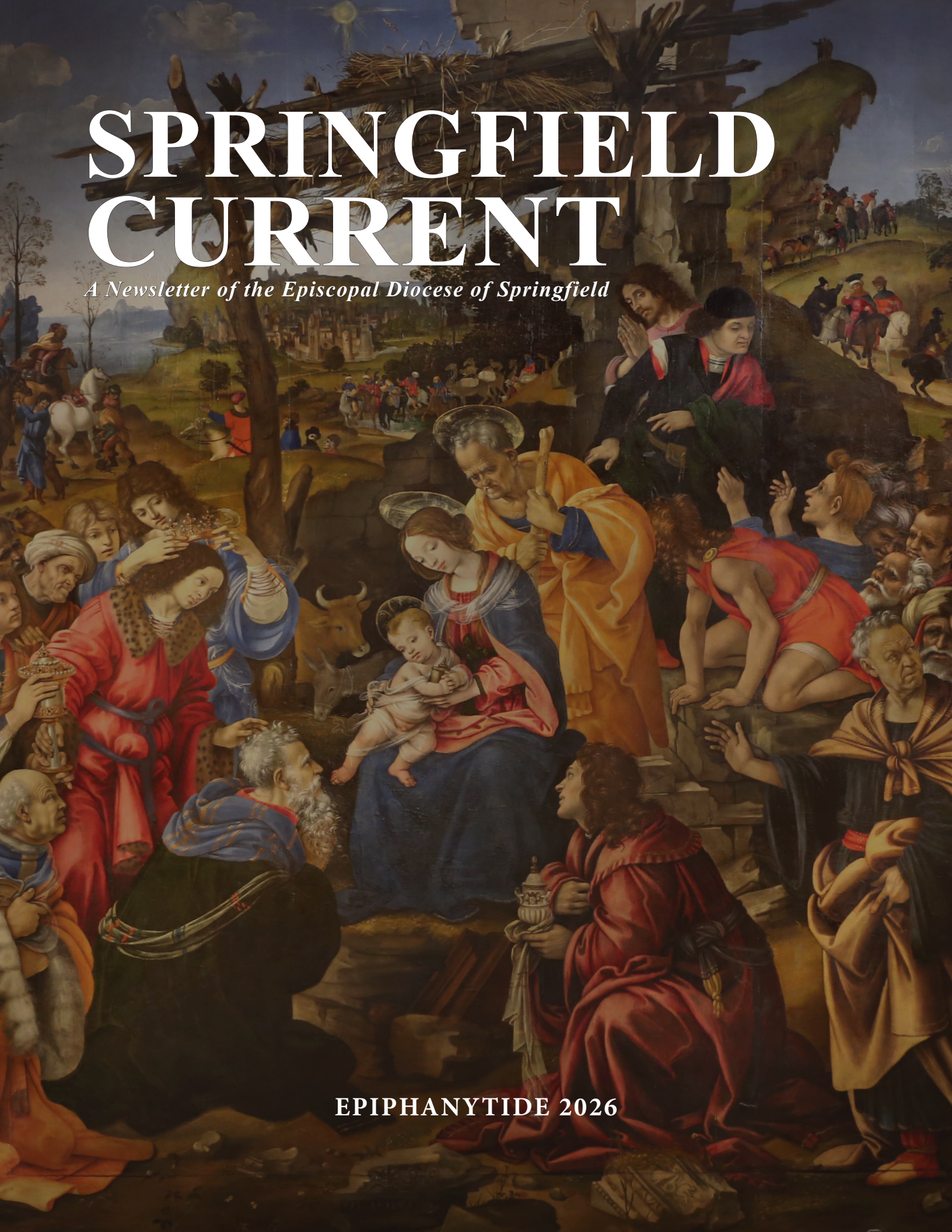


SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

A Newsletter of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield

EPIPHANYTIDE 2026



from the Bishop

Dear Beloved of Christ:

