews." Augustine of Hippo called these innocent children, "buds, killed by the frost of persecution the moment they showed themselves."

On January 1st, (a Sunday this year!) we celebrate the feast of the Holy Name. The eighth day after a birth was the traditional time for a Jewish family to bring their new son forward and to give him a name. (Even today, according to Jewish tradition, babies aren't named until 8 days after their birth). At St. Matthew's, we will celebrate in high fashion that special day with a service of lessons and carols. (If you've never been to a lessons and carols service – please do come. It's like a "greatest hits" party – all of the great scripture readings and our favorite carols. There's even Eucharist!)

January 6th marks the end of the Christmas season with the feast of the Epiphany. The word Epiphany comes from the Greek word meaning "manifestation" or "appearing". Epiphany as a day commemorates the wise men visiting from the east. (Little quiz: look in your Bible to see how many wise men there were and get back to me...) The season of Epiphany is marked by Gospel readings about call and miracles. In a sense, the season of Epiphany gives us a sense of what Jesus is all about.



Although the season of Christmas officially ends with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, in my mind the season ends with feast of the Baptism of Jesus. This happens on the first Sunday after the Epiphany. That's the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The Gospels don't have much to say about Jesus' growing up, and in the church we kind of skip that too. Perhaps as our own Christmas season devotion, we can spend some time thinking about what it might have been like for Jesus to be a toddler, a child, an adolescent, a young adult...

Christmas did not end on the 25th and the Jesus whom we welcomed as a baby very quickly grows up into a man who will demand things of his followers. So, rest up and get ready for the rest of the story!





PARENTING

DISCUSSION GROUP

In January we will holding a parenting discussion group for parents of all ages.

- **Wednesday, January 11 at 7:00**
 - Discovering your unique and ordinary child, honoring mother and father, why God doesn't want you to overprotect your child
- **Wednesday, January 18 at 7:00**
 - Gratitude, chores, mealtime rituals and issues
- **Wednesday, January 25 at 7:00**
 - Self-control, honoring the present moment, spirituality

Our discussions will be based on the book:

The Blessing of a Skinned Knee

In the trenches of a typical day, every parent encounters a child afflicted with ingratitude and entitlement. In a world where material abundance abounds, parents want so badly to raise self-disciplined, appreciative, and resourceful children who are not spoiled by the plentitude around them. But how to accomplish this feat? The answer has eluded the best-intentioned mothers and fathers who overprotect, overindulge, and overschedule their children's lives.

Dr. Mogel helps parents learn how to turn their children's worst traits into their greatest attributes. Starting with stories of everyday parenting problems and examining them through the lens of the Bible and important Jewish teachings, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee* shows parents how to teach children to honor their parents and to respect others, escape the danger of overvaluing children's need for self-expression so that their kids don't become "little attorneys," accept that their children are both ordinary *and* unique, and treasure the power and holiness of the present moment. This book is written from a decidedly Jewish tradition, but this gem of a book transcends to encompass Christian virtues as well.



ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar Flower Book for 2012 is on the desk in the hallway. If you would like to give flowers in memory of a loved one or as a thank offering, please sign up. The cost of flowers is \$25.00. Please note that flowers are not given during Lent.

ASHBY CALENDARS

Again this year, Maurer Funeral Home, Inc. has generously cost of the 2012 Ashby Calendars for St. Matthew's. You will find them the hall.

Please take one home and enjoy it throughout the year. Give one Many thanks to Maurer Funeral Home for their continued support.



underwritten the on the desk in to a friend!

THE BLOOD DONATION MINISTRY RESUMES



With the arrival of the year 2012, we are pleased to announce the start of our St. Matthew's sponsored Red Cross blood donation days. Our first scheduled blood day will be on Saturday, January 14th, 2012 from 8:00am until 1:00pm in the Parish Hall of our church.

At this time of year the spirit of "love thy neighbor" prevails and the mass blood donations of the "Holiday Hero" blood collections at such places as Carousel Center are truly wonderful, but know this. You are a hero anytime you donate your blood, and the need for blood is there every single day of the year.

Our blood donation days are open to all, appointment or not. But the Red Cross will staff our blood day according to the numbers who have signed and have an appointment. This condition directly effects the wait time at the clinic. So while we urge your sign up for an appointment, we encourage your participation, appointment or not. ALL ARE WELCOME.

Milt Oatman
Bill Boylan

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Samaritan Center dinner is January 21. Please consider volunteering to serve and clean up. Your time commitment will be from approximately 12:30 – 3:00pm. Look for a signup sheet right after Christmas.

