

EARTH & ALTAR

Newsletter of Saint Bartholomew's Anglican
Church



ADVENT SEASON, CHRISTMASTIDE & EPIPHANY SEASON

December 3, 2006 – January 28, 2007

*Our King and Saviour draweth nigh; O come, let us
adore him.*

The Incarnation of our Lord is both a settled doctrine and a mystery: one that has thrilled Christians for 2,000 years. When we speak of the Incarnation we are of course referring to the belief that the *Son of God* became *Son of Man* in the womb of the Virgin Mary, his earthly mother. Agnostics today scoff at Christians, because (they say) our religion is so cut-and-dried, that there is no sense of 'awe' at the universe. Yet, the Incarnation is not something that we have 'all figured out', by any means. Ultimately it is a wondrous mystery, and generations of Christians have lived in awe at the thought that God would become Man for our sakes! On the other side of the coin, Atheists scold Christians for being so awe-struck & gullible that we believe anything we are told. Once at a Christmas Party in Santa Barbara, a man came up to me (noticing my clerical collar) and remarked dryly, "You know, I don't believe in the Virgin Birth. I'm an Obstetrician." The way this man said the words, "I'm an Obstetrician" seemed to suggest that he of course knows the way babies are *really* made. I could only mildly suggest to this August Authority, that perhaps he had stumbled upon the very reason *why* Christ's birth is so special: because it is outside the ordinary course of things! This is what the Virgin Mary protested to the Angel Gabriel ('I know not a man'), and this is what caused Joseph (Mary's fiancée) to wrestle with doubts about her chastity on the very eve of their marriage! And, for believers in The Mystery, this is one of the 'proofs' of

Christ's divinity, showing that he really is who he claims to be. –*Father McGrath*

Parish Calendar

Advent to Epiphany

Sunday, December 3, Advent I

8:30 Matins 10:00 Litany & Holy Communion 5:30
Evensong

Wednesday, December 6, *Reflections on the Psalms*

(5:30 Evensong) 6:00 Supper 7:00 Class & Compline

Sunday, December 10, Advent II

8:30 Matins
10:00 Choral Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Wednesday, Dec. 13 *Reflections on the Psalms*

(5:30 Evensong) 6:00 Supper 7:00 Class & Compline

Friday, December 15, Ladies' Craft Social 7 p

Saturday, Dec. 16 (11am) Burial Office: Derek Wood

Sunday, December 17, Advent III ("Rose")

8:30 MP, 10:00 HC - *Greening of the Church* 5:30 E.P.

Winter Ember Days - December 20, 22 & 23

Wednesday, Dec. 20, *Reflections on the Psalms*

(5:30 Evensong) 6:00 Supper 7:00 Class & Compline

Thursday, December 21, St. Thomas, Apostle

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Sunday, December 24, Advent IV

8:30 Matins 10:00 Holy Communion

Christmas Eve, December 24

5:30 pm Evensong & Carols 11:00 pm "Midnight
Mass"

Christmas Day, December 25

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion 4:00 Evensong

Tuesday, December 26, St. Stephen

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion 4:00 Evensong

Wednesday, Dec. 27, St. John Evangelist

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion 4:00 Evensong

Thursday, December 28, Holy Innocents

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion 4:00 Evensong

Sunday, December 31, Christmas I

8:30 Matins 10:00 Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Monday, Jan. 1, Circumcision of Christ

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion; 5:30 Evensong

Saturday, January 6, The Epiphany

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Sunday, January 7, Epiphany I

8:30 Matins 10:00 Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Sunday, January 14, Epiphany II

8:30 Matins 10:00 Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Friday, January 19, Ladies' Craft Social 7 p

Sunday, January 21, Epiphany III

8:30 Matins 10:00 Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Thursday, January 25, The Conversion of St. Paul

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

Sunday, January 28, Epiphany IV

8:30 Matins 10:00 Holy Communion 5:30 Evensong

An Ancient Hymn for Advent

6 CONDITOR ALME, 1st Tune

Plainsong



CREATOR of the stars of night,
Thy people's everlasting light,
O Christ, thou Saviour of us all,
We pray thee, hear us when we call.

- 2 To thee the travail deep was known
That made the whole creation groan
Till thou, Redeemer, shouldst free
Thine own in glorious liberty.
- 3 When the old world drew on toward night,
Thou camest, not in splendor bright
As monarch, but the humble child
Of Mary, blameless mother mild.
- 4 At thy great name of Jesus, now
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
And things celestial thee shall own,
And things terrestrial, Lord alone.
- 5 Come in thy holy might, we pray;
Redeem us for eternal day
From every power of darkness, when
Thou judgest all the sons of men.
- 6 To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Laud, honor, might, and glory be
From age to age eternally. Amen.

Latin, 9th cent.

This Advent office hymn is appropriate for Evensong, and may also be sung at home by families with their night-time prayers. It is being used by our Advent Wednesday Class on The Psalms, as a Compline Hymn at the end of each evening. The text is a 9th century monastic hymn, composed originally in Latin. The present translation was made by John Mason Neale for his Hymnal Noted (1851) and further adapted for our Hymnal.



