

# News from the Hill

December 2017 \_\_\_

Poway, CA-

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An Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols

## The Gift of Advent

As a young person, Lent was the season of the church year that resonated with me most. A substantial period of 40 days – always longer than a calendar month, sometimes spanning three – Lent sets aside time each year for us to discern the

person of faith God calls each of us to be. Who am I, or perhaps where am I in my relationship to God and my neighbors? – an important question for all of us, and especially for anyone trying to discover a path and vocation in life. During Lent we consider various disciplines and commitments – things we can do or, often, give

up and not do – to bring us into better relationship. These are concrete things, I used to think – almsgiving, fasting, and prayer; by doing them, I can become a better person and Christian. During Holy Week, I can ponder Jesus' gift of self in the Eucharist and in service to others, his enormous sacrifice on the cross, and the freedom from death and sin won for us, as we in turn commit and recommit ourselves to living life in Christ. This is life-changing stuff, and, indeed, it was for me.

The older I get, however, the more entranced I am by Advent, the indefinite

three-to-four-week season of promise, preparation, and anticipation before Christmas. I'll admit, the natural season and weather help: as we hear the yearning for the Messiah in Scripture, in the northern hemisphere we too

yearn for light as the days grow shorter; the cooler weather (even in southern California!) draws us inside for expectant warmth and the closeness of community, around hearths and tables. In Advent we hear beautiful descriptions the prophets proclaim of the coming kingdom

of God, where "the wolf lies down with the lamb," where "the eyes of the blind are opened" (Isaiah 11); where God's Spirit "brings good news to the oppressed, binds up the broken-hearted, and proclaims liberty to captives" (Isaiah 61). These stories inspire us with a vision of a world yet to come, for Advent is indeed an in-between time: it's not Christmas yet, we know, and, while Christ has come in history, foretold by prophets, longed for by nations, and celebrated at Christmas, he is still to come at the end of time.



#### The Gift of Advent

continued from page 1

Advent speaks to us in this in-between time in which we live – a time I can probably appreciate more now than when I was younger, impatient for Christmas, ready for life and vocation to hurry up and begin. While Lent prompts important questions about our commitment to life in Christ, the questions we hear in Scripture in Advent are different and come from people who are confused in their particular moment:

- Jewish priests ask John the Baptist, "Who are you? Are you the prophet? Elijah? The Messiah?"
- In Isaiah, a voice says, "Cry out." "What shall I cry?" is the immediate response.
- Elizabeth wonders, "Why has this happened to me?"
- An incredulous Mary asks the angel, "How can this be?"

Advent gives us permission to be confused, to linger in the in-between stages of life without full answers, confident in God's promises, yet uncertain as to how they will play out.

Advent's focus is different, too. While Lent asks how we act and who we are in relation to God and neighbor, Advent asks, "Who is God in relation to us?" The God Advent proclaims is "God-with-us," Emmanuel, a God who has acted before us in the greatest deed of love and empathy the world has ever seen, the Incarnation, the enfleshment of God in humanity. This God participates in the full life and experience, promise and suffering of humanity in all ways but sin. This God knows us by walking with us, modeling what Pope Francis calls the most gracious act of human "accompaniment" through joys and sorrows, knowing them as we do in earthy, gritty human experience.

The challenge for us, then, is the same as it was for Jesus' mother Mary: how can we prepare our hearts and homes to receive this presence and love—unasked for, yet promised and sure to come? How might we respond to this gift? God and the church invite us to linger in this Advent season, to celebrate its promise amid our confusion, and to wonder at and respond to the tangible, human presence of God in our midst. Here are a few ways of doing so this year:

- Take part in the Advent Faith-at-Home workshop Friday evening, December 1, and make your own Advent wreath to help mark the weeks of this season. Hold off on Christmas decorations if you can, and enjoy the pregnant days of Advent with its deep blues and purples. Be conscious of the passage of Advent time and the opportunity to prepare for the in-breaking of Christmas light;
- Participate in the quiet, candlelit peace of Celtic liturgy Saturday evenings at 5 p.m. during Advent, and hear the earthy language of the Celtic tradition that especially recognizes God's presence in all life;

