

Christmas Tidings

December 2011

Wherever you find yourself on your journey of faith, there is a place for you here.

God Is With Us

The story is so simple. We have heard it our whole lives. It is almost here.

First, the mysterious pregnancy, the fraught journey to Bethlehem, the star, the stable, the

heavenly hosts in the night sky, the haste of the shepherds to the barn and the baby, and the proclamation that from this small corner of the world, everything, everything had changed.

All because of this event, this fracture in the fabric of creation, a place was made for you and for me. Despite the immensity of creation, stars, galaxies and planets. . .the birth of God with us has shown that God is—well, with us! What a joy it is!

Blessings to you and your families this Christmas and always.

Jeanne+



Sunset in Panama.



Panamanians playing against Canada at beisbol.



Elephant friends in Bali.

Christmas Tidings 2011
is a Christmas greeting from
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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Sunday Services

8:45 am—Rite II Communion
with traditional music

11 am—Contemporary Communion
with praise music

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Please make your reservations by Wednesday, Dec. 21 with Winnie Johnson at 746-6625. We are thankful to Winnie and Bob for again coordinating our potluck. Ham and substantial paper plates will be provided. You are asked to bring your utensils, a salad, or a main dish, or dessert.

The Spirit of Jesus will be present to bind us together in a joyful time of food and fellowship. If you have no other plans, please make your plans to join us! It's also young Tom Aldinger's birthday, and Emmett McDowell will have a fun question for us to share after dinner.

What I believe about Christmas

Before Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, or Jack Spong, there was The Rt. Rev. John A. T. Robinson (1919-1983), Biblical scholar and one-time Anglican Bishop of Woolwich. Though his words won't strike us as particularly controversial today, the publication of his book *Honest to God* in 1963 ruffled a sleepy Anglican Church. I have a favorite bit that I like to read in Advent. It prepares me for Christmas and gives voice to how I feel about God's Incarnation. Here it is for your enjoyment:

"Let me try humbly and honestly to say what I believe about Christmas. What Christmas means to me is that in that baby, and in the man who grew from Him, is to be found the clue to the meaning of all life. The Christmas gospel is that what we see in Jesus tells us more about the heart of the universe than anything else. It says that, however it may look on the surface, reality at bottom is like that: love of that quality is the most real, the most powerful thing in the world.



Now that takes a tremendous amount of believing. In fact, it takes so much believing in the world as we know it that it would be impossible to credit unless in Jesus Christ we have a window through into ultimate reality itself, into God. And that is what Christmas is claiming – that Je-

sus of Nazareth is the deepest probe into the meaning of things that we have been given. For in him we reach rock bottom – that rock of love on which the whole universe is constructed. What we see on the surface of history in Jesus is what it's like at the centre. That's what, in traditional language, is meant by the "Divinity" of Christ. And that is the conviction I am passionately concerned that others should share – and act on."

Jeanne⁺

Blue Christmas – Service of the longest night

an interdenominational service in Benicia



Blue? Yes, blue as in the “blues.” Are you among the many that need a respite from the hustle and hassle of holiday business? Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the past, the death of a loved one, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or something that puts a question mark over the future, make parties and celebration painful for many people in our congregations and communities.

You may be someone, or know someone who is seeking the quiet solace at this season. On Wednesday, December 21st at 7 pm, join us at St. Paul’s where there is time and sacred space for anyone wishing a quiet remembrance of Christmas. It is the ‘good news’ of God’s presence even in the midst of darkness that we offer peace, hope and healing to those experiencing sadness.

Please join us for a time of special music, scripture, silence, reflection and healing prayer. The service will be followed by a gathering around refreshments. The only things needed are you, your memories and your prayers. Please come.

Wednesday, December 21st at 7 pm

Christmas Services

Wednesday, December 21

Longest night – Blue Christmas at 7 pm

An interdenominational reflective and quiet candlelight service for those in need of solace—featuring Taizé music and Christmas carols. Fellowship follows.

Saturday, December 24

Family Christmas Pageant and Communion Service at 4 pm

The Christmas story for all ages.

Christmas Eve Festal Eucharist at 11 pm

Come early—choral and orchestral music begins at 10:30 pm

Sunday, December 25

Christmas

Rite II Holy Communion at 10 am

With Apologies to the Prayer Shawl Ministry!

As a young wife wishing to surprise my husband with a lovingly hand-made gift for Christmas, I knitted a sweater for him. Yes, I did. It was finished on December 24th. I showed my work to my mother who is an artist with knitting needles. She spent all of Christmas Eve “fixing” my “art” and extracted a promise from me that I never knit again.