While a parish day-school chaplain in Louisiana, I was informed by the parish receptionist that I had a young woman in my office who wanted to "talk to a priest." As the youngest clergy member, a great deal of those pastoral priorities came to my attention. The woman was in her later twenties and she held a wadded, saturated, and shredded piece of Kleenex in her hands. When I walked in, she allowed all of her emotions to pour forth. We didn't even have time to exchange names. I handed her a fresh box of Kleenex. Through the tears and uncontrollable sobbing, she shared how she was the daughter of two prominent and well-to-do people of the community; her father a physician and her mother (if I remember correctly) an elected East Baton Rouge Parish leader. What I could pick up was this: she had run off the rails as a younger woman and she had recently come to realize that a great deal of her earthly inheritance had been squandered. As the thick mascara ran down her face, I listened to the details of her downward spiral into a hole too deep to climb out of by herself.

When she finally ran out of breath and had to stop, we let the silence linger. The clock on the wall could be heard for the first time, adding a soft punctuation to the silence that gave us permission to simply sit still. Once her breathing returned to being somewhat normal, I asked a question that only inexperience invites. "Why are you here? What brought you to my office, within the confines of a corporate-size parish with a myriad of programs going on? Why this church?" Her answer has forever changed my perspective when it comes to outreach and evangelism. She said to me, "When I was a little girl my parents sent me here to attend your parish day school." After a pause, she continued, "This is the last place I can remember feeling holy. So, I came back." I have never been quite the same since.

Continued on page 5.

SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

The Episcopal Diocese of Springfield
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We accept submissions for *The Current* **on the 15th of the months of December, March, June, and September.** Articles, photos, and news can be submitted to *communicator@episcopalspringfield.org*. Contributions to the monthly e-newsletter may be also be sent to that email and are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Cover art: Adoration of the Magi, Filippino Lippi, c. 1496, Public Domain

Background image: Fr. Parker Asplin

CONTRIBUTING

Communication serves a crucial function in every ministry. Sharing information among congregations, committees, and individual members is no small task. Welcoming new members to our diocesan family also requires unique communication efforts at all levels.

Your contribution to this ministry of communication helps spread the word about what God is doing in our lives, in our congregations, in our diocese, and in the Episcopal Church at large. Please consider making a gift today.

We are committed to sending our diocesan publication to all members and friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield. It is not necessary to contribute in order to receive *The Springfield Current*. Nevertheless, if you choose to support The Springfield Current, your contribution will be of great assistance in this ministry and is tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