- Mark the beginning of Advent with Advent Lessons and Carols Sunday, December 3 at 4 p.m., and experience God's promises, our human questions, and the season's rich interplay of darkness and light in Scripture and song;
- Accompany others who remember loss or struggle to find joy at this time of year at Blue Christmas services Wednesday, December 20 at 9:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.;
- Celebrate Mary's confusion and assent to God's indwelling within her the 4th Sunday of Advent on December 24 separate from Jesus' birth later that day. Help transform the church following the 10:15 a.m. service from Advent to Christmas decorations;
- Finally, fully celebrate the awesome wonder of Christmas, God's redemptive indwelling in us, throughout the nearly two weeks of the Christmas season;

In the end, Advent is less about who we are or the things we do or commit to in the Christian life and more an invitation to live in God's indefinite time before the next coming and a reminder of who God is in relation to us. How can we live fully into this time of waiting? How can we respond to God's action of Incarnation? Who will we be at God's coming? Whom can we accompany this Advent? Whose life and flesh can we take on?

~Nathan Costa

## Christmas Flower & Music Donations

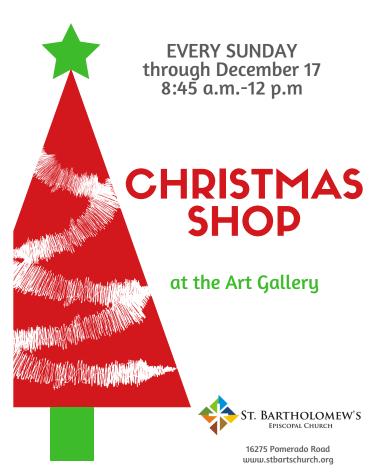
You can honor your loved ones on our Christmas Remembrance/ Thanksgiving list by making an offering to support altar flowers or our music ministry. Envelopes are in the church or make your offering online. All names are due to the church office by Monday, December



lsaldamando@stbartschurch.org, with questions.











Saturdays, 5 p.m.

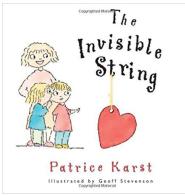
This Season of Advent we will all offer a Eucharist in the Celtic worship tradition at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday evenings. Celtic worship is deeply rooted in scripture and liturgical tradition and affirmed by music that draws both individual and community into the palm of God's hand. The energy and pace will be noticeably different - with more silence and breathing encouraged. Our goal for the four Saturday evenings this Advent is to offer a service of worship that counterbalances the energy of the world around us and draws out the Spirit within each of us.

## **Reading Corner**

Looking for a gift for Christmas? Searching for ways to bring faith into your daily life? Check out these great books – they'll become staples in your home.

#### The Invisible String, Patrice Karst

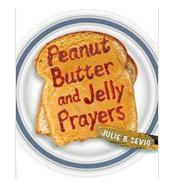
We are all connected, and no one is ever alone. That's the message of this beautiful children's book. Written to address children's fear of being separated from the ones they love, the message of this book is powerful for people of all ages. We're all connected by invisible strings made of love. Whether we're separated by



distance, or anger, or death, this book reassures us that love is the unending bond that unites us to everyone else.

#### Peanut Butter and Jelly Prayers, Julie B. Sevig

My new favorite! This book has simple, rhyming prayers that kids of all ages will love to share. In this wonderful prayer book, you'll find a prayer for pizza, for leftovers, and – my favorite – for macaroni and cheese:



Boil the water, add the noodles,

Mac and cheese, we love you oodles.

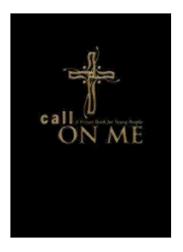
In gratefulness for this creation,

We bow and eat with such elation.

