



The Signpost Weekly

January 5, 2015

Second Sunday after Christmas

Miriam Acevedo, D.Min, M.Div., Vicar

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

Calendar

Saturday, January 3

- Rhythms of Grace, 2 p.m.

Sunday, January 4—

Christmas 2

- Healing Sunday, 8 a.m. service
- Eucharist Service, 8 and 10:15
- Finance Committee, 9 a.m.
- Bible Study, 9 a.m.

Monday, January 5

- Yoga with Miriam, 9 a.m.

Tuesday, January 6

- Women's Bible Study, 10 a.m. with babysitting.
- Al-Anon, 5:30 p.m.
- Yoga with Miriam, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 8

- Eucharist & Adult Ed at 7

Sunday, January 11 – First Sunday after the

Epiphany

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

Sunday, January 18 — Annual Meeting Eucharist Service, 10 a.m.

Not that Far Away--Bishop Rob's Next Visit, February 22.....!!!

Our Bishop will visit us on February 22, 2015. The Bishop visits us once every two years and it is a very special occasion. Mark your calendars now! There will be one service that day at 10 am followed by a pot luck. I also need to know if you want to be confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church. Please speak to me or contact me by email or cell phone, 489-3731. Miriam

A Heads up—The Annual Meeting, January 18

The annual meeting will be January 18, with a snow date of January 25. **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

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2014 Annual Report via email. "Hard copies" of the report will also be available at church. **Please save the date, Sunday, January 18, 10 a.m.,** and join us for this important parish-wide event. Miriam

Sunday School: What a wonderful Christmas Eve Celebration we shared! Please tell your kids what a great job they did! Thank you to all the kids for making our pageant a success whether a role or music or both. Thank you to our older kids for stepping up, filling roles and their musical talent! Thank you parents for your dedication to your children with our early arrival time for pageant practice. You made it all possible!!! See you all on Sunday as we resume our regular schedule. It's never too late to get in touch if you would like to organize a special project or just volunteer in a class! Ask me how! Danielle LeClair, Sunday School Coordinator

From the Stewardship Committee

We'd like to express our appreciation to all of you who have pledged to our 2015 campaign. *If you have not yet pledged there is still time. Pledge forms are available.* We are about \$10,000 short of our pledge goal. We are aware that it's been an extra stretch for many of you this year, and we are especially grateful to you. Thank you so much. Additionally, we'd like to report that our Pledge Secretary, Nancy Hickey, will be sending out all 2014 Receipt for Income Tax Purposes forms. Please contact Nancy directly if you don't



When Jesus identifies himself with a grapevine and God the Father as the vinedresser, he's not talking about making grapes. He's talking about the resilient, relentlessly outstretching, and healthy life that God longs for all of us. Bishop Rob

get a statement, or if you have any questions, Tel. 329-7840 or via email. As of December 31, 2014,

God of Love,
create in our hearts
a desire to seek out
Jesus in the darker
corners of our
world.

Grace us with the
courage to search
for your Son in
those people who
are strange to us,
who frighten us,
who are different
than us.

We ask this
through your son,
our Lord,
Jesus Christ.

Amen.

67 pledges, from 61% of the parish have been received, as compared to last year's total of 82 "pledging units" from 80% of the parish. Currently \$141,892 in pledges has been received to support the 2015 budget. There are 6 new donors; 36 increased pledges, 17 the same, and 8 decreased. The Stewardship Ministry Team – Eric Young, Miriam Acevedo, Marcia Devine, Br. David Gerns, Lyn Rockwell

Spiritual Direction Enrollment

You are invited to consider signing up for Group Spiritual Direction. Some of those who have already participated tell me that the experience has been fulfilling indeed. The sessions last exactly one

hour! Surely you have one hour for a rewarding experience that will open you up to how God is working in your life. Please see [Miriam](#), [Wayne Trombly](#), [Barbara Hughes](#) or [Ken Swenson](#), with any questions.

