



the Epistle

A Monthly Publication of St. Paul's-on-the-Plains Episcopal Church
1510 Avenue X Lubbock TX 79401 • (806)762-2893 Phone • (806)762-8986 Fax

WE HAVE TO ASK FOR YOUR CONTINUING INDULGENCE

Kathi is still recuperating from brain surgery and is not back in the office yet. So for the second issue in a row, much of the "normal" content of a standard issue of this newsletter is not here. Please keep Kathi in your prayers, and thanks for your understanding.

+ + +

FROM THE RECTOR

During this season of the year, the days are shortest and the nights are longest. I know that these long nights are simply due to the angle of the earth's axis as it orbits the sun. Nevertheless, the more romantic part of me sees powerful symbolism in the lengthening shadows as winter approaches. Our ancestors in the faith may have as well—that's perhaps one of the reasons that the Christmas season comes right on the heels of the winter solstice. For centuries it was thought that early Roman Christians chose the date of Christmas because of the pagan solstice celebration of *Sol Invictus*, the "Unconquerable Sun." Some modern scholars have actually pushed back on this hypothesis, contending that the Christian celebration of the Birth of the Son actually predated the pagan Roman celebration of the Birth of the Sun. But either way, the solstice and the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ do arrive in close proximity on the calendar.

Thus it is in the midst of the shortest days and longest nights of the year that Christmas comes, thumbing its nose at the darkness. "A light shines in the darkness," St. John writes (1:5), "and the darkness has not overcome it." It is precisely when darkness seems to overpower the light that we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. And after that twelve-day celebration, as the days continue to lengthen, we celebrate the season of Epiphany, a word that literally means, "shining forth."

Yet, in the midst of all the warm emotional feelings surrounding Christmas and Epiphany, in the midst of shepherds and Wisemen, we mustn't forget the underlying the reason for God coming to dwell among us in the person of Jesus Christ. The struggle against the Powers of Darkness did not end at the manger. In Israel, only 6 miles separate the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the traditional sites of Jesus' birth and Jesus' death. Thirty-some-odd years after his birth, the baby who is lifted gently in the arms of his mother Mary will be lifted high upon the cross. Christmas finds its true meaning in Good Friday and Easter. We sing praise to God at Christmas not because of the birth of a cuddly baby. Our praise stems from the fact that that baby is Emmanuel, God with us, and that through his death and resurrection, we are reconciled to God. As the final verse of "Hark! the herald angels sing" proclaims:

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,

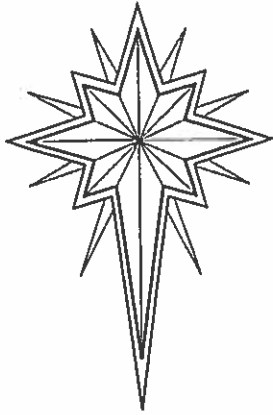
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.

Risen with healing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,

hail, the Sun of Righteousness! hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! (Hymnal 1982, #87)

May you have a Merry and Blessed Christmas, and may you experience and share God's light in 2018.

+ *Worshipping God in the Beauty of Holiness* +
+ *Welcoming and Growing in Faith and Fellowship* +
+ *Serving our Neighbors in Jesus' Name* +



INNER SCROOGE OR INNER CHRIST?

I recently ran across an article I had saved from the late 1990's from George Carey, who at that time was the Archbishop of Canterbury (the spiritual head of our worldwide Episcopal/Anglican family). It was his Christmas message, and I really liked his contrasting our inner Scrooge versus our inner Christ. Enjoy. Fr. Jim

Dear friends of the Anglican Communion;
One of my all-time favorite Christmas

stories is Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*. You will know it so well that it is hardly necessary to repeat the story. It is a real heart-tugger as the selfish old skinflint, Scrooge, is shown the truth about how so much of humanity lives with suffering and discovers the joy of sharing his wealth. It would be a mistake, however, to see it only as Scrooge learning to give. The story is also about him learning to receive. I don't believe, you see, that Scrooge was totally bad. He believed in hard work and he had had many disappointments in earlier life. But over the years he became hardened to the struggles of others and indifferent to their needs. As he withdrew from others he failed to see that he was shrinking inside and that his capacity to love, which is the essence of humanity, was dying. He lost the ability to see the beauty of others and the joy of receiving love from others. Surely, there cannot be a more perfect ending to a story than when Scrooge is moved to mark Christmas by meeting the needs of Bob Cratchit's family and Tiny Tim in particular. As he gives, so he receives in seeing the obvious delight of that unfortunate family.