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FROM THE BISHOP

Continued

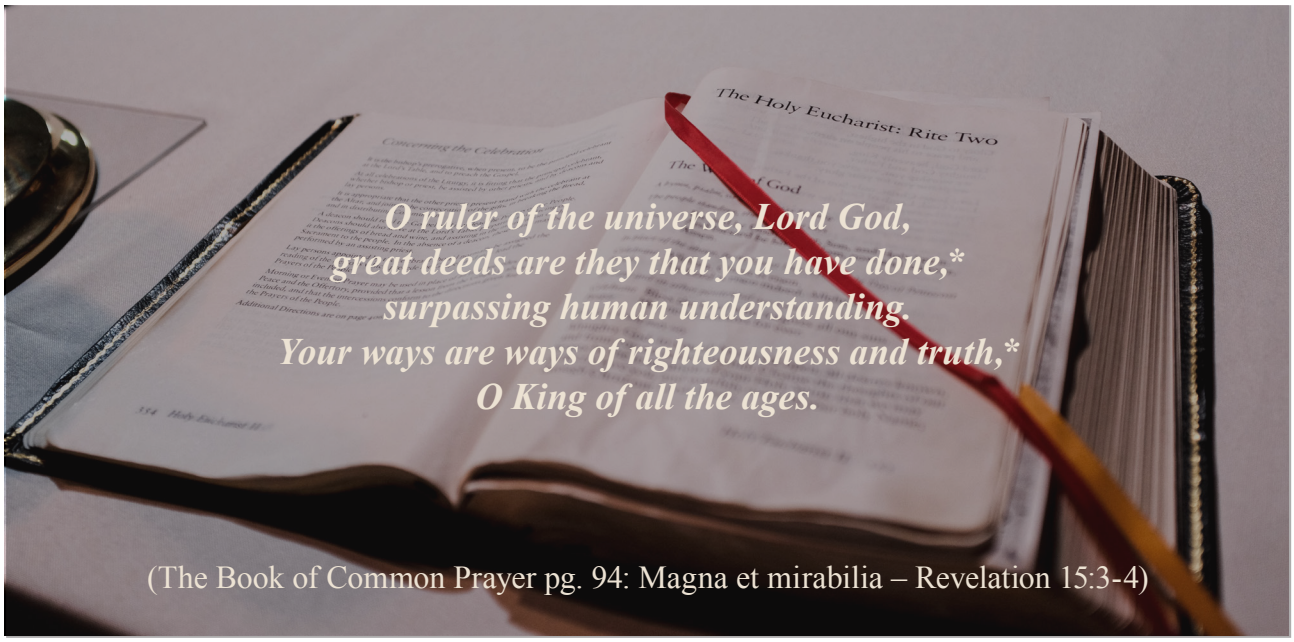
The Diocese of Springfield is just such a place. We collectively commit a great deal of human and financial resources to ensure that holiness and righteousness (right relationship with God) prevail here. Peel back from the surface the thin layer of programs, activities, book studies, receptions, and dinners, and you will find a diocese that is concerned with the sanctifying of life, time, and space. And as we do, as we set all that we are and all that we have for God's particular use, we invite those who are meant by God to complete us to enter in. Even our vestry and mission committee meetings convey a clear sense outwardly of who our Father is and what it is we risk losing by going it on our own. And if those corporate meetings don't do so, please reorient that expression toward the altars of which we have been given great and lasting responsibility. There is no truer bearing.

Second only to our sacred liturgy, our buildings and grounds are a powerful statement of evangelism. Entire communities are sanctified when stained glass radiates outward the story of our redemption during the evening hours, when heavy doors stand open welcoming the faithful and steeple bells toll softly, reminding the entire community that the Church is about the important work of prayer. For these and many other reasons, I, your Diocesan Council, the Finance Committee, and our Diocesan Standing Committee took the bold step of inviting all of us into a giving appeal. Launched during our 148th Annual Synod in late October, the priority of our Appeal is clear; to raise the funds necessary to rehabilitate the building and grounds of a beautiful Episcopal Church chapel in Marion and to provide granting opportunities for capital improvement projects at the parish and mission level throughout our Diocese. The response to this Appeal has been favorable throughout the Church. Many see this as being a reach toward holiness; a clearly defined goal with a shared responsibility, for and with those who already complete us. Financial gifts have arrived from Texas, Nevada and California, some with hand-written notes applauding us for the priority we have placed on preserving sacred space.

Yes, this is a stewardship priority. However, it is also a statement of evangelism. As those who have been invited to inherit the kingdom of God, we have been made worthy to stand in the courts of our Lord and sing praises to His most Holy Name, and worthy to have the benefit of beautiful, well-maintained churches that invite us and our families as we are being made into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. And because we have been made so worthy by the cross of Christ, I ask that we all sacrifice something financially significant to us in order to reach the goal that is well within our reach.

As you follow my Facebook posts of my travels throughout our Diocese (also posted to our Diocesan website), you'll see many advancements being made in central and southern Illinois on behalf of the kingdom of God. Beautiful liturgies, vocations being discerned, voices of common prayer gathering in recognition of our Church Calendar and clock. I had one young man, a sophomore in high school, march up to me in a parish hall following a Sunday Eucharist and proclaim, "Bishop, I want to be a priest." Consider for a moment the profound ministry taking place there that gave him permission to be that bold before his Bishop. That parish church is most likely where he came to vocational awareness in a very deep way, where he felt holy for the very first time.