St. Christopher's has a Number of Faithful, Loyal, and Dedicated Members who you may never have seen at the church...

... or whose name you have seen from time to time and have always wondered who they were, and no one you asked knew who they were, much less you! That is unless you asked Miriam. Her ministry extends to this group of St. Christopher's parishioners as much as it does to the rest of us, whether it's by phone, home visit, hospital or nursing home visit, emails, phone calls, letters, "Whatever it takes," says Miriam. "I want them to know that God is still watching over them, and that St. Christopher's has not forgotten them."

Jean Seeler-Gifford is one such person. Since she was introduced to Miriam by Bishop Robinson way back when, she has continued her membership in our parish right up to this very day. We saw her last when she drove from her home in Vermont to Hampstead to attend the 10:15 service and to present Miriam with a wonderful stained glass window, crafted by her late husband Dave, to show Miriam her appreciation for the support and comfort she had given her through difficult times. Thank you, Jean, for continuing to bless St. Christopher's. Please join us often. Should you happen to visit Miriam at her home office, you can't miss Dave's lovely stained glass right there in the center of her office window.



Prayers of the People. Please pray for **Arthur Mueller, Matty O'Leary; Greta and Jim; Nancy Hollinrake;** for **Linda**, who has been diagnosed with cancer; for **Ryan;** for Corinne Dodge's friend, **Mariellen;** for **William Friel;** for **Carol Sienkiewicz;** for Jeff and Katie Waymouth's daughter, **Ginny** and family; for **Jacqueline Parent**, for strength and peace; for Jean Porter's grand-nephew **Tyler**, for **Cheri** and her husband **Walt**, friends of Jennifer and Robert Aiken; for **Rosalie Papoutsy;** for Natalie Gallo's brother, **Lorin Bielski;** for Mark and Ingrid Chapman's son **Eric** who with God's grace is in safe hands.

Serving in the Military: Please pray for Del Dooling's cousins, **Daniel Canfield, Matthew** and **Sandra Maloy**, for **Paul Gagne.**

Parish Cycle of Prayer: **Eleanor Simmons; Terry and Joan Stevens; Sara, Matthew and Genevieve Taglieri; Bill, Leslie and Ryan Steinhoff.**



Attendance
12/28 Sunday
8 am – 20;
10:15 – 36

"Jesus says that we are the salt of the earth, and we must not forget that. The continuing challenge for all of us is to be the salt and yeast that give rise to all of the ministries that this church makes possible." Oliver Ford III

THE GOSPEL

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'")

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The beginning of the book of Genesis reads this way: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light." Genesis tells us that God said the word, he spoke and creation came into being.

The beginning of our Gospel reading for today echoes the first words of the Genesis story, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This section of John's Gospel that we read today is called the Prologue and it asserts certain things: it asks us to believe in the unbelievable, remarkable notion that God became human—the infinite entered the finite and more than that that Christ existed before time, before anything was Christ and Christ was there in the beginning with God.

While the Prologue asserts the unity of all things under God it also introduces the idea that disunity exists in the midst of unity—the disunity is the darkness. And so we are told that light shines in darkness but that darkness cannot overcome the light—the light of God is the stronger force—the light of God is one with Christ.

Light of course allows us to see things clearly and so the light exposes God, the text asserts that when it says, "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known." So light is a positive thing, but some despise the light because of what it exposes—it exposes our hardness of heart, our greed, our hate, our exploitative nature, our selfishness, our cruelty, it exposes our demons. The light disrupts all this and when we are caught by one of these factors—our greed, our hate, our demons and so forth the light hurts our eyes as it lays us bare and naked—light exposes all things and the darkness cannot overcome it.