We'll also need warm socks, mostly for men, but some smaller for women and children.

Thank you!

Vivian

WEBSITE HELP?

We're looking for a person or two with some computer skills to assist Sarah Alamond in keeping our website up-to-date. If you would be able to help with this, please contact Sarah Alamond at thealamonds@yahoo.com

IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU ASK

A situation has arisen in the parish, and volunteers are needed on fairly short notice. There are a couple of ways to ask, with decidedly different responses.

- The Panic Approach: HELP!!! We have an emergency! We need volunteers!
- The response: Oh no!
- The Calm Approach: We have an opportunity to help out in a situation that has come up. Can we count on you?
- The response: Of course!

Recently, The Rev. Carrie Schofield-Broadbent, rector at St. Matthew's in Liverpool, received a request from InterFaith Works asking if we would be willing to sponsor a family of refugees from Somalia. If you know Mother Carrie, you know that she put out a call for volunteers using The Calm Approach. The result was as expected.

On the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, as chair of the Outreach Commission, I received an email from Mother Carrie:

"We got a call from the Center for New Americans asking if our parish could sponsor a Somali Family who is coming into Syracuse on Nov. 30th.

I said yes – confident that we can do this well and joyfully.

Now – it's time to rally the troops, get organized and get moving!"

And our answer was: Of course!

At St. Matthew's our hearts went out to this family of nine: Mom, Dad, children ages 2 – 14, including a set of twins. Two boys and five girls. They were coming from the warmth of Africa to the cold and damp of Syracuse, New York at the end of November. The Center for New Americans found them a house and provided a coordinator, an interpreter and a case worker. We put out a call for EVERYTHING the household would need: beds, mattresses, a crib, car seats, furniture, pots and pans, cleaning supplies, toiletries, linens, food, clothing – especially warm coats.

In the space of a week, with the help of the Center for New Americans and a grant from the Diocesan Episcopal Fund for Human Need, we had the house furnished with enough beds for everyone, a sofa, dining table and chairs, curtains, tables and lamps. Parishioners spent two days thoroughly cleaning the entire house, leaving beds made, linens in the bathroom, clothing in the closets, and cutlery and dishes in the cupboard.

On the day of the family's arrival, the Rector and five parishioners, including two of our youth, met them at the airport with vans to bring them to their new home. Upon arrival the father asked "What city and state are we in?" Just imagine transporting your family of NINE to literally "who-knows-where!" The family was transported to their new home, and were grateful for the welcome they received. They didn't know how to use the stove, and they asked permission to wear the clothing left for them.

Of course there are always snags and challenges, ups and downs, to make the story interesting. On the positive side, this is a Muslim family, and we wanted to respect their dietary needs. We learned that they require food that meets Halal requirements (the Muslim equivalent to Kosher). A visit was made to the Jerusalem Market on Teall Avenue in Syracuse, where the staff was so impressed with what we were doing that they helped out by calling a Somali friend to learn what the family might like. They even donated special treats for the family!

On the other hand, in traveling to the house to help put the finishing touches on the cleanup and organization, the wheel fell off the truck of one of the St. Matthew's volunteers! He had to have it towed, and was in jeopardy of missing the family's arrival, but another parishioner picked him up and drove him to the airport to welcome their flight.

On the positive side, there were reports that the family belongs to an outcast sect, and concern that they might be ostracized by the local community. Not so! A Somali neighbor learned of the family's arrival and welcomed them. The neighbor is a single dad, and was happy to have playmates for his children.

On the other hand, on Friday after their arrival on Wednesday, the father was admitted to St. Joseph's Hospital with an infection caused by a spider bite incurred while he was in Africa. The good news is that he was treated and in good spirits, and was sent home on an antibiotic treatment.

The family is beginning to settle in, and we will continue to look after them.

St. Matthew's parishioners are joyous at this opportunity, grateful that we are blessed with the wherewithal, resources, and caring to take on this project; thankful that we are able to work together as a team to welcome this family, which has endured so much hardship.

Vivian Silliman

CHOIR



I would like to thank the members of the choirs who sang at the 7:30 and 11:00 services on Christmas Eve. They gave up personal time to prepare the music, and their dedication is much appreciated.

On January 1 (The Holy Name), the Parish Choir will sing their Christmas Eve anthem again: Et In Terra Pax by John Purifoy. We will also be using a Service of Lessons and Carols that day as the Ministry of the Word.

