

The Epiphany Star

Volume IX, Issue 6

November & December 2009

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY
6605 Atlantic Avenue, Ventnor, NJ 08406

Music & Lyrics By

At the principal Mass on Christmas Day this year the Second Lesson will begin with the first words from the letter to the Hebrews:

God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

An amazing text! This single sentence may be a bit tortured, yet it comes close to covering the whole spectrum of Christian thought. Let's unpack this a little: first, the writer recognizes that God has been in communication all along with humankind. We can assume he is thinking largely of Hebrew prophets, but not exclusively: the Old Testament tells us of Balaam, a prophet of Yahweh who was most decidedly not Jewish. And later in this letter, the writer claims King David was referring to Christ when he wrote, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek." Melchisedek was the king of Salem, not a Hebrew. Thus, the Biblical record itself reveals a God who in many times and many ways has tried to communicate with us human beings through those who, Hebrew or Gentile, speak faithfully for him. To me, the words "sundry" and "diverse" paint the image of God almost desperately "trying anything" to establish loving relationship with us.

Now finally, the writer goes on to say, God has built relationship with us through the Son Himself. He clearly assumes the Incarnation, though he doesn't use the word. He doesn't need to. Jesus, the Son, is

"the brightness of God's glory and the express image of God's person"! Wow! That Son, the appointed heir of the whole universe, through whom God also made the worlds, is sitting now, God incarnate, at the right hand of the Majesty on high! This Son now "upholds all things by the word of his power."

The Sunday before we begin Advent celebrates Christ the King. It wouldn't hurt to remember this passage then. Pay attention to the images: the heir, the maker of all worlds, the brightness of God's glory, the express image of God's person, sustaining all things with his powerful word, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Behold, your King!

And guess what? This all-powerful King loves us—loves you and me! Loves us so much that he "purged us of our sins," restoring us to that relationship that God in love so greatly desired. I think a few allulua's are in order. Oh. And fall down at his feet. Adore him. Thank him. Praise him.

We begin November praising God for the triumphant saints who continue to be channels of God's mercy to us. We end December celebrating the Love that placed God among us as a Man—a Man who now sits beside the Father and champions us before the Throne! God present among us in Jesus Christ now pleads our cause before the Father! How truly amazing! So here's a formula truer than $E=MC^2$: "God loves us. God is merciful. God is in control." And now a question: would you rather win \$100 million in the Lottery or be loved by the God who is Lord of the Universe? What makes you truly rich? Having all that money? Or knowing that God?

Cheers,

Jim Cramer
Music & Lyrics By

November Birthdays

7 Ashley Sheats
10 Edwina Gilbert
16 Mary Corbin
20 Peter Weiss
27 Christine Wiatrowski
29 Robert Carty

November Anniversaries

1 Dorothy and Ed Higgins
16 Dale and George Lonkart

December Birthdays

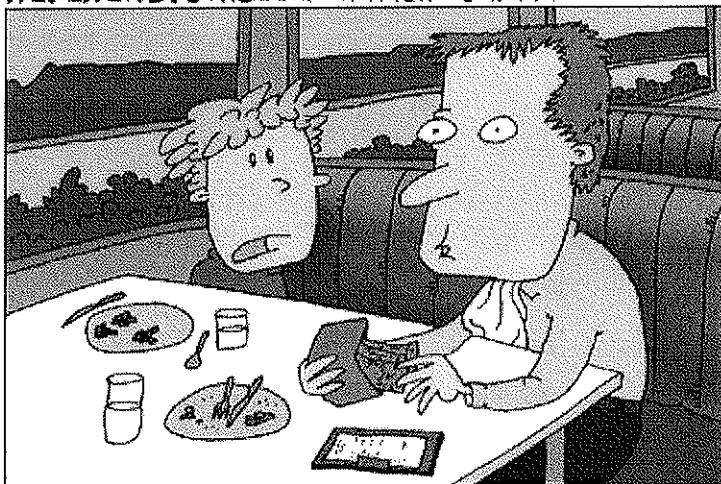
16 Carol Fredericks
23 Robert Braddock
26 Audrey Knorr

December Anniversaries

7 Fr. William Parker – Ordination to the Priesthood, 1996

Do we have your birthday and/or anniversary in file? If we've missed your dates, and you would like them published in the Star, please get them to the Parish Office.

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Thanks to Shirley Ostrander

01-15-2004

HOW COME THE WAITRESS GETS 15% AND GOD ONLY GETS 10%?

MAINE: Bishop 'grieved' over defeat of same-gender marriage law

By Mary Frances Schjonberg, November 04, 2009
[Episcopal News Service] Episcopal Diocese of Maine Bishop Stephen T. Lane said Nov. 3 that he joins the "many Episcopalians [who] are deeply grieved" by Maine voters' rejection of that state's same-gender marriage law.

