

Your Priest's Perspective

*O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.*

One of the things that surprised me most during my first winter in Western New York several years ago was how early, creatively, and extravagantly people decorate their homes for Christmas. One of the pleasures of my commute, especially at the end of a long day, is the great variety of bright lights and figures that light the roads between Wilson and Williamsville. During these short weeks between the harvest and the snow, the landscape can be quite bleak, and there is a certain bravado in the snowmen, Santas, reindeer, and giant candy canes that beckon me from so many homes along the road, homes outlined against the night sky with lights of gold.

As I saw the first lights go up during the spring-like week before Thanksgiving, I wondered how we might decorate our own hearts to be places where Christ might dwell. Our “lights” are the people who have guided us, and helped us, and reminded us of the best in ourselves. Our ornaments are images of our memories, regrets, plans, and unfinished projects, artifacts of our childhood yearnings and of our children’s aspirations.

Going through our things in preparation to decorate requires our complete attention. It always brings mixed feelings, always both a sense of loss and a sense of the fullness of our lives. How many moments do we relive as we go through our dusty boxes, unwrapping delicate ornaments from layers of crushed tissue paper? Broken ornaments take their place beside those that have remained whole, for their cracks and ragged edges are as much a part of our history and our hope as are the smooth and shiny balls on which time has left no mark.

During this Advent season, we pray for the grace to welcome all the feelings that come to the surface during this time of year, when it’s hard to separate memory from anticipation, gratitude from longing. In the Eucharistic Prayer that we will use each Sunday, we will give thanks for the creative Wisdom of God, which has been revealed in Jesus Christ and continues to bring forth new life in us. We will meditate upon the life-giving power of God’s love, and we will promise to become light-bearers and God-bearers who will continue to nurture and nourish the seeds of life that are hidden in the darkness. In our Prayers of the People, we will call out to the God who has promised always to always be with us—Emmanuel.

And so let us be as extravagant in decorating our hearts this year as we are in decorating our homes. Let us search for the brightest lights and the most gaudy pieces of our history. Let us bring out the broken pieces, the patched and taped figures of our lives, so that Christ, too, will smile as he enters our hearts yet again, knowing now that *we* know he is here.

Judith+

Dates to remember

December Food collection - **Food for Holiday meal**

December 6 – Annual Meeting & Potluck Lunch

December 6 – Carol Sing @ Carter's - Potluck

December 9 – 6:30pm Vestry

December 20 – Cookie Exchange

December 24 – 10:40pm Christmas Eve @ St John's

December 25 – 10am – Christmas Eucharist

January Food collection – **Peanut Butter & Jelly**

January 13 – 6:30pm Vestry

January 15 - **Pious Press Deadline**

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2009 Acolyte Festival

Traveling to Washington, DC on October 9 - 11th with the acolytes was a truly amazing experience. There were 15 acolytes and 13 adults representing Grace Episcopal, St. Andrew's and St. John's churches. Representatives from St. John's were: Jerilyn, John, Johnnie and Jared Carney, Alison Carter and Denise Failla We participated in the 30th annual National Acolyte Festival at the Washington National Cathedral, attended and participated in the church service at Church of the Epiphany and also had some moments to squeeze in some site seeing.

The National Cathedral is the 6th largest cathedral in the world. The actual acolyte procession took one hour - it may have taken this long because there were 1,120 acolytes who participated. The entire service was 2 hours and 40 minutes. INCREDIBLE is about the only word that comes to mind. There are 231 stained glass windows and 112 gargoyles which decorate the cathedral, it was beautiful.

During our site seeing opportunities we toured: the lighted monuments of - Lincoln, Washington, Jefferson, FDR, and the Vietnam and Korean Memorials; the White House and Arlington National Cemetery.

Sunday morning we arrived at the Church of the Epiphany. This is a church for the poor and/or homeless individuals in Washington. We were assigned different tasks to complete prior to the morning service - making posters, setting up tables or practicing with the choir. During the service we were encouraged to sit in and amongst the parishioners of the congregation, not in a group. Following Eucharist we all had breakfast together. Each participant was assigned a number when we entered and that determined when and with whom you would eat your breakfast.

We would like to say THANK YOU again to every individual who helped in making this trip a reality for us. I know that I can speak for everyone in saying that "we had

a really great time". Thank you for buying the hot dogs, the candy bars and the raffle tickets. This trip would not have been possible without your help. Thank you again.

Denise Failla

Outreach - Community Missions

This is just a reminder that it is time again to fill the Toy Box at the Mission. Small unwrapped gifts are just right for this project. Children who come for refuge are allowed to choose an item.

Personal hygiene bags are needed regularly at Community Missions. We are always in need of soaps, shampoo, deodorant, Kleenex, combs and razors. The travel size is just right for including in the bags. You may put your donations in the basket at the back of the sanctuary or hand them to one of us.