Even before Christmas, the choir was working on music for the services in January. On January 8th (Epiphany 1), we will sing Shines the Light by Susan and Lee Dengler. This is a Celtic folksong that calls the listener to look beyond the manger to the cross.



On January 13th, Sandy Davis and I will head south to Pennsylvania for a new sacred choral reading session where I will buy my music for spring. We used to go to the Rochester area for this purpose, but Heather Sorenson (my newly discovered sacred choral composer), Joseph Martin (a past favorite), and John Purifoy (another new discovery) will be the clinicians for the workshop. It is particularly meaningful for me to have composers present their own works with their interpretations. This not only inspires me but also helps me to lead the choir. This is quite an undertaking for Sandy and me. We usually spend a Saturday going to Rochester for this, but this will be a two-day journey and experience.

There are two "calling" themes that we will hear in scripture in January: the calling of the prophet Samuel, and the calling of Simon, Andrew, James and John to be disciples of Jesus. In keeping with this theme, I have selected Mark Patterson's All That I Am. Our new soprano, Jodi Serrano, will lead this anthem with her first solo at St. Matthew's. She has a beautiful voice, and her interpretation of the solo is moving.

The other anthem I selected inspired by the "calling" theme is Ask of Me by Joseph Martin. It is a beautiful celebration of the power of prayer in our lives.

Once I return from the workshop with new music, the choir will be busy preparing for Lent. We are having a Community Eucharist on February 2nd to observe Candlemas. The choir will be active participants in this service, and we will be preparing the music for it in January as well.

Sue Parsons
Music Director

 <p><u>SHOPPING CART SUNDAY</u></p> <p>January 15th</p> <p><u>Non-Food Items, Please</u></p> <p>THANK YOU!</p>	 <p>February Grapevine Deadline</p> <p>January 15th</p>
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EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

With thanks, The Episcopal Relief & Development has received a contribution in honor of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church from Deacon Shelly. With this gift, chosen for you from *Gifts for Life*, Episcopal Relief & Development is able to save lives and build hope in communities to help heal a hurting world.

Drought-Resistant Seeds have been purchased in our honor. A family in need will yield a plentiful harvest.

Thank you, Deacon Shelly!

WHAT'S MOTHER CARRIE READING?

A few folks have asked me to mention from time to time the books that I'm reading. Here are a few I've finished recently that are worth passing on:

Little Bee by Chris Cleave

This gripping story is about a young woman forced to flee the violence of her native Nigeria to seek asylum in England. The story follows her from Africa, to a refugee detention center in England, and into the lives of an English family with whom her story is tragically and beautifully tied. Not a story for those who insist on tidy plots and happy endings, this book is deep, colorful, moving and heart-breaking at the same time. I loved this book, not only because I learned more in depth about grief, resilience, and the refugee experience, but also because this story allowed me to feel deeply – which I love in a good book.

The Dovekeepers by Alice Hoffman

True story: When the Romans sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD, a group of Jews fled the holy city and took up camp in Masada in a former palace of Herod the Great. They lived there for 2 years before the Roman legions arrived and the group of about 700-900 people committed mass suicide before they could be taken by the Romans.

The Novel: Follows the story of four women who had their own journeys which led them from Jerusalem to Masada where they worked in the dovecotes together. This is a well-researched and well-written story about the lives of these women and their unique lives. I loved, not only the story lines but also the rich understanding it gave me of what it was like to live in that time and place when Christianity was just being born.

ST. MATTHEW'S WISH LIST

If you're out and about taking advantage of those after-Christmas sales and you feel like picking up something for the church:

- ❖ **Liquid Hand Soap** - We like to put out nice pump hand-soap in our bathrooms. We can use both girl-y smelling soap and man-soap as well!
- ❖ **Pump hand lotion** - Hands get so dry in the winter, we also like to have available nice-smelling pump hand-lotion for our restrooms. It's nice gesture of hospitality.

- ❖ **Tea-bags (individually wrapped)** - Health codes indicate that any tea we serve must be in individually wrapped tea bags. If you happen to be by the tea section and see some yummy selections, please feel free to pick up a box for church
- ❖ **Kitchen Items** - We're always in need of zip lock bags of all sizes for our kitchen, as well as cute paper plates and napkins. Most of our coffee hour hosts bring those items and leave the left-overs, but it's nice to have a supply in stock in case someone forgets.

Thank you!