At 1 a.m. Nov. 4, with 87 percent of the state's precincts reporting, 52.8 percent of Mainers had voted to repeal the law, versus 47.2 percent who voted to keep it, according to the Portland, Maine, Press Herald newspaper.

In a statement posted on the diocese's website, Lane said that many faithful Episcopalians "had hoped that they and their families might enjoy the recognition and protections afforded heterosexual couples."

"The rejection of the law also feels like rejection of them as persons. I join in their grief that the right of same-gender couples to enter into a lifelong, monogamous marriage has been denied," he continued. "At the same time I know there are other faithful Episcopalians who are thankful about the election results. I understand that this matter has been a matter of conscience for them."

In April, Lane had submitted testimony in favor of the then-proposed law during a legislative hearing. Maine Governor John Baldacci signed the law in May, but it never took effect because of a petition drive that succeeded in placing the question on the fall general election ballot.

Lane said in his statement that after the governor signed the law he began work on a set of guidelines for clergy to use with legal same-gender marriage. "These guidelines will not be distributed," he said. "However, I will continue to work with a small group to consider the ways we may support the faithful, monogamous relationships of faithful gay and lesbian Episcopalians."

During the Episcopal church's July 8-17 General Convention in Anaheim, California, deputies and bishops passed Resolution C056 calling for the development of theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same gender relationships to be considered at the next meeting of convention in 2015. Meanwhile, the resolution said, "bishops, particularly those in dioceses within civil jurisdictions where same-gender marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships are legal, may provide generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this church."

In Anaheim, Lane had sponsored Resolution B012 which asked for that permission. That resolution was melded with others and the original C056.

The Episcopal Church in Maine will continue to welcome to all people, Lane said in his statement, and "we will continue to strive for justice and peace among all people." "Whether you are saddened or thankful, please know that you remain in my prayers," he added.

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FROM FR BILL - Nov & Dec Worship and Christian Formation Happenings:

SPIRITUAL FORMATION CONTINUES:

During our diocesan focus on Spirituality, I want to thank those who attended the classes and discussions on Anglican/Episcopal Spirituality - it was well received! From these classes, two other events emerged: we will be having an Advent Quiet Day on a Saturday in December - date and times to be announced. I will also be doing a "why we do what we do" walk through of the Eucharist periodically - again, dates and times to be announced. Thank you again to all who made the effort and commitment to grow together in their relationship with God in Christ using the Anglican approach!

OTHER FORMS OF FORMATION END:

I am saddened to announce that we will be discontinuing Evening Prayer in the church on the first and third Wednesdays of the month due to a total lack of attendance. It is my prayerful hope that we can again launch this public foundational discipline of Anglican spirituality at some point in the future.

CALLING ALL EUCHARISTIC VISITORS:

I will be forming and training a lay group of visitors to take the Blessed Sacrament to the home-bound and hospitalized. If you feel God may be calling you to this vital ministry, please speak directly with Fr. Parker

LAY LEADER TRAINING:

I will be offering training sessions for lay Eucharistic ministers and lectors for both existing participants and for anyone interested in exploring these ministries. Please speak with Fr Parker directly, and we will set-up dates and times that work for everyone.

INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE:

This year the Thanksgiving service will be on Tuesday, November 24 at 7PM. See the flier in this issue of The Star. This community service will be our parish service as well, and allows those who travel or cook at Thanksgiving the chance to worship with all the faithful in our area. Please make an effort to attend.

CHRISTMAS EVE MASS:

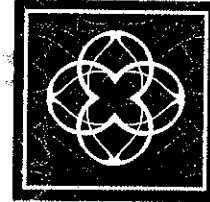
As in the past, our celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord will be on Thursday, December 24 at 8PM. There will be no Mass celebrated Christmas Day.

Please thank the Episcopal Church

Founded in 1834, The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI)

is a voluntary ecumenical agency affiliated with the Episcopal Church that provides pastoral care, maritime education, and legal and advocacy services for mariners.

*Women
who
knitted
these
items.*



The SCI staff, on behalf of the mariners we serve, wishes to thank you for your gift of:

Six (6) Sea scarves.

The Peace of God be with you.

with much appreciation.

Christmas At Sea

Date/Time:
Tuesday, November 24th
Beginning at 7:00pm

Location:
St. Andrew by the Sea Church
936 Baltic Avenue,
Atlantic City

(plenty of safe,
free parking)
Entrance to large, well-
lighted parking lot on
Maryland Avenue below
Baltic only)

**Refreshments
and Fellowship
immediately
following**

For more information
about this service,
please feel free
to contact:

Jen Williams

Phone: (609) 348-1421, ext. 38

E: jwilliams@covenanthouse.org

