



Saint John's

Inter **C**hange

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The parish newsletter for the people of God called to the Christian community of Saint John's Episcopal Church, Quarrier at Leon Sullivan Way, Charleston, West Virginia

Our Mission: We reach out to the world in Christ's name in the hope that all might find a home in God's healing love.

SUNDAYS DEC. 23 AND 30, 2007, AND JAN. 6, 2008 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY SUNDAY

- 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
- 8:45 a.m. Lectionary Study and Group Discussion, library
- 9:30 a.m. Adult Education Formation
Adult Forum, No Adult Forums are scheduled for Dec. 23 and Dec. 30
Nicene Creed Course, Jan. 6, How the Nicene Creed came about, Room 109
- 10:10 a.m. Parents' Fellowship, Room 208
- 10:10 a.m. Chapel for Older Children, Room 225
- 10:30 a.m. Classes for toddlers through Grade 5: Toddlers, Room 298; Godly Play, 4 to 8 years old, Room 299; St. John's Eagles, 3rd to 5th Grades, Room 221.
- 10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, with choir
- 11:30 a.m. Coffee Hour, Hunter Hall

Nicene Creed Course a Temporary Substitute for Adult Forum

During the month of January, a four-week course on the Nicene Creed will be offered in Room 109 during the Adult Forum time slot from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. Each week a different aspect of this creed will be explored through lecture, conversation and reflection. The first session on **Jan. 6** will explore how the Nicene Creed came about, followed on **Jan. 13** when the topic is The Creator; **Jan. 20**, The Christ, and **Jan. 27**, The Spirit. This course will be led by parishioner Beth Marquart. And yes -- in the last Interchange it was communicated as a five-week course, since revised to four. The Adult Forum will return on Feb. 3.

Advent and Christmas with St. John's Children and Teens

By Kathie Giltinan

Our **St. Nicholas party** was held on Saturday, Dec. 1. I really look forward to it as that event gets my Christmas spirit going like nothing else! After the Charleston Christmas parade, families come to St. John's for hot cocoa and lunch. Then we go to church, leaving our shoes by the entrance. Inside, St. Nicholas talks to the children about how Santa Claus got his start. Kudos to Eli Rouse for another grand performance! When the children go to find their shoes, they discover them filled with traditional St. Nicholas treats! Before leaving for home, families made Advent-theme crafts to take. Older children made star ornaments from colored paper to remind them that God's love will guide us as surely as the Christmas star guided the three kings. Young children created a wreath of hand shapes representing the good deeds they would do during Advent, *God's love is born anew with each good deed I do.*

One of the good deeds our children will perform for Advent is to invite a friend to St. John's on Christmas Eve. Monday, Dec. 24, at 4:30 p.m. we'll share our traditional **Christingle Service** for families with children. Let me take this opportunity to invite *you* and I hope you'll share the invitation with friends and neighbors.

According to Wikipedia, the Christian custom of having Christingle church services at Advent dates to 1747. The first such service took place at a small town

in Germany. A Pastor John sat at home in front of his fire, wondering how to explain the love of [Jesus](#), and what Christmas really meant to the children in the church. In order to convey the message of Christmas in a fresh way, he prepared a simple symbol. Pastor John gave each child a lighted candle wrapped in a red ribbon, with a prayer that said "Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these dear children's hearts". In 1968, John Pensom of The Children's Society in Great Britain, introduced Christingle services to the [Anglican Church](#).

The custom arrived at St John's and our family Christmas service became a Christingle Service in 1997 thanks to Claire Lofgren, former Assistant Rector. She had participated in similar events while living in England. For a decade now, as part of the Christingle service, we have collected items needed by the Children's Home Society. Donations of diapers and toys are brought to the creche and exchanged for the christingles. Then, by the candlelight of Pastor John's lovely symbols, we sing "Silent Night." Please come for the 10th celebration of this very special St. John's tradition. Parents and volunteers are invited to **help make the Christingles on Sunday, Dec. 23** (children welcome - in Room 109). Share in good company and wonderful smells as we mix oranges with ribbon, clove and dried fruits to create enough Christingles for the Christmas Eve family service