If I may earn the trust of your financial gift on behalf of this Diocese, please call me directly at the Diocesan Office in Springfield. However, before you do, please know that I truly do believe the words we pray:



In the peace of God, which passeth all understanding;

Bishop Brian K. Burgess
XII Springfield


The Archangel Michael Ovrethrowing Lucifer, c. 1620-1650, Public Domain

DIOCESAN APPEAL

for the Restoration of St. James Chapel in Marion and Capital Improvements

With the support of Standing Committee, Finance Committee, and Diocesan Council, an Appeal is being extended with the target goal of raising $250,000 from parishes, missions, communicants, and friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield, to be gifted for the work that God in Christ is doing in Central and Southern Illinois. Meeting this goal will allow us to direct $150,000 in the rehabilitation of St. James Memorial Chapel in Marion, with the remaining (roughly) $100,000 to be distributed in a matching grant format in interest of capital improvements at the parish and mission level.

These individuals and Churches (see right column) have generously responded to the Diocesan Appeal for a Capital Improvement fund. Their financial expression of thanksgiving for the various altars left to our care and proper stewardship will help tremendously as we look forward to announcing the commencement of needed capital improvements on the campus of St. James' in Marion and throughout our Diocese. This list will be updated as more gifts to the Capital Improvement Fund are received.

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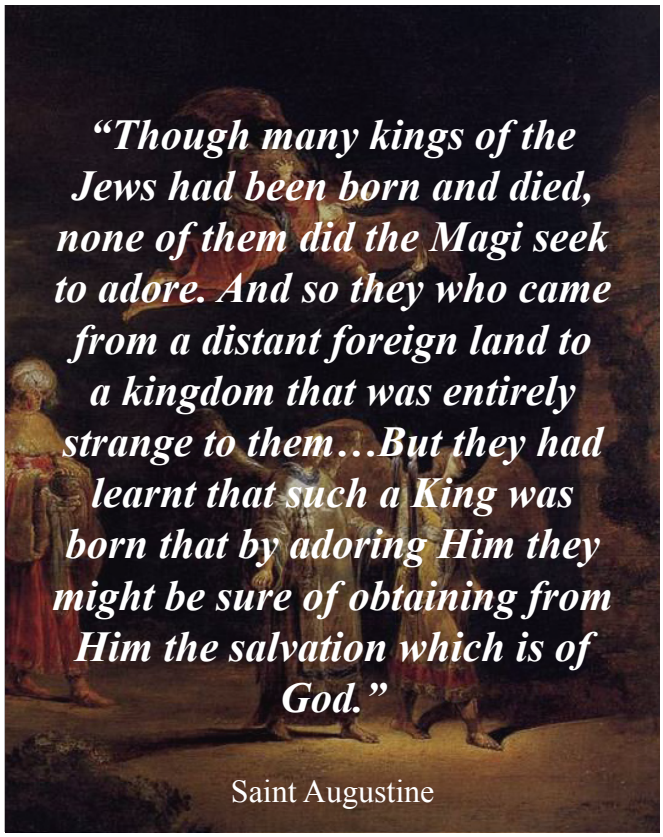
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WE THREE KINGS