Parish Notes

• **Debut of our Schola Cantorum** Although the occasion of their first performance was bittersweet, members of our **Schola** were very well received for their performance of *Psalm 121* set to Anglican Chant, at the Burial Office of Mr. Adrian Boeschoten. The "Schola

Cantorum" (lt., *School of Singing*) will continue to meet once-a-month to study choral music and perform at Church. If you are interested in being a participant, please speak to Father McGrath. • **Bible Study Update** At present, we are in the throes of our Advent Study on *The Psalms*. We are also experimenting with a Wednesday-Evening-Potluck-Supper-and-Class arrangement, instead of the former Sunday Morning time. If it is more agreeable than meeting on Sunday morning, then we shall continue on Wednesday evenings in Epiphany Season, with a study of *The Gospel according to St. John*. Incidentally, the first eight chapters of *St. John's Gospel* are appointed in our Lectionary to be read through at Evensong during Epiphany Season (see BCP, xii – xv). • **Hearty Thanks** to everyone that has pledged to our parish for the Year 2007. A goodly number of folks from last year increased their pledge, and we welcome some new pledges, too. The final results of our Pledge Drive, and the Budget for next year will be unveiled and discussed at our Annual Parish Meeting in January, date TBA.

A Fond Farewell

Mr. Adrian Boeschoten, November 19

Mr. Derek Wood, November 25

O GOD, whose mercies cannot be numbered; Accept our prayers on behalf of the souls of thy servants departed, and grant unto them an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of thy saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord... Amen.

HOLY SCRIPTURE

...and the way it is used in the Anglican Church

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Despite a general decline in Churchmanship in the West today, there remains a lively interest in The Bible. The Bible has become a big industry, both for publishers and for the scholars who edit and refine the ever-increasing number of new translations, paraphrases, versions and Study Bibles! The greatest

Anglican Bible, known as the King James Version, is still one of the most widely revered Bibles, but is there a uniquely Anglican approach to using it?

The Anglican approach to Holy Scripture is summarized in our formularies, namely *The Book of Common Prayer*, *The Ordinal* and *The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*. Let us begin with the last formulary first. Article VI of the Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles, following the example of 4th century St. Jerome, sets forth what we mean by “Holy Scripture”: it lists those books that are considered *canonical* (i.e. authoritative for doctrine), and those books which may be read profitably but which are not the basis of doctrine in our Church. Canonical Scripture is “sufficient” and “containeth all things necessary to salvation”. In other words, everything to be known by mankind in order to be saved can be found on the pages of Canonical Scripture. Article VII highlights the unity of Old and New Testaments that is found in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament tells us that Christ is coming, the New Testament tells us the Good News that Christ was born, that he lived, died, rose again, ascended and will come again.

Now for *The Ordinal*, which is the form for ordaining Bishops, Priests and Deacons: it states that our ministers are to study the Scriptures, to read them aloud in Church, and to instruct their flock out of them. It is reiterated (along the lines of Article VI) that nothing may be taught as necessary for eternal salvation, but that which may be “proved” by the said Scripture. One must also assume that no minister may teach as “Truth” his own personal opinions about The Bible, but rather those truths which the catholic Church has read and set forth from Holy Scripture in its councils and creeds.

How is Scripture used on a daily basis in our parish? It is read *Devotionally* and it is read as the basis of *Instruction*. The devotional use of Scripture is something we share with the Roman, Orthodox and Lutheran Communion. Our Liturgy is created from direct quotations or paraphrases of Scripture passages, so that we worship and pray by means of the word of God written, even as we offer our prayers in the Name of the Word of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ. At Daily Morning and Evening Prayer a large portion of Scripture (Psalms, Old Testament Lesson, New Testament Lesson) is read out with no Sermon or other commentary attached. This use of

Scripture by itself is intended to refresh, sanctify and inform the heart and mind of the hearer.

Scripture is read for *Instruction* in our parish in the context of Holy Communion, where there is provision made for a Sermon (usually on the Epistle or Gospel). We also have our Bible Study Class, in which we take a small portion of Scripture and devote an hour or so to instruction & discussion. Systematic Bible Study is something we share in common with Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, but with a key difference: we do not grant the right to an individual person, reading by him or herself, (or alternatively, the study group leader), to be the magisterium who interprets the Bible. Rather, we yield that function to the catholic Church through its creeds and councils. Nor do the Anglican Formularies describe Holy Scripture as “inerrant” in every detail, opting instead for the somewhat more modest and realistic adjective, “sufficient”.

No discussion of Scripture would be complete without mentioning our Collect for Advent II (BCP, 92): “*BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.* Here, we are to read, study, pray, **learn**...and **meditate upon** Holy Scripture...and by it to receive the “patience and comfort of [God’s] holy Word”! The “Word” referred to here is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God Incarnate. This point is further elaborated upon in the Prologue of *The Gospel according to St. John*, a powerful passage that will be read at Holy Communion on Christmas Day, as we celebrate the Incarnation of our Lord, the Word-made-flesh.

What does this have to do with Scripture? Scripture falls within the order of ‘knowing’ rather than the order of ‘being’. Scripture has no life of its own: it did not fall out of the sky. Rather, it is a letter written from the Ancient Church to us today, containing the Good News. As part of the order of ‘knowing’, Scripture is not to be identified with the Word of God himself, but rather as ‘the word of God, written’. We do not worship The Bible—we worship the Word of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ—but we read about him in Holy Scripture, and we

worship him and meditate upon him through its pages. In any case, we all could use this resource a lot more: let us get better acquainted with our Lord through Scripture during this Advent, Christmas and Epiphanytide!!! -Fr. Daniel McGrath +

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The Rev'd Dr. Edward H. Miller, *Deacon*

Worship Services

The Daily Prayer Offices

Matins 8:30, Evensong 5:30

The Litany

Wednesday & Friday after Matins

Holy Communion

Sunday, and other Feast Days, 10:00