We too know the pleasure of giving at Christmas. How we rejoice as we see the gratitude of our family and friends as

they open the presents we give them. It doesn't have to be much to give real pleasure to people. 'It is the thought that counts' we often say and it is true. Giving is a truly ennobling thing and speaks of the character of God himself in his total and unconditional love for Creation.

God's gift of Christ is, of course, central to all our Christmas celebrations. How God, too, rejoices as he sees his precious gift of love changing us. The challenge of Christmas for us, as we seek to respond to God's gift, is whether we are able to receive him afresh, to allow ourselves to be open to the promptings of the Spirit, rather than turning in on ourselves and closing off from God in a Scrooge-like defensiveness and selfishness.

I have to confess that there is a 'Scrooge' in me that wants to protect all that I hold dear, to defend myself from the insights and challenges of even my companions in faith. Equally, however, I hope the 'Christ' in me is constantly challenging this instinct, prompting me to listen to what they have to teach me and to receive and surrender to their wisdom. I hope he prompts us all to offer ourselves in willing surrender to others. As an English bishop wrote not so long ago, 'No Christian preaches the Gospel on the basis of being a good advertisement for it, but only on the basis of being totally dependent on the love and power of God to take him or her forward.'

(continued on next page)

Perhaps Christina Rossetti's poem puts it even better:

*What can I give him poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.*

Eileen joins me in wishing each of you, our dear friends, a most happy and joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.
The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. George Carey

DECEMBER 24 SCHEDULE

We will have ONE Sunday morning service observing the 4th Sunday of Advent:

10:30 a.m.—4th Sunday of Advent. This will be a mostly said service with Advent hymns (and the focus will still be Advent, not Christmas).

Come let us
Adore

Him



And then we will have our regular Christmas Eve services:
4:30 p.m.—Children's Service. This is a noisy and kid-friendly service, with a VERY simplified liturgy, including a simplified Eucharist.

6:30 p.m.—Early Christmas Eve "Vigil" Service. This will be a "real" Christmas Eve service, though just a bit "plainer" than the "Midnight" service (it will NOT have incense). This service will begin with 15 minutes of Christmas music at 6:30, with the processional hymn and service proper beginning at 6:45. It will be a full Eucharist with a sermon

and traditional carols.

10:30 p.m.—Late Christmas Eve "Midnight" Service. This is the service with "all the trimmings". It begins with 15 minutes of Christmas music at 10:30, with the service proper beginning at 10:45. **INCENSE WILL BE USED** at this service, only.

Nursery

Nursery will be available for the 6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve "Vigil" Service

Sunday School

We will not have Sunday School classes on Sunday, December 24th or Sunday, December 31st.

OFFICE HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The St. Paul's office will be closed on

Thursday, December 21

Tuesday, December 26

Tuesday, January 2

*Reminder: our normal office hours are
Tue, Wed, and Thu, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm*

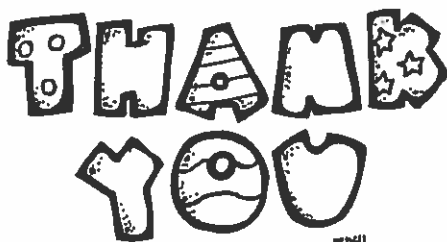
**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

CHESTER by C W Harriger

I remember a time when certain members of St Paul's would gather for a workday at the church, generally on a Saturday. Armed with buckets, shovels, rakes and hoes we would spread out in a frenzy of raking and shoveling and hauling trash to the dumpster. It never took long. Many hands make light work. In the end, the church stood a little taller, prouder and maybe even sparkled a bit. We were all proud of our work and vowed to meet again in the near future. The near future generally meant next year. Then one day someone pointed out the sagging gutter in the courtyard to me as if I was the only one who might understand gutters. I tried to think back, "had I ever lived in one.? Rejecting that thought I found a ladder and climbed up for a close look. The gutter was full from south to north. Good soil supporting everything from moss to grass and even a handful of small trees at the north end. I was digging soil out when Chester appeared with his bucket and rake. I had seen Chester on a weekly basis going about his task of raking and cleaning the perimeter. Leaves, paper, twigs, plastic bottles and all the other detritus that blows in. He was a quiet man, moving about with purpose, and to my best recollection we had never spoken in the past. Maybe a brief nod of the head and then onward until the day I cleaned gutter while he raked the beds below. Eventually he looked up and spoke while I was scooping dirt and plants into my own bucket. The pause was brief, the conversation short, the connection certain. Two men working at different tasks for the same cause. In the future we continued to nod but now it was a knowing nod. That day made me think of words from Robert Frost.