Plus, there's a table talk question for each prayer listed. The questions are great ways to get your family talking together, and making the most of family meal time. Check out the prayers "When Friends Visit," "In our Sadness," and "Vacation." There are also prayers for each season of the church year. Highly recommended!

#### Call on Me: a Prayer Book for Young People, Sharon Ely Pearson and Jennifer C. Gamble

Do you ever struggle with knowing how to pray? Have you ever gone through a dry period in your prayer life? The title of this book is misleading – it's really a prayer book for all people. I turn to this book again and again in my personal life, in conversations with teenagers, with parents, with those in the hospital, with anyone searching for genuine connection with God.



More than any prayer book I've

found, this one speaks to real life yearnings. The prayers range from anxiety before a test, body image, and the suicide of a friend to prayers for ending world hunger. There are also daily prayers that can be incorporated into short breaks in your day.

It's relevant and profound, for grown-ups as well as teenagers. I think every home should have one.

~The Rev. Mary Lynn Coulson

# Advent Faith-at-Home Workshop



Join us to make
Advent wreaths and
learn new ways to
pray through
Advent with your
whole family.



All Ages All Are Welcome

Dinner and wreath materials will be provided.

For more information, contact Alex Howard, ahoward@stbartschurch.org



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## **November Vestry Update**

Following our opening prayer, Jim Grandinetti led the Vestry in a reflection on a section from the Book of Acts. One of the messages from that discussion is that today's Christians need to emulate St. Paul and the early church by moving out of our comfort zone to effect change.

In December, the Vestry will be addressing the Budget for 2018 and receive an update from Mtr. Mary Lynn on Faith Formation. The Vestry will also receive updates on Campus Redevelopment and the formation of a Campus Safety Committee led by Jr. Warden Mark Davis.

Mark Davis updated up on progress of possible rock removal for the proposed Parish Hall, as well as the ongoing mapping of underground utilities (you may have noticed the green, red, and yellow paint markings around St. Bart's). The search committee for a new Music Director has been formed and is led by Tim McLellan as co-chair with Fr. Mark. Also announced was the status of the possible sale of the Church of Christian Science.

Bob Capettini presented the Resource Management update, outlining a long list of completed and to be completed goals. Completed goals ranged from updating the parish database, maintenance requirements, and parish financials. To be completed goals covered a significant list including strategic planning for the Preschool, updating the campus master plan, and development of off-campus ministries.

Bill Angus led the Vestry though possible changes that will be incorporated in the 2018 budget, as well as presenting the Treasurer's Report. Income is exceeding our forecast; pledged receipts are more than forecast with expenses being slightly less than expected.

In addition to approving October's minutes and the November's Treasurer's Report, the Vestry voted to accept the Finance Committee recommendation to increase 2018 Diocesan Common Life Share to \$116,961 and approved the new St. Bartholomew's Denominational Health Plan Policy for 2018. Finally, \$3,500 from the Nicholson Trust was approved to repair/replace our Wi-Fi vulnerabilities.

The Campus Safety Committee includes Mark Davis, Beth Dean, Cheri Hoffman, and Mike Jewett. Two additional members are needed, names suggested were Vic Jones and Doug Clements.

The next Vestry meeting is December 12 at 6 p.m.

~Dan Crane

## Are You Ready for Leadership?

The Vestry is the lay leadership of the church. Each year several Vestry members retire after serving a three-year term. These members then serve with the Wardens and Rector as the nominating committee to identify candidates for the Vestry. We are now recruiting four Vestry positions. Please begin prayerfully considering if you might be called to serve in spiritual leadership as a member of St. Bart's Vestry. Please direct questions about serving on Vestry to Dan Crane. All nominations should be submitted by January 1, 2018.