That promise would not have been broken but for the beguiling members of the Prayer Shawl ministry. The idea that someone’s love and prayers could be poured into a piece of fabric, and communicate the love of a community is so compelling. I could not resist giving it a try.

Well ... **IF** I manage to complete the seemingly simple task of a prayer shawl, it will need to remain in my possession. The prayers being stitched into this particular shawl are not the prayers meant to promote healing ... hilarity, yes, but not physical healing as such. I am pretty sure that my effort is going to look more like a “battle honor” than a shawl!

Observing knitting is relaxing. Knitting itself is, for me, literally a crick in the neck! Seriously, I am in awe of anyone who by their own hands and creativity makes lovely works for others to enjoy.

To all the creative people at St. Paul’s, especially the Prayer Shawl Ministry, Love and blessings at Christmas and always!

Jeanne+



BIRTHDAYS

Ian McGillis	2
Teena Miller	3
Dennis Gaines	4
Aislynn Stotler	6
Maureen Troyer	7
August Urban	7
Mark Brown	11
Nancy Bauschinger	13
Haley Rodekohr	14
Kim Rodekohr	17
Judy White	20
Tom Aldinger	25
Edie Westphal	25
Ski Smiglewski	26
Albert Jouvenot-Sells	27
Thomas Jouvenot-Sells	29
Shelby Rodekohr	29

ANNIVERSARIES

Gary & Jackie French	18
David & Ann Lindsay	29
Bob & Kay Barnard	31

God Has Moved Into Our Neighborhood

In a Christmas sermon, the 5th century pope Leo the Great declared: "No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator."

At the heart of the Christmas story is the amazing truth that God has moved into our neighborhood. The world is different now because God is here. We are different now because God is one of us.

My wish for all the good people of St. Paul's is that this Christmas season will find you marveling at God's goodness and sharing those glad tidings with everyone you meet.

Arthur Holder+



St. Paul's EMC Update

First, I would like to thank all of you who have made your pledge for year 2012. Your pledges are what allows your vestry to set our budget and plan our programs. Without these financial commitments from you, we would be a stagnant, dying congregation. As you know, this is not the case. You belong to a dynamic congregation with forward looking leadership, a rector who is constantly looking for programs to offer the best in worship and spiritual development, and a church that does not have a mortgage! Your hard earned dollars are not spent on bricks and mortar. We are, indeed, blessed.

Having said this, I must say that we are running behind in our campaign. As of this date, we are behind last year's results, and last year we ran on a bare bones budget. If you have not pledged, please prayerfully consider making a commitment. I know that these are hard times for a lot of people, but that means it is more important than ever for those who can possibly afford to contribute to do so. Please contact me, or any vestry person, if you have any questions.

—Fred Railsback, Senior Warden

December 2011 Lay Ministries Schedule

<u>DECEMBER 4—SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</u>		
8:45 AM	Lector	Frank Shoemaker
	LEM	Jackie French
	LEM/Inter.	Judy Furlong
	Crucifer	Michelle Gaines
	Torch.	Jake Sackett, Piper Dean
	Heal. Prayers	Edie Westphal
	Ushers	Bob & Ellen Whitehead
11 AM	Lector	Robin Silver
	LEM	Mike Baldwin
	LEM/Inter.	David Sells
	Ushers	Jeff & Jennifer Jarvis
	Heal. Prayers	Edie Westphal
	Altar Guild	Susie Bonstin, Katie Scott, Judy Furlong
	Flower Guild	Maggie Smith Edie Lockman
	Office Angel	Ginny Altice
	PIE Greeter	JoAnne Craig, Jim Turner
	Verger	Tom Mader

<u>DECEMBER 18—FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</u>		
8:45 AM	Lector	Debi Hall
	LEM	James Brown
	LEM/Inter.	Bob Hall
	Crucifer	Matt Markley
	Torch.	Emily Sackett, Mara Guerin
	Ushers	JoAnne Craig, Jim Turner, Steve Rodekohr
	Ushers	JoAnne Craig, Jim Turner, Steve Rodekohr
11 AM	Lector	Robert Mott-Smith
	LEM	Jennifer Jarvis
	LEM/Inter.	Jeff Jarvis
	Ushers	Carole Johnson, Donna Patey
	Altar Guild	Sandy Voorhees, Edie Lockman, Nancy Jenks, Martha McAfee
	Flower Guild	Lee Voorhees
	Office Angel	Betty McIntosh
	PIE Greeter	Mike Baldwin
	Verger	Tom Aldinger

