

THE

SIGNPOST

WEEKLY

December 20, 2015

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Miriam Acevedo, D.Min, M.Div.

Visit us at: <http://www.saints.org>

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

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Calendar

Sunday, December 20

- Sunday School Classes 10 am
- Eucharist Service, 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.
- Bible Study, 9 a.m.

Monday, December 21

- NO Yoga at 9 am.

Tuesday, December 22

- Al-Anon, 5:30 p.m.
- NO Women's Bible Study at 9:30 am
- NO Yoga with Miriam at 6:30

Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

- Christmas Eve Family Service and Children's Pageant - 4:30 p.m.
- Christmas Eve, Holy Eucharist, 9 p.m.

Friday, December 25 – Christmas

- Christmas Day, 9 a.m., Holy Eucharist

Saturday, December 26

- NO Saturday Family Service

Sunday, December 27

- Eucharist Service, 8 and 10:15
- No Bible Study

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

We light the last candle on our Advent wreath and our preparation for Christmas is almost finished. Sometimes called the Angel's Candle, we are reminded of the heavenly hosts that proclaimed Christ's arrival with "Behold. I bring unto you good tiding of great joy!" The Angel's candle is also purple, reminding us that it was a King's birth the angels were announcing.

Remember the Point of the Season—love!

When the commercialism of Christmas gets in the way, we need to go back to the point—God so loved us that he became flesh and lived among us and makes Himself known to us in the midst of our ordinary lives. Having said that let us also



...and so as we celebrate Christmas to experience again the birth of Jesus Christ, hug your kids a little tighter, make those who are visiting feel a little more welcome, forgive those who have hurt you; be more gracious to one another. And afterwards, when all that's left of Christmas is the mound of ripped wrapping paper, live your life in the knowledge that God has held back nothing and given you the very treasures of heaven so that you may in turn give them away.

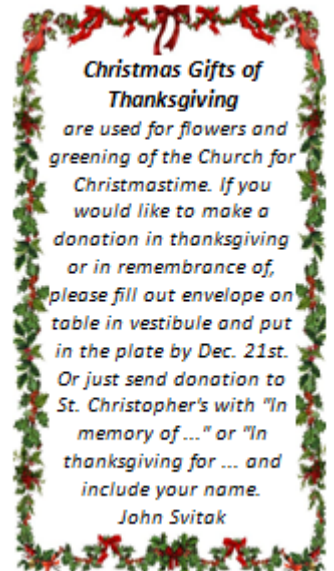
Merry Christmas!

remember that Christmas is not a good time for many people who suffer from depression and other illnesses and/or who have suffered a great loss in their lives. This suffering is real, yet God, through each of us, can fill deep wounds with love. So love freely as God loves freely and may the God of love shine on you this Christmas season. Miriam

Our Parish Annual Meeting is Jan. 24

The Annual Meeting will be on January 24 with a snow date of January 31. As is our custom, we will have one service on that day at 10 am. New members of the Bishop's Committee, Delegates to Convention and Assessors will be voted in. A week before the meeting you will receive a PDF of the 2015 Annual Report via email. "Hard copies" of the report will also be available at church (for the

three of you who don't have email.) Please save the date and join us for this important parish-wide event. Miriam



Giving Tree Gifts Thank you all for participating. The gifts along with a special (and bountiful) holiday food supply, was distributed last Thursday at the food pantry. *Outreach Committee*



The Sanctuary Gets “Decked Out” for Christmas Too.

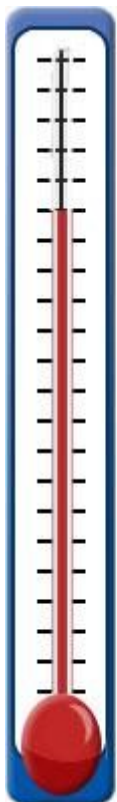
Traditionally, by the fourth Sunday of Advent the Sacristans decorate the Sanctuary for the Festival of Christmas. It's called the "Greening of the Church."

Year-End Guidelines for Receiving Pledge Payments and Donations

To report charitable giving on your 2015 tax return, your gift by check must be dated on or before Dec. 31, 2015, and if mailed via U.S. Postal Service, must be postmarked on or before Dec. 31. If hand delivered, please make arrangements with [John Svitak](#) or Miriam to received it by Thursday, December 31. Questions about your gift by check? Ask John in person or [via email](#). Pledge Secretary, Nancy Hickey, will be mailing you in January a statement for tax purposes itemizing your donations to St. Christopher’s during 2015.