AN ADVENT CALENDAR, REINDEER ANTLERS, GRACE AND A PRAYER

In addition to the wonder and joy of Jesus' birth, the Christmas season also brings excess mail, lots of donation requests, crowded stores, and impatient drivers. With the wonder and joy we are able to act generously, donating money, food and clothing to those in need; and letting people in line ahead of us. With the wonder and joy we are able to experience deeply the anticipation of the birth of Christ, to re-live Mary's anxiety and anticipation, and to hold our breath in awe as the Christmas story unfolds before us. Then we get in the car.

Everyone's in a hurry, tailgating at 65mph, weaving in and out of traffic. Once "there," willing to resort to fisticuffs for that ONE parking spot. In the store, pushing in line, using pepper spray to guard purchases. Really! Is this *Christmas*?

How do we as Christians resolve these conflicting emotions and behaviors? It's truly amazing how seemingly unrelated ideas, events and things can come together to shape our attitudes and behaviors.

An Advent Calendar: Our dear Mother Carrie has made Advent calendars available to us, and she offers a quiet time after each service during Advent for us to be still. I take time each busy, hectic, time-to-do-nothing-meaningful day to reflect on the calendar's message for that day. I even color each day's picture – I love to color! – forcing myself to spend more than just a passing glance and checking off the day.

Reindeer Antlers: This year I am "in the Christmas spirit," which is unusual for me, and quite refreshing. To put my Christmas spirit into action, I sought to find reindeer antlers and a red nose for my car (I saw them on a certain red VW beetle in the church parking lot and was inspired!). Lots of searching by my husband resulted in locating the car costume at Pep Boys. It was exciting to decorate the car. I have to think that everyone who passes me – those who have the time to notice – must get a little chuckle.

Typically I am not a rude or dangerous driver, but I am impatient, and I have little tolerance for reckless drivers. So, of course, this time of year can be particularly challenging.

Recently, as I was driving on the freeway and starting to feel anxious and impatient, some things came together for me. I remembered an Advent reflection suggesting we should learn to be patient; wait for Christmas; enjoy the wonder and joy; soak it in. Even though it will be difficult at times, work on it! And I have reindeer antlers and a red nose on my car. I believe, in some subtle way, that creates an expectation from other drivers that the person in that car is caring, or at least has a sense of humor and is not a monster behind the wheel. So I feel obligated to act nice and to be polite and considerate. It really changes the way I feel.

Grace: The Advent calendar, quiet time after Sunday services, and reindeer antlers came together to give me the grace to act as a Christian who is anticipating the Savior's birth with wonder and joy. And patience.

A Prayer: Gracious and loving God, thank you for putting in my path – and for giving me the ability to seize upon them – those ideas and material things that enable me to act in a caring way during this Christmas season. Give me the grace to share wonder and joy everywhere I can.

Vivian Silliman

PRAYER IS . . . **Abraham Joshua Heschel**

Prayer clarifies our hope and intentions. It helps us discover our true aspirations, the pangs we ignore, the longings we forget. It is an act of

self-purification.... It teaches us what to aspire to, implants in us the ideals we ought to cherish. Prayer is an invitation to God to intervene in our lives, to let God's will prevail in our affairs; it is the opening of a window to God in our will, an effort to make God the Lord of our soul. We submit our interests to God's concern, and seek to be allied with what is ultimately right.

Source: *The Wisdom of Heschel*

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION FROM BISHOP ADAMS

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ 2011

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Isaiah 9:6

I recall a time when a neighbor boy stayed at our home for a sleepover with one of my sons. It was getting late and they were talking a bit loudly, so I approached the bedroom to gently suggest they hold down their voices. As I drew closer to the door, the indistinct clatter of their voices took on clarity. From the recesses of the sleeping bags on the floor I made sense of the discussion that was taking place. They were talking about the things they wanted to ask God when they got to heaven. Fortunately I was wise enough not to interrupt their musings, and returned to my own bed, falling asleep with my own questions rumbling about.

The search is always going on is it not? It is the search for meaning as we try to make sense of our world and our place in it. In the end it is a search for home, a place where we belong and can stand on firm ground and know we are secure in the embrace of something beyond ourselves. Somehow we sense that God is the place we find ultimate answers, or perhaps better questions leading to reconciliation within our own hearts that can be offered and lived in the world. Two eight year old boys displayed that truth of the heart as it came out in bed-time wondering - prayer.

One of the promises of Christmas is that the One in the manger, the Son given to us, is the One who leads us home. At the same time, the Babe in the manger is the sign that God seeks us and has already found us. He becomes the feast in the feed-dish of an ox. Even as we search, we come to a place of realization that all of our searching begins and ends in God.

Even as God is, all along the way, St. Augustine reminds us our hearts are restless until we find our rest in God.