Also, we are seeking St. Bartholomew delegates to convention. Each year, we select these delegates. This is an important role within the church as our delegates vote on resolutions that affect both our church and our Diocese. We are seeking five persons who would like to participate in this process. If you're interested or have any questions, please contact Dan Crane, dan\_crane2001@yahoo.com. All nominations should be submitted by January 1, 2018.

~Dan Crane



Clergy and Vestry wall in the church office.

## The Connection of Faith and Giving

The theme of "faith" weaves its way through all of Scripture. It was faith that led Noah to build an ark for 120 years. It was faith that caused Abraham to be willing to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. It was the faith of a Roman Centurion who believed that if Jesus just uttered the word, his son would be healed. It's a word that we toss around freely as Christians and Episcopalians.

Hebrews 11:6 states that it is impossible to please God without faith. What is it about "faith" that makes God smile? Faith requires us to look beyond ourselves for answers. Faith drives us to look to God and place our hope and trust in Him.

Jesus reminds us, "What is impossible with men is possible with God". Our faith, no matter the size, puts the wheels of

heaven into motion and it is that faith that will sustain us in our capital campaign to grow the church and put our faith into motion to serve our community.

II Kings 4:1-7 provides a tangible illustration of what faith can do and the impact that faith has on God's love for us.. Let's take a look.

The chapter opens by introducing us to a grieving widow of a nameless prophet. Her grief over his death is superseded by the realities of the life she will now lead.

He has left her in debt and with no means of providing support for her two sons.

In ancient days creditors could repossess your children just like a car you stopped making payments on. She had not only lost her husband, but was in real danger of losing her sons to slavery.

In desperation, she cries out to Elisha who asks her "What do you have in your house?" With a little embarrassment, she reveals the hopelessness of her situation. She says "Your servant has nothing there at all, except a little olive oil."

Elisha then gives a curious response. He tells her to go to her neighbors and gather as many empty jars as possible. In other words to go into her community. He even adds "Don't ask for just a few, ask for a lot."

He then instructs her to go inside her house, shut the door, and begin to pour the little oil she has into the jars that she has collected. This seems like a strange suggestion, but her situation is hopeless. What does she have to lose?

What she does in that next moment reveals her faith. Every house she went to was a step of faith. Every request for a jar was an expression of faith. Just like every request to support our capital campaign is a step of faith.

She knew she only had a little oil and that it would require a miracle for all these jars she collected to be filled with oil. Her faith put the wheels of heaven into motion as God prepared to do the impossible. Every jar she collected gave God greater opportunity to reveal himself and his power, just as all that we do in our capital campaign reveals God to us and our community.

Imagine the scene as she closes the door of her house. Jars are stacked everywhere. Jars of every size and every shape sit in her house. Standing beside her are her two sons. They are about to witness up close and personal a miracle that they would tell and re-tell hundreds of times during the course of their life,

just as what we do now will reveal itself in our community for generations to come.

This widow then looks into the one jar that is hers. In that jar is a small amount of oil. Her faith wavers. Was this just the wild idea of Elisha or was this really from God? Her heart begins to race and she picks up her jar and begins to pour oil into an empty jar. She tilts her hand and the oil rolls over the edge of the jar and begins to pour into the empty jar. She looks into her jar and there is still oil. It keeps flowing until the first jar is full to the brim.

She stops, looks at her boys and they all three simultaneously grin at one another. They are amazed at what has just taken place. However, the widow doesn't linger long. She takes another jar and again slowly begins to fill it. And then she fills a third jar. And a fourth. And a fifth. Jar after jar is filled and she looks around the room, she sees God's gracious provision.

She asks her son to bring her the next jar. But he replied that there were no more jars. The Bible says that it was just then that the oil stopped flowing because God's provision was fulfilled, as it will be fulfilled here with us at St. Bart's.