Millie High
Jean Reid
Mary Gamble



Dear Lord

We pray this Christmas for all hearts everywhere, for some are sad and some are glad and some are filled with care. To every heart give courage; take all our fears away. Be near to everyone this blessed Christmas day.

Amen.

Advent and Christmastide at St. Andrew's and St. John's

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| November 29 | 1 st Sunday of Advent | Children's activities |
| December 5 | 11 am | St. Nicholas Day at the Cathedral |
| December 6 | 2 nd Sunday of Advent & St. Nicholas Day | Annual Parish Meeting at St. John's |
| | 5pm | Family Carol Sing at the Carter's
2572 Wilson-Cambria Road, Wilson
Bring a dish or dessert to share |
| December 11 | 7pm | Adult Christmas Party at the Waters'
3089 Coomer Road, Newfane
Kevin Clark at the piano
Bring a snack to share; \$7 |
| December 13 | 1-4pm | Deanery Youth Group Caroling |

	4pm	Lock City Glee Club Concert at Christ Church
December 17	7pm	Advent Vespers at St. John's
December 19	11am-1pm	Pageant Practice & Pizza at St. Andrew's
	2pm	Caroling with the St. Andrew's Choir
December 20		Cookie Exchange & Greening of the Church at St. John's
		Lessons & Carols with Pageant at St. Andrew's
		Pot-luck luncheon and Greening of the Church at St. Andrew's
December 24		Christmas Eve
	5:40pm	Carols and Service of Holy Eucharist at St. Andrew's
	10:40pm	Carols and Service of Holy Eucharist at St. John's
December 25		Christmas Day
	10am	Service of Holy Eucharist at St. John's
January 3		Epiphany Sunday

St John's will be having a Christmas cookie exchange on December 20th. If you are interested in participating, bring 6 dozen cookies. Divide them up in 6 cookies per plate and we will exchange them after church. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

Profits from fall projects:

Rummage sale: \$264.00,
 Gala event: \$ 1920.54,
 Swing raffle: \$1221.00,
 Applefest: \$ 5033.94,
 Chicken & biscuit dinner: \$1001.83.
 Total offerings \$ 8816.70
 [including October events]
 Total expenses \$3826.96.



"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God-what is good and acceptable and perfect." -ROMANS 12:2

DID YOU KNOW,

Nike corporation paid Michael Jordan more money for one year of television commercials than they paid all the workers in all the factories who make Nike shoes in Indonesia?

If your income is \$25,000 a year, you are in the top five percent of all world incomes?

In 1960, the richest fifth of the world's population was 30 times as wealthy as the world's poorest fifth; in 1994, they were 78 times as wealthy?

There are four million millionaires in the United States and 170 billionaires, in a world where 32,000 children are dying daily?

The combined wealth of the world's seven richest people could end world poverty?

The net income of 10 billionaires is worth one and a half times the combined national income of the 48 least developed countries.

How we spend our time, talent and treasure does make a difference. Stewardship is about using these resources to choose a different world. Or, as James wrote: "If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."
-JAMES 2:15-17

Shoebox Project

November 11th was a day off of school but children abounded at St. John's. Some of us older types decided to get there an hour or so before the boxes were to be stuffed in order to get some wrapped and ready to go for the kids. There were several tables of box wrappers and several more tables loaded with supplies to be placed in the shoe boxes brought to St. John's by the St. Andrew's elves. Stacks of coloring books and crayons, Soft cuddly toys, pencils, little cars, card games, notebooks and almost anything you can imagine that might just tickle the fancy of a child was available. There were even toothbrushes, wash cloths any thing that would fit in a shoebox. When all was said and done we had produced 88 or 89 boxes to be now moved to the Pendleton United Methodist Church which is the central gathering spot. That task will be done by the Carney family and then the task of getting these boxes shipped for Samaritan's Purse is out of our hands. It does cost us \$7 per box to ship them so any donations to defray that cost would be gladly received. Just mark on the memo line what the check is towards. The day ended under bright sun and blue sky with a joyous lunch of pizza and pop as well as addictive brownies. The children played with the wrapping paper tubes until we had had enough. Home we all went feeling really good about the stack of boxes we left in the hallway to the parish hall. Well done! Good and faithful servants! And many, many thanks to all who helped in any capacity.

From the Bench l y r K G

Advent is fast approaching and with it comes a time of introspection and anticipation. We will be using a single line of a hymn for our Gospel Acclimation during this 4 week period. The whole hymn is a good advent/Christmas one, but would not be classified as a carol but as a hymn.

"Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne" is not your usual Christmas song as the text encompasses not only Jesus birth, but his life on earth, his suffering, death and the triumph of his second coming. Each stanza ends with "O Come to my heart, Lord Jesus, There is room in my heart for Thee!" This is the portion of the hymn we will be using during Advent as it expresses most succinctly what we should be preparing for in ourselves.