So come to the joy and wonder of the search. It is the one in which we are all engaged whether or not we actively recognize it. Even more, dare to gaze upon the One born in Bethlehem who is the beginning and end of our search. Come to the manger with your questions, your anxieties, your hopes and your dreams, and see our God who visits us in great humility. Hear his words to you, "Welcome home."

Bishop Skip

GREGORY J. HARRIS MILITARY COURTESY ROOM AT HANCOCK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The military courtesy room opened July 29, 2008 and was established for the use and relaxation of all active and reserve military personnel traveling through the Central New York area. Our military often have to spend long hours waiting for their flights, sometimes overnight, when heading home on leave, moving to a new duty station or returning to their place of deployment. As part of St. Matthew's Outreach Commission, Lisa Sager is heading a project to help provide donated items to the courtesy room that the service men and women can use while waiting for their flights. Non-perishable goods that are regularly needed are **Beverages:** Powerade, soft drinks, fruit juices, bottled water; coffee, tea, hot chocolate. **Snacks:** Individual snacks such as chips, crackers and cookies, etc. Breakfast Danishes, Hot Pockets, Ramen Noodles, Chef Boyardee products, individual pizzas, granola bars, beef jerky / Slim Jims, and fruit cups. **Comfort Kits:** (with personal hygiene

items) - deodorant, shaving cream and razors, pocket tissues, toothbrushes, paste, floss, shampoo, Q Tips, powder, Handi-Wipes, hand sanitizer, combs, brushes, clippers. **DVD's & books** welcomed. Collected items will be delivered monthly to the courtesy room on behalf of St. Matthew's. Lisa already has delivered several boxes to the courtesy room. **VOLUNTEERING:** If you would like to volunteer at the Courtesy Room, please see Lisa for an application or the application can be completed on the website, at www.GregHarrisMCR.org and emailed. You will need an e-mail address that you regularly check, as this is the communication mode used with the volunteers. The purpose of the volunteer is to provide comfort, a smile and a positive setting. You probably would make coffee and help keep the area orderly and clean and assist our military however possible. Volunteers are scheduled in pairs; a new volunteer with one of experience. If you are interested in volunteering visit the website. For more information or questions, please contact Lisa Sager, 699-7250.



SANCTUARY: In churches built on the western pattern, the sanctuary is at the head or east end of the structure. In the Old Testament the holy place where God was present was called the sanctuary. While the Hebrews were in the desert, this meant the Tent of the Presence (Exodus 35-40); in the time of King Solomon, this meant the Temple in Jerusalem (1st Kings 6-7). There are a great many parallels which can be drawn between catholic Christian sanctuaries and their Hebrew counterparts.

The more Eucharist-centered the denomination, the greater the importance of the sanctuary. Most sanctuaries are located several steps above the main floor level of the nave. This increases their visual prominence and affords a better view of what occurs there.

The altar is the focal point of the sanctuary and usually nothing is located therein which detracts from its centrality. While there was a time when sanctuaries were crowded with objects of veneration (statues, paintings), the modern trend is away from this practice. A properly designed sanctuary affords room for an ambry, a credence table and seating for the ministers of the table.

The presence of God in the Jewish sanctuary was symbolized by a fire kept burning at all times. A candle or lamp burns over or near the altar in those churches where the sacrament is reserved in the sanctuary signaling a holy Presence.

Rules in ancient Judaism permitted only the priests to enter the tent or the inner Temple; only the High Priest could approach the Holy of Holies at its center. In the Eastern Church, that part of the church located inside and behind the screen called the iconostasis is called the sanctuary. Many Eastern churches prohibit women from going into this area. The Western Church has treated the sanctuary as "holy ground" in its tradition and ordinarily only the ordained (and those almost as "holy," e.g. acolytes and altar guild) have entered. These rules are slowly fading as social barriers to women and ecclesiastical barriers to lay people fall.

The writer of Hebrews compared the work of the High Priest in the sanctuary to the work of Jesus Christ (chapters 8-9). Holy Scripture has also presented the individual Christian as a sort of sanctuary made holy by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The sanctuary in Christian churches remains a lively symbol of the presence of God in our midst, particularly in the Holy Eucharist.

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(If anyone has been omitted from this list, please call the office)

In Our Thoughts and Prayers...

Chris Allen	Marion Magee
Joan Amerman	Em Michnowicz
April	Gladys Miller
Elizabeth Bartlett	Kevin Miner
Brenda	Mary Morgan
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Timothy Dight Cook	Richard Slade
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Eleanor Duke	Louise Staring
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