So I ask you, to dare you, to believe the words of the apostle Paul, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." Ephesians 3:20 (NIV). Amen

~The Rev. William Zettinger

#### St. Bart's Preschool

The past month has been very busy at the preschool with Trunk or Treat, the All-Family Preschool Harvest Festival, and All Saint's Day Parade that ended with our Pre-K Friday Class celebrating Día de Muertos. In between, our preschoolers sure had fun making a Chicken Pot Pie dinner for their families during one of our Lunch Bunch Enrichments.

Here at the preschool we are extremely thankful to only have one spot left. If you happen to know of anyone who needs a preschool, our Tuesday and Thursday 3's class has an opening. A big thank you to everyone who has referred our school. We are eternally grateful, and it shows in our growth.

It's hard to believe the holidays are almost here. We at the Preschool could not be more excited!

Upcoming is our Advent Wreath, Polar Express, and Rudolph Enrichment class that will surely be popular with our students.

On December 18 and 19, the preschool will be holding its annual Christmas Pageant in the church followed by a celebration in the Parish Hall after. All are welcome to come and watch our students. The pageant begins at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. We hope to see you all there!

Best wishes to everyone in the St. Bart's Parish for a joyous holiday season!

## **Church Planter Redesigned**

In the past week the entry way into St. Bart's Church has gone through a mini make over, just in time for the Diocesan Convention and the holidays!

A big thank you to Tammy Harmon of TMH Landscape Design who generously provided her time and talents to create the drought tolerant landscape design and a big shout out to Mike, Cheri and Jen for planting the plants!



## **Christmas Pageant**

All of our children and youth are invited to be part of this year's Christmas pageant! This year we will have one Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve at the 4 p.m. service. The dress rehearsal will be Sunday, December 17 at 12 p.m. If you have any questions about the pageant, please contact Alex Howard, Children's Minister, ahoward@stbartschurch.org.





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## **Around St. Bart's**





St. Bart's Thrift Shop hosted a Christmas Bizarre on November 18 & 19. Along with the many wonderful gifts available from our Thrift Shop and Art Gallery, several other vendors took part.





St. Bart's celebrated Mother Mary Lynn and David's marriage with a reception on the patio after services on November 5.





## **Regular Meetings**

#### SUNDAY

#### Interfaith Community Services (ICS) - Merle's Place

4-6 p.m. on the first and third Sunday of the month. Contact Jill Henderson at 760-807-8445.

## Daughters of the King

Third Sunday at 9:15 a.m., Room 3E

#### Monday

#### **Boy Scouts:**

7 p.m., Parish Hall

#### **Health and Wellness Ministry:**

First Monday at 5:30 p.m., Education Building, Room 3AB

#### **Hand Bell Choir**

Mondays, 7 p.m., Choir Room

#### **TUESDAY**

#### **Centering Prayer:**

5 p.m., Education Building, Room 3AB

#### The Prayers and Squares Quilt Ministry:

Tuesdays (except fifth Tuesday) at 6:30 p.m., Quilt Room

#### WEDNESDAY

#### **Interfaith Community Services (ICS):**

Serve breakfast, fourth Wednesday at 6:00 a.m. Contact Denny Walters at 760-432-8518.

#### **Thrift Shop Work Night**

Last Wednesday at 4:00 p.m., Thrift Shop

#### Schola

Wednesdays, 5:15 p.m., Choir Room

#### **Youth CREW**

Wednesdays, 6 p.m., Youth Room

#### **String Ensemble**

Wednesdays, 7 p.m., Choir Room

#### **THURSDAY**

#### **Grief and Loss Group**

Thursdays, 8:30-10 a.m., Education Building

#### **Book Guild:**

Fourth Thursday, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room

#### **B.P.U.S.A.**- Bereaved Parents:

Fourth Thursday, 6:30 p.m., Conference Room

#### P.A.S.S. - Parent Advocates Seeking Solutions:

Third Thursday, 7 p.m., South Parish Hall

#### Choir

Thursdays, 7 p.m., Music Room

#### **AA MEETINGS:**

Sundays, 6 p.m., Conference Room

Mondays, 9:30 a.m., Parish Hall (Women only)