Youth Group's Project a Success

We want everyone to know about the **youth group's Advent project** because you'll be so proud of them. The St. John's youth group designed a Christmas gift project and invited the entire parish to join in. They spent weeks collecting things to be used in the game room at CAMC's Women's and Children's Hospital where patients range in age from toddlers to high school seniors. The hospital had a Nintendo Game Cube. But, there were no games to use with it. Gifts for individual patients were also collected. On Sunday, Dec. 9, we loaded up craft kits, craft supplies such as children's scissors, construction paper, glitter, etc., DVDs, books and card games such as UNO. Christie Bisset, of Women's and Children's Hospital, welcomed our teens who delivered the gifts. After the hospital visit, we capped off the evening at The Marriott where we enjoyed well-deserved treats.

Three Teens to Join Rite 13

On Sunday, Jan. 6, we will welcome a new group of **Rite 13 celebrants** into St. John's at the 10:30 a.m. service. They are Caitlin Cline, Collin Morris, and Ben Canfield.

Interchange Deadlines

The next issue of Interchange will be for the Sundays of Jan. 13 and 20. Please submit items to:

julkemp@verizon.net
or bdearien@stjohnswv.org

by Tuesday, Jan. 1, at 4 p.m.

Epiphany Returns to Church

On Sunday, Jan. 6, we celebrate Epiphany at St. John's. For the past two years we've celebrated with a bonfire and very special Saturday afternoon in the country at the Paybins' home near Elkview. This year the celebration returns to church since, once again, the date falls on a Sunday. After the 10:30 service, all children (through the fourth grade) will follow the cross out into Hunter Hall, where they will sit on the stage. Cake will be served. Gold coins are hidden in three places. The three children who find the coins get to be the Magi. They'll be crowned and robed and we'll sing "We Three Kings." Then we'll march the kings with their gifts back into church where a short blessing will take place at the creche. This is another chance to bring presents of diapers and toys for The West Virginia Children's Home Society.

Church Books Closing Dec. 28

The books will be closed on Friday, Dec. 28. Anything received after that date will not be posted on this year's contributions.

New Year's Eve at St. John's

Our church will again take part in the Good Night events sponsored by the Charleston Community Music Association. Performers on Dec. 31 are: 6 and 8 p.m., The O'Daugherty Family Singers in "A Salute to Patriotism; and 7 and 9 p.m., Almost Heaven Chorus of the Sweet Adelines. All events are free. A special Taize service will begin at 10 p.m. in the chapel.

Christmas Music...

Some thoughts from Brenda Maurice Vanderford

One of my most faithful choir members gave me a gift for my birthday last month. It was one of those beautiful giant books full of "Christmas Music."

I know that she intended for me to put it on my 9-foot grand piano in my great room and lead singing for friends and family. It would serve well for just about any group of people because this book has everything from "The Coventry Carol" to "Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer", from "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing" to the song from "The Grinch That Stole Christmas."

This vast array of selections made me contemplate how music and the Christmas season are so intrinsically interwoven ... some things speak to some people, other things speak to others. Everyone finds their musical Christmas wherever it touches their heart. In the Episcopal Church, we cling to the tried and true carols.

Jim Lewis was the rector who taught me something about Christmas carols. I cannot remember his exact words, but he basically said that the most effective carols were not the sentimental ones that deal with the baby in a manger and angels singing. The ones that carry the real message are the ones that allude to what that baby's life is going to be like and the purpose for which he was sent.

As you sing your carols at "Lessons & Carols" on Dec. 16 or at the Christmas Eve high mass, keep this thought in your mind.

Madrigal Epilogue

Thanks to everyone who helped make the 2007 Madrigal a wonderfully successful parish event. To all who prepared and served food, helped with set-up and publicity, and performed the many behind the scenes tasks that are so important, and to those who attended the Madrigal Dinner -- The Half-Act Players and the Ambrosian Singers extend our hearty thanks. We donated \$645 from our proceeds to Manna Meal! --- *Rebecca Burns*

Have a Thought You'd Like to Share?

Interchange always welcomes articles for Cross-Examination which appears on the back cover of each issue. These should be of 300 words or less. Please submit this material to our interim priest, The Rev. David R. Hackett, well within our deadline requirements to facilitate publication.