<u>DECEMBER 11—THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</u>		
8:45 AM	Lector	Ann Lindsay
	LEM	Chris Mader
	LEM/Inter.	Tom Mader
	Crucifer	Allen Kwok
	Torch.	Patric Knoblich, Giovanna Zampa
	Ushers	Dale & Charlie Kilbourne
	Ushers	Dale & Charlie Kilbourne
11 AM	Lector	Maggie Smith
	LEM	Donna Patey
	LEM/Inter.	David Sells
	Ushers	Don & Maggie Smith
	Altar Guild	Chris Mader, Linda Tremain
	Flower Guild	Suzanne McDowell
	Office Angel	Jeanne Brown
	PIE Greeter	Jennifer Jarvis
	Verger	Neal Mulholand

<u>DECEMBER 24—CHRISTMAS EVE</u>		
11 PM	Lector	Steve Rodekohr, Steve Yurosko
	LEM	Edie Westphal
	LEM/Inter.	Steve Yurosko
	Crucifer	Michelle Gaines
	Thurifer	Haley Rodekohr
	Torch.	Patric Knoblich, Joseph Ellett
	Ushers	Chris & Tom Mader, Steve Rodekohr
<u>DEC. 25 CHRISTMAS DAY</u>		
10 AM	Lector	Mary Frances Kelly Poh
	LEM	Edna Aldinger
	LEM/Inter.	Tom Aldinger
	Ushers	Tom & Edna Aldinger
	Altar Guild	Kim Rodekohr, Cyndi Hardy
	Flower Guild	Julia Ritter
	Office Angel	Kay Barnard
	PIE Greeter	Jane Samuelson
	Verger	Robert Avant



December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>GROUP MEETINGS AA: 7 am Mon- Sat; 6 am & 8 pm Sundays LifeRing: 7 pm Tuesdays Meditation: 6 pm Sundays NA: 8 pm Fridays</p>				<p><i>1</i> 9 am MP†</p>	<p><i>2</i> 2-4 pm Friday Activities for Kids 5 pm Chili Dinner</p>	<p><i>3</i> 7:30 am Guys' Group Meeting 9:30 am Com- munications Committee 2 pm Concert</p>
<p><i>4 2nd Advent</i> 8:45 Rite I HE† 9:30 am Nursery 11 am Contemporary Eucharist 11:15 am Children's Program 2 pm Women's Advent Tea</p>	<p><i>5</i> 9 am MP† 7 pm 30-Hr Famine Meet- ing</p>	<p><i>6</i> 9 am MP†</p>	<p><i>7</i> 9 am MP† 10 am HE† 10:45 am Bible Study 4:30-6 pm Meal</p>	<p><i>8</i> 9 am MP† 7 pm Vestry 7 pm Christ- mas Eve Music Rehearsal</p>	<p><i>9</i> 1 pm 30-Hour Famine Begins</p>	<p><i>10</i> 7:30 am Broth- erhood Meeting 10 am Mutual Ministry Review 3 pm 30-Hour Famine Ends</p>
<p><i>11 3rd Advent</i> 8:45 Rite II HE† 9:30 am Nursery 11 am Contemporary Eucharist 11:15 am Children's Program 4 pm Spirit of the Season Concert</p>	<p><i>12</i> 9 am MP†</p>	<p><i>13</i> 9 am MP† 4 pm Kiwanis Private Party</p>	<p><i>14</i> 9 am MP† 10 am HE† 10:45 am Bible Study 4:30-6 pm Meal</p>	<p><i>15</i> 9 am MP† 7 pm Christ- mas Eve Music Rehearsal</p>	<p><i>16</i> 2-4 pm Friday Activities for Kids</p>	<p><i>17</i></p>
<p><i>18 4th Advent</i> 8:45 Rite II HE† 9:30 am Nursery 10 am Children's Pageant Re- hearsal /Party 11 am Contempo- rary Eucharist</p>	<p><i>19</i> 9 am MP† 10 am Greening of the Church</p>	<p><i>20</i> 9 am MP†</p>	<p><i>21</i> 9 am MP† 10 am HE† 10:45 am Christ- mas Potluck 4:30-6 pm Meal 7 pm Blue Christ- mas Service</p>	<p><i>22</i> 9 am MP† 7 pm Christ- mas Eve Music Rehearsal</p>	<p><i>23</i> Office Angels Luncheon</p>	<p><i>24 Christmas Eve</i> 4 pm Family Pageant and Communion† 11 pm Festal Eucharist†</p>
<p><i>25 Christmas Day</i> 10 Rite II HE†</p>	<p><i>26</i> 9 am MP†</p>	<p><i>27</i> 9 am MP† 7 pm Potluck for Caleigh Furlong</p>	<p><i>28</i> 9 am MP† 10 am HE† 4:30-6 pm Meal</p>	<p><i>29</i> 9 am MP†</p>	<p><i>30</i></p>	<p><i>31</i></p>