The Symbolism of the Magi's Gifts in the Nativity Narrative

By Fr. Dantè Anglin - St. Barnabas', Havana

Holy writ is absolutely chalked full of symbolism as well as biblical typology and the season of Advent is full of these references. Typically in the season of Advent we think of the beloved typology and symbolism of the prophets, particularly the prophet Isaiah. In this season that extends into Christmas, Epiphany, and Candlemas, there is another beloved biblical typology that is rich in Christology and that is the presentation of Magi's gifts to our Lord in the manger in the gospel according to St. Matthew. The gifts that are presented to our Lord are not just expensive or nice-smelling gifts, but are rather symbols that point to who Christ is for the world as well as serving as a reflection of gifts that the Church and the faithful are called to offer to God. The gifts that are given to our Lord are as follows: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The first gift of gold symbolizes and represents the Kingship of our Lord and his authority as King of Kings. The second gift of frankincense symbolizes and represents our Lord's divinity and alludes to worship as well as sacrifice, more specifically, "...the once offered, full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world" (BCP 334). The third gift of myrrh symbolizes and represents our Lord's eventual death on the cross, for myrrh was commonly used as an ointment for burials during this time.





Journey of the Three Magi to Bethlehem, Leonaert Bramer c. 1638-1640

The travel of the Magi to our Lord and the gifts that are presented to him represent the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles and subsequently act as a calling to the Church Catholic to serve, like the shining star that served the magi, as a beacon of light and a source of healing as well as comfort to

the whole world. We are called to embody the truth and beauty of the message of the gifts that the magi represent, that being a universal invitation from the Church to the whole world to come and see our Lord in a manger. To come and worship and fall down before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. To come aboard the ark of salvation to be united to Christ in where, as St. Paul tells us so beautifully in his letter to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). May we by the example of the magi and the gifts offered to our Lord as one collect prays for to,

> ***... Lead us, who know thee now by faith, to thy presence, where we may behold thy glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen"***
>
> (BCP 162)



Adoration of the Magi, Salomon Koninck, c. 17th century, Picryl



WHY GO ON RETREAT

By Craig Bielke

Executive Director at Toddhall Retreat & Conference Center

In the rhythm of our busy lives, the word "retreat" can sound like an escape; like we are stepping away from our responsibilities or the world around us. But in the Christian tradition, "retreat" is something much deeper. It is a sacred invitation to step back toward God to listen, to rest, and to be renewed. At Toddhall Retreat & Conference Center, we have seen repeatedly how time apart can bring new life - not just for individuals, but for whole communities. Whether someone comes for prayer, silence, or fellowship, retreats offer space for restoration and clarity that everyday life rarely allows.

Here are just a few of the gifts a retreat can offer:



Christ in the Wilderness, Moretto da Brescia (1498—1554), Public Domain

- A break from the noise
- Removal from the constant motion and demands of daily life. This pause helps us breathe more deeply, think more clearly, and hear what God may be whispering in the quiet
- Time to reconnect with yourself and God
- Space from distractions, where we can rediscover who we are, and whose we are. Retreats give us the time and space to reflect on where we have been and where God might be leading us next
- Deepened relationships
- The chance for a church group to retreat together, sharing time in prayer, rest, and conversation that often leads to stronger bonds and renewed commitment to shared ministry
- New insights and fresh energy
- A space of silence and stillness where God often stirs new ideas, fresh inspiration, or a deep sense of peace that reshapes how we return to our work, families, and faith communities
- The chance to be restored
- Nurturing to both body and spirit through rest, nature, healthy food, and intentional practices of worship or reflection. We come home renewed, grounded, and ready to serve again



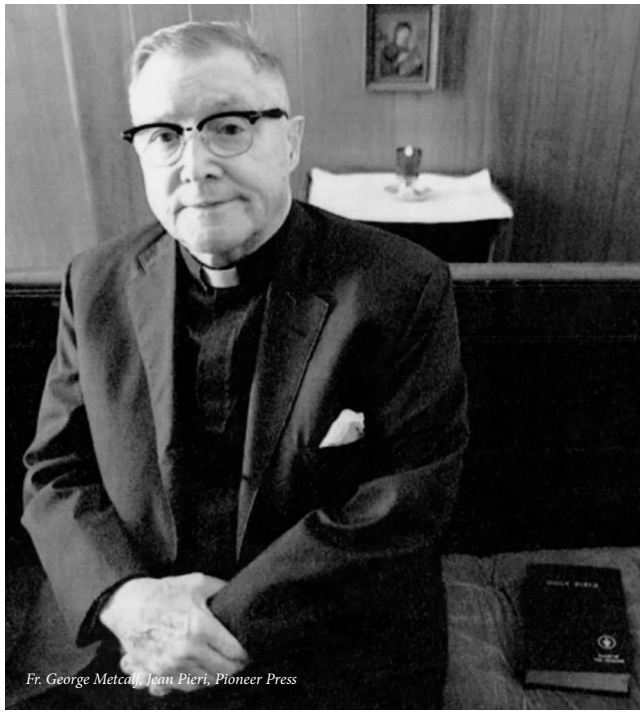
Toadhall Retreat Center, https://www.toddhallretreat.org/