The hymn was written by Emily Elliott to teach children the truths of the Advent and Nativity seasons. She was born in 1836 in the holiday town of Brighton, England where her father was pastor of St. Mark's Anglican Church. She wrote the text for the children of the parish and soon it went on to be a widespread favorite because of the easy wording, poetic imagery and the spiritual truths found in its lines. The text was inspired by Luke 2:7, "but there was no room for them in the inn." Each of the first four verses is composed of an interesting opening statement paired with a contrasting phrase beginning with the word "but".

The melody for this hymn is called "Margaret" and was composed especially for this text by Timothy Richard Matthews. He was born at Bedford, England on Nov 4, 1826. In Great Britain he was recognized as one of the leading organists of his day. He was a clergyman and the composer of over 100 hymn tunes. This hymn was contained in the 1940 Hymnal and another of his tunes was used in the 1916 Hymnal for a morning song Come, Holy Ghost, Who ever One art with the Father and the Son.

Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown when Thou camest to earth for me:but in Bethlehem's home was there found no room for Thy holy nativity.

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang, proclaiming Thy royal degree; but of lowly birth didst Thou come to earth, and in great humility.

The foxes found rest, and the birds their nest in the shade of the forest tree; but Thy couch was the sod, O Thou Son of God, in the deserts of Galilee.

Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word that should set Thy people free; but with mocking scorn and with crown of thorn they bore Thee to Calvary.

When the heav'ns shall ring and the angels sing at Thy coming to victory, let Thy voice call me home, saying, "Yet there is room - there is room at My side for thee" My heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus, when thou comest and callest for me.

Refrain for verses 1-4: O come to my heart, Lord Jesus - there is room in my heart for Thee!

An interesting note about Emily Elliott was that her Aunt was Charlotte Elliott, the author of the hymn "Just As I Am."

Keep Singing! Lois

D Q

The Greatest Gift Of All

A little boy and girl were singing their favorite carol in church the Sunday before Christmas. The boy concluded "Silent Night" with the words, "Sleep in heavenly beans."

"No," his sister corrected, "not beans. Peas."

The story reminds me of the wonderful and hectic holiday season many of us are approaching soon.

Dave Garroway was, for many years, the host of the TODAY show on NBC television. Someone once asked him about his understanding of Christmas. He replied: "I've noticed that when people are asked what they want for Christmas, nine times out of ten, they answer with something material. That used to be amusing to me, but it's not amusing to me any longer. I happen to be one of those people who can afford anything he wants, but I find what I really want, I can't buy at all. I want peace of mind, peace of soul; the kind of peace you have when you don't really want anything."

What do YOU want for Christmas? Or if you don't celebrate Christmas, what do you want for your life. For your world?

For me, what I want cannot be bought or gift wrapped. What I want most can best be summed up in words like "faith" and "hope" and "love".

For myself, I want faith. Faith enough to see light in even the bleakest of situations. Faith enough to believe that goodness will prevail in the end.

For my loved ones I want hope. Abundant hope. Hope in tomorrow. A hope that helps them believe that better times lay ahead so they can take that next step.

For my world I want love. And I believe that the solutions to most of our biggest problems will only be found when we decide that we are indeed one family. The problems of war, health care, crime in city streets, immigration and unemployment take on a different hue when I am talking about my brothers and sisters whom I love dearly. Do you also want things you can't buy? What if we all decided to go after those things this year that truly matter? That could be the greatest gift of all.

-- Steve Goodier

<http://www.lifesupportsystem.com>



2010-2011 DeVaux Scholarships

All recommendations for DeVaux Scholarships to Niagara University must be submitted by January 15, 2010, to:

Lillian Gondree
DeVaux Commission
1159 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14222
or lgondree@hotmail.com

A View from Our Youth Deanery Youth Group



Christmas Caroling!
4pm
Meet at Grace
Genesee Street,
We will be going



Sunday December 13th, 1pm-

Church's Arnold House, 110
Lockport.

Christmas Caroling at the

Presbyterian Home (a few blocks away) from 1:15-3pm, returning afterwards
for cookies and hot chocolate. Dress accordingly for the weather -- Invite a friend!

Our annual Deanery wide ***Epiphany Gifts for Life collection*** will take place on **Sunday January 3rd**. This year half of the donations will go to the Diocesan Disaster Relief Fund and half will go to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD). Watch your Sunday bulletin for more information!

~Sarah Harrington

Niagara Deanery Youth Missioner

Dancinsarah83@yahoo.com / 778-7986

www.eyouthwny.org



Niagara Deanery Youth Group Pop Can Drive



All year we will be collecting pop cans and bottle return receipts to help fund our activities and events. Rinsed, empty cans or bottle return receipts can be given to active youth group members, adult mentors, or your Deanery Youth Missioner.

Please call or e-mail Sarah Harrington to find out more information or arrange a pick-up! 778-7986