*and feel a spirit kindred to my own;
so that henceforth I work no more alone,
but glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
and weary, sought at noon with him the shade,
and dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
with one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.
Men work together, I told him from the heart,
whether they work together or apart.*

There are people at St Paul's I speak to and then there are some I simply nod to. The nod indicates someone I know little about and haven't had opportunity to know better. I looked for opportunity with Chester but time ran out. He was a quiet guy, frequently seen toting a bucket and rake around the church property. It must have been a task he appointed for himself. I wish we had spoken sooner.



THANKS

The staff and clergy of St. Paul's wishes to thank you for your most generous Christmas gifts to us this year. We are most appreciative of your gifts and kindness. We wish you and yours a blessed 2018!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, Dec 21—Office closed

Sunday, Dec 24—4th Sunday of Advent—10:30 am Service only (no 8:00 am, no Sunday School)

Sunday, Dec 24—Christmas Eve—4:30 pm children's service, 6:30 & 10:30 pm full services

Tue, Dec 26—Office closed

Sunday, Dec 31—regular 8:00 and 10:30 services, but no Sunday School

Tue, Jan 2—Office closed

Sunday, Jan 7—2:30 pm—Carillon Eucharist

Tuesday, Jan 16—6:30 pm—Vestry

Wednesday, Jan 17—2:00 pm—Movie Afternoon: *Akeelah and the Bee*

Thursday, Jan 18—11:30 am—Ladies Lunch Bunch—La Madeline, 19th and Quaker

Sunday, Jan 21—Bishop's Annual Visitation—reception after 10:30 service

Sunday, Jan 21—2:30 pm—Carillon Eucharist

Monday, Jan 22—1:30 pm—St Hilda's Guild (study of John—at Carillon, Cimarron Rm)

Sunday, Jan 28—St. Paul's Annual Meeting (with potluck starting at 11:45 a.m.)

Tuesday, January 30—6:00 pm—Ladies Night Out—BJ's Restaurant, 4805 S Loop 289

AND IN FEBRUARY...

Sunday, Feb 4—Super Bowl Party (beginning at 4:30 pm at the Kopp's)

Sunday, Feb 11—"Shrove *SUNDAY*" Pancake Brunch at 9:15 am

Wednesday, Feb 14—Ash Wednesday—services at Noon and 6:00 pm

January Birthdays

Sharon Casey (2)

Stephen Keen (4)

Betsy Jones (5)

Jenny Murphy-Lubowicz
(12)

Debbie Quartaro (15)

Lady Falls Brown (18)

Sally Brown (18)

Cora Stephens (18)

Charles Mire (19)

Linda Jones (19)

Helen Liggett (20)

Erika Warnick (20)

David Nystel (21)

Mollianne Carter (22)

Ron Lubowicz (24)

Sonja Nash (25)

Cody Colvin (25)

Matthew Quinn (27)

Ruth Jones (27)

Bill Ward (28)

January Anniversaries

Bill & Sharon Casey (9)

Ken & Mary McCormick
(18)



BIG EVENTS IN JANUARY!!!

BISHOP'S VISIT

Sunday Jan 21—including confirmations at 10:30 service, with reception to follow

ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK

Potluck lunch begins around 11:45, with Annual Meeting following

CANTERBURY MEAL TIME

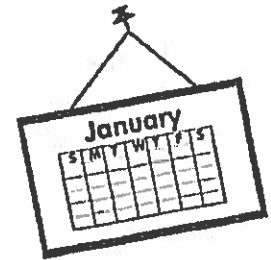
Each semester, the Episcopal churches in Lubbock and Levelland serve the students at Canterbury and it is St. Paul's turn. We serve about 15 people dinner on the first four Sundays of the semester (January 21st, 28th, February 11th and 18th). If you would like to sign up to bring part or all of a meal, please contact Renee at 445-3667

or nwtxyouth@suddenlink.net

LADIES' FELLOWSHIP

Please join us for Ladies Night Out on January 30th at 6:00pm at BJ's 4805 South Loop 289

Please RSVP to Renee at 762-2893 or nwtxyouth@suddenlink.net by January 29th



January Ladies Lunch Bunch will get together on Thursday, January 18th at 11:30 am at La Madeline's 19th and Quaker

MOVIE AFTERNOON

Wednesday, January 17th at 2:00 pm: *Akeelah and the Bee*

A young girl from South Los Angeles tries to make it to the National Spelling Bee. Popcorn, snacks and drink! You don't want to miss it!