If your congregation has never experienced a retreat together, perhaps this is the season to begin! Toddhall offers quiet hospitality and sacred space for spiritual renewal, a planning retreat, vestry/council gatherings, and personal reflection. We invite you to come, rest a while, and see what God might be waiting to show you.

MEDIA RELEASE FROM STILLWATER, MN

By Buck Malick of the Stillwater Amateur Radio Association

The Stillwater Amateur Radio Association's annual event at Afton's Belwin Conservancy drew a distant and illustrious visitor through the medium of "ham" radio. Belwin's Savanna Center was once the home of the late Episcopal priest Father George Metcalf, a ham-radio operator with call sign WØJH. Last year, Episcopal Bishop Brian K. Burgess, also a ham, contacted SARA during the event. This year, he plans to visit January 9-11 to operate alongside the SARA hams. While here, Bishop Burgess will visit local clergy, bring greetings from the Diocese of Springfield to the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, and officiate with Fr. Jay Phelan at the 10:00 Sunday service at Stillwater's Ascension Episcopal Church.


Fr. George Metcalf, Jean Pieri, Pioneer Press

Bishop Burgess' interest in this special event station was immediately sparked. When asked what piqued his interest, he responded: "The Church has always commemorated those who



Fr. George Metcalf, Stillwater Amateur Radio Association

have exhibited a greater capacity for kingdom of God work. Fr. Metcalf's vocation as a priest was repeatedly set apart by God for His particular use. Yes, we focus on the headline events of his life, but there is also his selfless service as a parish rector, his dedicated leadership within his Diocese, and his generosity within his community. He was also a most proficient amateur radio operator who attended to a higher level of emergency preparedness while others slept. My interest in the Stillwater Amateur Radio Association's annual Special Event Station was increased when I found a community of highly dedicated radio operators who live as they pray; to the glory of God and on behalf of those He came to redeem."

Remembering Father Metcalf – WØJH will be held from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. on January 9-11 at the Savanna Center. The SARA-sponsored event is free and open to "anyone interested in communicating with other radio operators around the world," said Dave Glas, past president of SARA. "This is a way for us to honor Father Metcalf. We want to recognize his generosity in donating the land and his support of amateur radio and other sciences."

Metcalf, who died in 1995, founded the Oratory of St. Mary's in 1959. For years, the land and the buildings, which included a residence and two small cottages, served as a spiritual retreat, and "Metcalf's radio ministry was broadcast around the world from towers on the sloping hillside," according to Belwin's history of the center. Metcalf was a long-time volunteer with the Courage Center's Handiham program, helping program members with ham-radio education and learning Morse code, Glas said.

Metcalf grew up in St. Paul and served as Gen. George Patton's personal chaplain during World War II. He was one of two chaplains who drafted the "Weather prayer" that Patton's troops believed ended three months of cloudy skies and rain in December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge. "There was terrible weather in that part of the world," Glas said. "The Allies couldn't fly airplanes in to provide support, and the Germans had tanks surrounding Bastogne." The prayer, which was printed and distributed to unit members, read: "Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen."