Just a Reminder

The little wooden Alms box is on the wall in the Narthex. These funds collected are divided between Manna Meal and Covenant House. As you walk by the box, share your coins or bills.

Latest Report from the Search Committee

By Phyllis Atwood, Chair

The Search Committee met on Tuesday evening, Dec. 11, for another session of reviewing candidate resumes in our pursuit of the new Rector for St. John's. From the initial group of 32 candidates we have narrowed the field to 8, who will be considered in the next step of the calling process. We have been told by one of our members who was on previous committees that this was the greatest number of possible candidates that had been received. Working through these profiles and conducting telephone interviews with each of them, as well as with their references, has been a monumental task, which has been diligently accomplished by the members of this committee. As we continue this discerning process we ask for your prayers, along with ours, for wisdom to choose the person who most nearly meets our expectations for the next Rector of St. John's.

Parish Life Ministry Says Thanks to Many Volunteers

By Beth Marquart, outgoing Parish Life Chair

Thanking people by name is dangerous business, the risk of forgetting someone or misspelling their name is terribly high. But, so many people helped make Parish Life's 12 events a success this year, I decided to accept the risk, beg the apologies of those I may have missed and name names. So, deep and sincere thanks to:

Alesha Lewis, Shonda Newsome, Polly Diller, Georgia Hamra, Mary Fitzgerald, Jo Blackwood, David Ramkey, Sara Walker, Kathie Giltinan, Karen Glazier, James Tibeault, Donna Hamra, Ann Morris, Mike Klausning, Ben Dettinger Linda Cooper, Gary Frame, Wayne Gorrell, Juanita Cook, Garry Page, Steve James, Lila Ramkey, Eli Rouse, Dottie Thomas, Collin Morris, Brenda Dearien, Marion Perry, Cynthia Barrett, Page Hamrick, David Vick, Greg Clarke, Bren Pomponio, Sandy Morris, Shirley Studivan, Judy Lewis, Maggie Latimer, Michelle Walker, Nathan Arnett, Stan Forrest, Barbara Knight, Steve Thomas, Phyllis Atwood, Michelle Walker, Bob Swartz, JoAnne Christian, Archie Morris, Sue Harpold, Juanita Reed, Rob Ferguson, Andrew Swing, Catherine Blackwood, Bridget Posey, Collin Morris, David Studivan, Judy Skiles, Wanda Dettinger, Brian Hamra, Steve Chionsini, Sam Kitching, Betty Jo Lloyd, Carrie Swing, Maggie Morris and the countless, anonymous others who dropped off a dish or two to share!

There are 63 names here and many of you helped with more than one event. So, thanks for your dedication, your willingness, your good-natured help!

Cross-Examination

X Marks the Spot
By The Rev. David R.

Hackett

We've all heard, and perhaps used, the expression "X marks the spot." I'm not sure when we began to designate a place with an "X". Years ago when many persons were illiterate, one made his "X" for his signature on a document. All of us know that when we are signing a legal document we look for the Xs which indicates where we are to sign.

Several years ago there was a reaction to the use of Xmas at the time of Christmas. We heard, "Put Christ back into Christmas!" What many failed to realize was that Christ wasn't taken out of Christmas by using Xmas because the "X" stood for the Greek letter *chi* which is the first letter of Christ in the Greek. I won't go into the real ways we leave Christ out of Christmas such as celebrations of the season without any reference to him.

When God incarnated himself in the person of Jesus of Nazareth he, in St. Paul's words, *"emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. There God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

That moment in time, "in the fullness of time", when the Almighty, Everlasting God of all creation enfleshed himself in a baby in the womb of the Blessed Virgin and came in to our world as one of us: God with us, Emmanuel – that moment marks the beginning of a new creation, a new covenant, enabling those who receive the Christ as Lord and Savior to be "a new people, a royal priesthood", looking in hope to the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. That coming, that advent, that incarnation is what we celebrate and for which we give thanks and make Eucharist in the holy season of Christmas. X truly does mark the spot. Christ is our salvation! May he be praised!

May yours be a joyful and blessed Christmastide.