LOST & FOUND—GOING, GOING, GONE?

Are you missing a jacket, pair of sunglasses or a casserole dish? Please check out the table in the fellowship hall after church Sundays January 7th through January 28th and take home your missed item. After that date—most items will go to the Thrift House.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE UNITED THANK OFFERING INGATHERING!



The ECW of St. Paul's on-the-Plains Episcopal Church hosted this year's second UTO ingathering on Sunday, November 12th and you responded with your generous contributions. We raised \$516.57! This money will support mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Thank you from Executive Board of the Episcopal Church Women of St.

Paul's, Renée Haney, Judi Keller, Caroline Kopp, Pam Morgan, Joy Perry, Lynn Rodgers, Kim Sanford and Linda Walter for participating in this Episcopal tradition along with the many other churches in our Diocese and the nation. We hope you will continue to keep your blue boxes handy and throughout the year fill them with your coins and your thanks for the many blessings in your life. We will have another ingathering in the spring!

FOOD BASKET FOR THE NEEDY

Please remember that we are collecting food items each week for the less fortunate (small toiletry items too!). Items may be placed in the basket in the narthex each Sunday. They will be brought forward at the offertory at the 10:30 service each week. Thank you.

EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT \$760,000 HOLIDAY MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

Between now and December 31, all contributions up to \$760,000 will be matched.



Healing a hurting world

Go to support.episcopalrelief.org to donate online, or call 1.855.312.HEAL (4325).

Gifts can also be mailed to Episcopal Relief & Development
PO Box 7058
Merrifield, VA 22116-7058

PRAYER LIST—NEW PROTOCOL

We are rebooting our prayer list. If you have a prayer request that you'd like on this list, please fill out the following form, and put it in the offering plate or drop it by the office.

ST PAUL'S PRAYER REQUEST FORM

Please add to the church prayer list

Name: _____

I would like them to remain on the prayer list for

1 month 1 year
 6 months 5 years

Which prayer list?

General
 Deceased (date of death? _____)
 Active duty military

Your name: _____

Your relationship to the person, or additional information (optional):

Please place in offering plate or drop by office

COMING IN FEBRUARY—MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

Super Bowl Party

Sunday Feb 4, beginning at 4:30 pm at the Kopp's
10804 Norwood Ave

Bring your favorite tailgating food—drinks and paper goods provided.

"Shrove SUNDAY"

Pancake Brunch

Sunday Feb 11
Between services
9:15-10:15 am

We're moving our "Mardi Gras" celebration a couple days earlier this year!



Ash Wednesday

February 14
services at Noon and
6:00 pm

**St. Paul's-on-the-Plains
Episcopal Church**
www.stpaulslubbock.org

*St. Paul's is a part of the
Diocese of
Northwest Texas*

VISION STATEMENT

+ *Worshipping God in the
Beauty of Holiness* +
+ *Welcoming and Growing in
Faith and Fellowship* +
+ *Serving our Neighbors in
Jesus' Name* +

VESTRY

Bob Nebb, Sr. Warden;
Mike Quartaro, Jr. Warden;
William Asquith, Clerk;
Patrick Pritchett, Treasurer;
Abby Quinn, George Sanford,
Sally Brown, Sheila Gray,
Lane Thomas, David Bennett,
Bart Howard, Richard Morgan,
Sonja Nash

PARISH STAFF

The Rev. James P. Haney V,
Rector
The Rev. Becky Tilton-Orem,
Deacon
Dr. John Hollins,
Minister of Music
Kathi Harris,
Parish Administrator
Cary Harriger,
Sexton

The Epistle

Epistle Deadline
Monday, January 16
Epistle Workday
Wednesday, January 31
at 10:00 am

St. Paul's-on-the-Plains Episcopal Church
1510 Ave. X • Lubbock, Texas 79401

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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DECEMBER 24—SERVICE SCHEDULE

This year, Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday. This is the "worst case scenario" for services, since Sunday morning is the 4th Sunday of Advent, and Sunday evening is Christmas Eve. (We've been lucky—because of leap years it hasn't fallen this way since 2006, though it will happen again in 2023).

So we will have ONE Sunday morning service observing the 4th Sunday of Advent:

10:30 a.m.—4th Sunday of Advent—a mostly said service with Advent hymns

And then we will have our regular Christmas Eve services:
4:30 p.m.—Children's Service
6:30 p.m.—Early Christmas Eve "Vigil" Service
10:30 p.m.—Late Christmas Eve "Midnight" Service