The Prologue of John is poetic and lyrical speech. It is a song, a hymn that sings life into the world's babble, chaos and voices of death. And what is this song about? It is a song where God tells us who he is—as Christians we believe that God speaks in Jesus as in no other way and that Jesus tells us who God is: in Jesus we hear that God heals, forgives, embraces outcasts and sinners even those who hurt him; in Jesus we hear that God understands betrayal, denial, suffering and pain, humiliation and death—he understands the human condition; and in Jesus we hear that God brings victory over despair, defeat, destruction and death. [Working Preacher] In this song Jesus gives us the power to become children of God and he draws us into God's abundant life being born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And so the Word became flesh and lived among us—the word did not become flesh in general but specifically became flesh among us. The Greek for "lived" often translated as "dwelt" can also be translated as "setting up one's tent" or "fixing one's tabernacle." Tabernacle refers to the story of Israel and how the tabernacle was a tent built to

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Miriam Acevedo, Vicar

carry the Ark of the Covenant and to contain God's presence while they were wandering in the desert for 40 years. John is claiming that Jesus, the Word made flesh, is the means by which we now have access to God's presence.

I want however to be careful saying this because it's a sad and a mistaken notion to suggest that Judaism considered God as distant or unresponsive to humanity. Hebrew scripture tells us the opposite, it talks about a God who is responsive, loving and who longs for intimacy from the people and not their destruction. In the prophet Hosea for example, God says to his people—"It was I who taught Israel to walk, I took them up in my arms." That's intimacy! And that's not the only place in Hebrew scripture where God talks affectionately about his people—God's desire for his people is spread throughout the Old Testament. It clearly states that God heard their cries, he responds and saves them.

But in the same way that we do, they put distance between themselves/ourselves and God. That Jesus became flesh and lived among us is affirmation—not I think a new idea—that God desires a relationship, an intimate relationship with his people and he always has. The light of God is for everyone. David Lose, one of my favorite commentators wrote that, "We grasp the magnitude of John's claim and promise about Jesus when we hold onto the wonder that God came for us and for all others and that we, therefore, only live into the fullness of our lives when we see in those around us—whether they look similar or different from us—the face of our siblings, co-heirs and fellow children of God."

Which brings me to how the Prologue talks about how the Word was rejected—"He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him." Let's look at this with a broader lens—while we interpret this rejection as coming from the Jews let's realize our own guilt in rejecting God's light that is Jesus.

Isn't it so that we are too preoccupied with our own distractions whatever they might be, to recognize or receive the Word of life and light? Rather than pointing a finger we need to take stock of our own lives and the ways by which we still refuse

to accept or recognize God's Word. And when is it that we refuse to recognize God's Word? When we do things to hurt one another, when we refuse to help one another, and when we continue to refuse to accept God's Word into our hearts and lives.

Someone I read called the rejection of the Word as the tragedy of the story and he describes what I think is a Twilight Zone moment—we've gone off on a long journey and when we finally arrive home our house is filled with people having a party but when you go to open the door the locks have been changed, and when someone comes to the door they don't recognize you.

That's what we do to God all the time, we change the locks of our souls and don't recognize him to let him in. Thus we separate ourselves from our spiritual life line. We've rejected the Word as much as anyone else.

John's Prologue testifies to the light that has entered into the world—a light that was present and part of the creation of the world. The Prologue communicates that and the challenge for us is to receive and respond to that communication. The promise of that communication is that when we do hear, receive and respond, we find ourselves in an intimate and transforming relationship with God. Then we become messengers of God—reflecting God's reign in our actions—making God known through what we do in service to others. Then we take on God's characteristics as healers, people who forgive, people who embrace the rejected ones of the world and people who work to make things better for others.

Finally, the Prologue is John's nativity story—very different from Luke's baby in the manger. It is a hymn to the majestic power of God to create, to love and to persevere in his quest to woo us back from those places of darkness. It is a love song where God shows his vulnerability by becoming fully like us. A love song that testifies to a light that can't be overshadowed by the darkness of the world or our hearts. Light triumphs and all that is required now is active, intentional acknowledgement of our call to be part of the unfolding story of God—it's an old story, a long story from Old Testament to New and then beyond to our lives.