From the Stewardship Ministry Team As of December 18, 2015, 69 pledges from 78% of the parish have been received. Currently \$132,944 in pledges have been received to support the 2016 budget. Our most heartfelt thanks to people who have made a pledge commitment. *The Stewardship Ministry Team.*

Number of pledges received to-date.



88

69

Thank you to the children from the Middle School Group for helping decorate our parish grounds for Christmas.



Online Giving on the Church’s Website:
<http://www.st-christophers-nh.org/giving>

St. Christopher's is grateful for the many ways that our members support our work within our community and also well beyond our church walls. It is through a generous and intentional spirit that we share the resources that God has blessed us with. We hope that the simplicity and convenience of being able to make pledge payments and [memorial and honor donations](#) online will be helpful to you. You may authorize your bank to allow us to deduct a specified amount from your account without having to write a check. You may also use your debit or credit card, just like you pay bills or make purchases online. It's secure and confidential! Check it out! [Kathy Trombly, Webmaster](#)

Prayers of the People

Pray for **Diane Foley**, who is in hospice, and is the mother of Morgan LaMonica’s boyfriend; **Quinton Collins**, Robin Flynn’s father, diagnosed with cancer; **Bill Steinhoff** going through radiation and chemo. What a pleasure to see Bill and his family at church on Sunday. Just know, Bill, that our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. **Jabula Butler; Diane Kolbe; Ann Donovan; Carmen Acevedo; Jess; Kate; Joan and Ron Ruggiero, and Josephine Herbert;** 2 year old **Brayden; Matty; Ian; Joan Fettes;** for Christine’s friend **Christine;** for **Cheryl;** for **Linda**, mother of Ruth Ann who has been diagnosed with cancer; for **Ryan;** for **Jacqueline,** for **Natalie Gallo;** for Jean Porter’s grand-nephew **Tyler;** for Natalie’s brother **Lorin;** for Mark and Ingrid’s son **Eric** who with God's grace is in safe hands. **Serving in the Military:** Please pray for Del’s cousins, **Daniel, Matthew and Sandra,** for **Paul.**

Parish Cycle of Prayer: Danielle, Kaitlyn and Nathan LeClair; Lily, Troy, Austin, and Jackson Leedberg; Marlana LeSage; Tom Leveille



The Clergy and Congregation of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church
INVITE YOU TO SPEND CHRISTMAS WITH THEM.

Christmas Eve
 4:30 p.m., Family Service
 9 p.m., Late Service, Holy Eucharist

Christmas Day
 9 a.m., Holy Eucharist



187 East Rd.
www.saintcs.org

*Ask much of us. Expect much of us. Enable much by us. Encourage many through us.
 May we dedicate our lives to your glory. Amen.*

Ministry “Moment”

Sunday, December 6, 2015 Andy Weir



I have a pretty good hunch that many of you see me as a bit gruff and standoffish, maybe like Bernie Sanders without the Brooklyn accent. No doubt my obvious discomfort and awkwardness at “the peace” has helped reinforce that view. Sometimes I wish I could be more “touchy feely” or be a “hugger”, but that’s just not me. Anyway, someone has to be the counterbalance for Carolyn’s willingness to comfort every stray dog or cat.

So it may surprise you that I really like the ministry minutes. Invariably I learn things about my fellow parishioners that I might otherwise never know. I think the use of ministry minutes needs to not only be continued, but actually should be expanded. We’d really come to know and understand each other much better if everyone who was willing to do so stood up and told us their own story.

But where they don’t seem to fit is in the pledge drive. I sort of doubt that there are many, if any, folks who weren’t going to pledge, but decided to do so because of a ministry minute. Or folks who decided to increase the amount they pledge after hearing one of these stories. Especially when they are rarely directly encouraged or asked to do so.

Those of us of a certain age well remember being told that there are some subjects that you never bring up in polite company. Topping the list: religion, politics, sex, and money. That was probably drummed into many of us from the time we were old enough to understand.

So let’s deal with those one at a time. Religion. We’re in church right now, so if that’s not OK here, then you have to ask yourself why you are even here. Politics. Not our central focus here, but like religion, it is built on personal values. Values we must respect in each other, whether we share them entirely, in part, or not at all.

The only thing I’ll say about sex is that I am grateful that my son was old enough that I didn’t ever have to answer awkward questions about the reason for all those ED commercials. My hat’s off to those of you who bravely face that challenge.



That brings me to that other taboo..... money. I want to share a story that isn’t about me or Carolyn and what we like about this church. It’s a story that has had a profound influence on me for a long time. I have a few photos related to the story.