In 1959, Metcalf and his wife, Mary, went looking


Battle of the Bulge. The National WWII Museum

for property in the country and fell in love with 100 acres in Afton. In 1972, the Metcalfs donated around 90 acres of their 100-acre parcel to the Science Museum of Minnesota. The couple wanted the land, which included a freshwater marsh, to remain undeveloped and to be used for the observation and study of natural phenomena. The Metcalfs eventually became frustrated that the museum was not using the land for scientific study as stipulated in the deed agreement, family members said. In 2004, Mary Metcalf sued the museum to get it to abide by the agreement or to allow control to be transferred to another organization. A settlement reached in 2006 transferred the land to Belwin. Mary Metcalf died in 2007, and in 2009, Belwin purchased the family home and guest houses and remaining 12 acres. Since then, Belwin officials have transformed the property into the Savanna Center, a hub for expanding programs and partnerships that make outdoor experiences more accessible to the community. The Center is surrounded by 250 acres of restored oak savanna. Belwin Conservancy specializes in outdoor science education and has protected more than 1,600 acres in the St. Croix Valley.

For more information about the upcoming SARA event, please visit radioham.org.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH CAMP OF IL

By Carol McCrary



There's an amazing place to spend a week in nature with lots of activities, food, friends, singing and worship. Episcopal Church Camp of Springfield Illinois offers campers (7 years through eleventh grade) six days at Camp Wartburg near Waterloo, Illinois. Next summer (2026) we will gather from June 21 to June 27.

Camp Wartburg hosts our Episcopal Camp in their dining hall, worship spaces, sleeping cabins, activity room, and gym with a rock climbing wall, and all amenities are air conditioned! We also make great use of their outdoor spaces, including a huge playing field, swimming pool, hiking trails in the woods, a creek to walk along, a pond, campfires, archery, gaga ball courts, and a ropes course and zip line for our older campers! It is such a joy to enjoy the beauty of nature.



However, the most important part of Episcopal Church Camp is worshipping with friends, old and new. We have several caring priests who lead us in study and worship, and a talented music leader who teaches us new songs as well as playing many old favorites. We have a dedicated group of counselors who would love to lead your child as they benefit from a week with nature, activities, learning, singing, and worship!

We have an excellent staff of counselors who donate their time for the week. They undergo special training courses, including Safe Guard training, and required background checks. All the staff, including Wartburg specialists, complete training for the activities they lead. We are very conscious of the safety and care of your children.

We call our younger group (first through fifth grade) the "Alphas," and our older group (sixth through eleventh grade) the "Omegas," with campers who graduate high school being invited to return as





counselors. The prayer of our ECC team is that next year we might have enough campers enrolled that we could bring back a middle grade group! If your children are interested in enrolling for the first time or returning to camp, please talk to your priest or email Carol McCrary at troub71@yahoo.com for more information on how to sign up. We have scholarships for first time campers and many others.

SUMMER CAMP COORDINATOR

Episcopal Church Camp of Illinois

The Camp Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield is seeking a Camp Coordinator for its summer camp. Camp is held for one week each year at Camp Wartburg near Waterloo, IL and is for school-age youth. The purpose of this position is to coordinate and manage the program and its human resources and strategic operations. This contractual position offers $5,000 per year. Those interested should submit a statements of interest, qualifications, and a resume to: Camp Committee, Episcopal Diocese of Springfield, 821 South Second Steet, Springfield, Illinois 62704 or by email to administrator@episcopalspringfield.org. For more information, view the Episcopal Church Camp page on the Diocesan website.



PRE-LENTEN CLERGY RETREAT

February 11-13, 2026

This is a reminder to all clergy to mark your calendars for the 2026 Pre-Lenten Clergy Retreat, hosted at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Snows in Belleville, IL. Due to limited availability at the retreat center, this year's retreat will be held Wednesday afternoon through Friday lunch the week before Ash Wednesday (February 11, 12 and 13) instead of the typical Monday afternoon through Wednesday lunch schedule. Please mark your calendars now in preparation to join.

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