Tuesdays, 12 p.m., South Parish Hall

Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m., South Parish Hall (Women only)

Wednesdays, 6:45 p.m., Parish Hall

Thursdays, 12 p.m., South Parish Hall (Beginners)

Fridays, 9:45 a.m., South Parish Hall (Women only)

Fridays, 12 p.m., South Parish Hall and 6 p.m., Room  $_3AB$ 

Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. and 12 p.m., Conference Room

#### AL-ANON:

Mondays, 12 p.m. – South Parish Hall

Tuesdays, 12 p.m. - Parish Hall

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News from the Hill is a monthly publication of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 16275 Pomerado Road, Poway, CA 92064.

Editor: Kristeen Evans, Communications Manager

Deadline for submission of articles and announcements is the 10th of the month for the next month's newsletter. We welcome your submissions of information for publication. Please contact news@stbartschurch.org.

## Get the St. Bart's App

Keep up with our St. Bartholomew's community through our app. There are so many ways to use this app - view service times, read St. Bart's Blog articles, listen to Sermons, pray for someone on the Prayers of the People list, get ready for Sunday with Lessons & Readings, and watch past 9am Forum discussions.

Install the ChurchLink app on your phone.



- Search St. Bartholomew's or Poway (you'll see our logo).
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## **Worship Services**

**Sundays:** 8 a.m., 10:15 a.m.

Wednesdays: 9:30 a.m. (Healing Service)

Saturdays: 5 p.m.

## **Office Hours**

Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## **Clergy and Staff**

Clergy	
The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Assisting Bishop	
The Rev. Mark C. McKone-Sweet, Rector	858-432-7107   revmark@stbartschurch.org
The Rev. Mary Lynn Coulson, Assistant Rector	858-432-7106   mlcoulson@stbartschurch.org
The Rev. Chris Harris, Assistant Rector	858-432-7114   charris@stbartschurch.org
Honorary Clergy	
The Rev. Robert Crafts, Priest-in-Residence	
The Rev. Roy E. Hoffman, Priest-in-Residence	
The Rev. William Zettinger, Deacon-in-Residence	
Music Ministry	
Nathan Costa, Director of Music and Liturgy	858-432-7112   ncosta@stbartschurch.org
Janie Prim, Associate Organist	
Christian Formation for Children and Youth	
Alexandra Howard, Children's Minister	ahoward@stbartschurch.org
Maureen Hovannesian, Children's Ministry Assistant	858-432-7102   children@stbartschurch.org
St. Bartholomew's Preschool	
Cheri Hoffman, Director	preschool@stbartschurch.org
Jen Shah, Administrator	
Administrative Staff	
Beth Dean, Parish Administrator	858-432-7110   bdean@stbartschurch.org
Lisa Saldamando, Bookkeeper	858-432-7105   lsaldamando@stbartschurch.org
Kristeen Evans, Communications Manager	858-432-7104   news@stbartschurch.org
Treasurer	$\dots$ 858-432-7119   treasurer@stbartschurch.org
Mike Jewett, Sexton	858-432-7120
Pastoral Care Coordinator	
Cathie Roy	pastoralcare@stbartschurch.org
St. Bartholomew's Thrift Shop	858-486-2110
Laurie Wathen, Manager	stbarts@att.net

## **Vestry and Terms**

Dan Crane, Senior Warden	2020
Mark Davis, Junior Warden	2020
Pat Blair	2020
Karen Crafts	2018
Elaine Coke	2020
Geoffrey Connie	2019
Derek Escobar	2018
Michael Fuqua	2018
Jim Grandinetti	2019
Nancy Petersen	2019
Mike Richardson	2019
Cathie Roy	2018
Hanna Hagshenas, Youth Rep.	2018
Bill Angus, Treasurer	
Pauline Getz, Chancellor	
Anne Snyder, Clerk	





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Change Service Requested