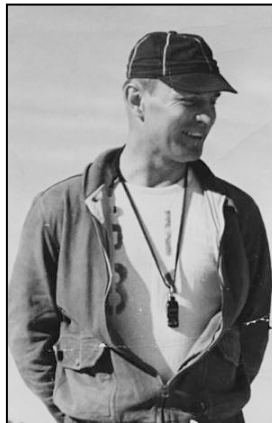
In the 1920’s, a retired Texas Ranger, Captain Charles Schreiner, then a rancher living west of San Antonio, partnered with the Presbyterian church to build a prep school, Schreiner Institute in Kerrville, Texas. The school’s first students came from remote ranches and received military training and a curriculum designed to prepare young men for college work. Today it is a small, but highly respected coed liberal arts university, still named for Captain Schreiner.

I know this place because my paternal grandfather was the dean when I was growing up. He had come originally to run the athletic department, but by the time I was spending summers there, he was Dean of Students.

My grandfather had an unusual nickname, one that often embarrassed my brother and me. He had been a student at Texas A&M, graduating in 1923. A previous student who was from Germany had the same last name. In those not politically correct times, the slang term for a German was, “Heinie”. I’ll give you one guess what my grandfather’s lifelong nickname became. That was tough. And add more confusion, we were of Scottish descent, not German.

His time and celebrity at A&M followed him throughout his life. He was captain of the track team and reportedly ran the 100-yard dash in 9.7 seconds. This was when the track surface was made of cinders; you wore 1-inch spikes and dug holes instead of using starting blocks. He won almost every sprint race he ever ran in Southwest conference track meets.

He was also the captain of the football team, one of very few to ever captain teams in two sports. On New Year’s Day in 1921 while playing in the Dixie Classic (the forerunner to the Cotton Bowl), he broke his leg playing against Kentucky’s “Praying Colonels” from Centre College. This caused the now short-handed A&M coach to summon a Cadet from the stands to don his uniform. And their now famous “12th Man” tradition was born.



Ministry “Moment”

Sunday, December 6, 2015

Andy Weir



In all the years I knew him, he never mentioned his accomplishments a single time. I learned the story of the 12th Man from a summer school student who was shocked that I didn't know it when he mentioned it. When I asked my Grandfather about it, he simply confirmed it was true and said no more. Talk about modesty.

As you can imagine, he could have become whatever he wanted to be. He was revered all over the state. He married the prettiest girl on campus, the daughter of a former mayor of Bryan, Texas. As you can see in the photo of her with my 5-year old father on her knee, she was a spectacularly beautiful young woman.

Education and coaching were my grandfather's passions. He coached at a couple of high schools in rural Texas before moving to Kerrville and Schreiner in 1937 as Athletic Director and Head Coach. He would subsequently devote his life to education and to what is now Schreiner University.



In the 1950's Schreiner faced an economic crisis that threatened the viability of the school. My grandfather could have easily moved on to an important post at any number of other institutions, but he had made a commitment to Schreiner that was inviolate.

The details of what happened are lost to history, but the story I heard repeated was that along with Andrew Edington, Schreiner's president he loaned his life savings to the school. I can't prove that's true, except to note that the main academic building on campus and one of the school's 3 original buildings, today bears his name. (The WC Weir Academic Building, and no, not the Heinie Weir building, in case you are wondering).

The end of his story has nothing to do with Schreiner, but serves as final proof of his unselfish devotion to others. In 1972 my Grandmother was terminally ill with an aggressive cancer.

As with every other challenge to what he valued most, he had devoted himself to her care. As she approached what would be the final week of her life, he was forced into the hospital himself.

He had leukemia and had become too weakened to care for her. He had told no one of his illness, except perhaps my father and then only when it was no longer possible to conceal it. Just three days after my Grandmother passed away, he died in the arms of a hospital orderly, aware that she no longer needed him. He had been unselfish until he took his last breath. Mourners came to her funeral, shocked to see twin coffins sitting side by side.

So why did I tell you this story? I certainly don't plan to give my life's savings to St. Christopher's, but this story humbles me when I find myself thinking about excuses or justifications for reducing our pledge or maybe not pledging at all. I think about what he might have said to me. Although St. Christopher's is not on the verge of collapse, the trends in attendance, pledge percentage, and income are not very good and getting worse.

No one is going to come riding to our rescue and put up everything they have like my grandfather did. God may provide, as they say, but he'll only do it through us, not some mysterious miracle. Miriam, Church leadership, and the Stewardship Committee are too diplomatic to put pressure on you, but I hold no church office and have no authority over anyone but myself, so I can speak my mind. So I am asking you to close your mind and your ears to excuses and reach deeper than you had planned to do.