

St. James'



Journal

The Rev. Dr. Cathy L. Deats, Rector

December 2002

O come, O come Emmanuel

*What is the crying at Jordan?
Who hears, O God, the prophecy?
Dark is the season, dark our hearts and shut to mystery.*

Carol Christopher Drake (Hymnal 1982, #69)

The season is dark. Sunrise creeps toward seven a.m., and sunset closes the day before five. We resist the darkness with timers set earlier and Christmas lights strung like jewels in the bushes. There is in me still a remnant from my childhood: being afraid of the dark. Leave the door cracked; open the shade, and leave the porch light on. Like the children in the movie "Monsters, Inc.," I am scared of that which I cannot see. Even as an adult, I love things predictable, things in order. (That is part of what makes me a good Episcopalian!)

But the season of Advent is about mystery. The poet reminds us that our hearts are "shut to mystery." We have to pry our hearts open to experience the mysterious. We are preparing for Emmanuel, God-with-us. Jesus Christ born into our world, and born into our hearts once again. In our mind's eye, we see the child laid in a manger while few take notice; the shepherds blinded by the glory of the angels; foreign Magi traveling a great distance, guided only by a star, to worship him.

But when we arrive at church on the First Sunday of Advent, we hear "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken." (Mark 13:24) What happened to the baby, the angels, the shepherds? This is the other side of Advent: the *coming again* of Jesus Christ, to complete the work begun at his incarnation. Jürgen Moltmann, a Protestant theologian of the 20th century (who is still writing in the 21st), says that Christ's first coming makes sense only in light of his promise to come again. The two cannot be separated without damage being done to both: without a first coming there could be no second coming; without the second coming, it becomes difficult to believe that current existence is somehow the kingdom of God. Advent calls us to hold both together; thus, the mystery.

Meanwhile, we are living in the "certainty" of the here and now – making Christmas lists, preparing gifts, planning family get-togethers. While we do this, the malls and the stores play Christmas carols; the TVs and newspapers advertise Chia-pets, foot-massagers, and all manner of things produced only to be Christmas gifts. The Church calls us to take time to sit in the darkness, afraid or not. God calls us also to sit in silence, to shut off the cacophony of "Jingle Bells" choruses and sales pitches, even if just for awhile. In the darkness, I can imagine the Jesus who was born of a woman as a crying baby is also the Jesus we expect to come "with clouds descending" in great glory. This is the Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. In the silence, I can allow the mystery to just **be**.

Draw closer to the mystery this Advent. Even if you are afraid of the dark, come sit with us as we allow it to envelop us. Even if you dislike silence, try it on to see what God would say to you.

Peace be with you.

Tis the season to mark your calendar

December 1	Family Breakfast 9:15 AM
December 1	Giving Tree in the Narthex
December 1	Advent Wreath Making 5:00 pizza supper
December 12	Taizé Prayer Service 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting at Rector's home
December 15	Deadline for Giving Tree Gifts
December 22	Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols 10 AM Service
December 22	Greening of the Church following the 10 AM service
December 23	Cathy Deats Guest Speaker WRNJ - 10 - 11 AM

<i>Christmas Eve Services</i>	
4:30 PM	Children's Nativity Service
7:00 PM	Holy Eucharist Rite II
10:30 PM	Music
11:00 PM	Solemn Holy Eucharist Rite I
<i>Christmas Day</i>	
10:00 AM	Holy Eucharist

Advent wreath-making 5:00 PM December 1 in the Parish Hall. Advent wreaths for family use will be made with a choice of wreath styles – logs, grapevine, foam, greens. Be creative! Come and help make wreaths needed for parishioners at home. Pizza supper will be Served.



Taizé prayer service 7:00 PM December 1 in the church. Enter into the season of Advent during a service of prayer, readings and silence from the Taizé community in France. Sung prayer is one of the strongest expressions of our search for God. Simple chants, repeated over and over again, underscore the meditative quality of prayer.

Christmas "Cleaning and Polishing" starting at 9:30 AM Saturday, December 2. The Altar Guild invites you to help us with our seasonal "Cleaning and Polishing" for Christmas. Coffee and munchies will be served. Altar Guild is an important "behind the scenes" ministry at St. James'. This would be a good way to get acquainted with who we are and some of what we do.

Donations for Christmas Poinsettias Now Being Accepted.

There are envelopes in the pews for you to make an offering toward the purchase of the poinsettias used to decorate St. James' for the Christmas season. Please return the completed envelope with your donation in the offering plate by ***Dec. 15 ***so the names of those remembered can be included in the bulletin.

Greening of the church

Will be on Sunday December 22nd immediately following the 10:00 *Advent Service of Lessons and Carols*. The church will be decorated with poinsettias. Coffee hour will be held in the church. Join us to decorate for Christmas.



St. James' Children Bell Choir to Participate in Advent Program

On December 8th at 2 PM, the Port Morris United Methodist Church in Landing will be holding a "**Celebration of the Birth of Christ Through the Arts.**" Five scenes from the birth of Christ will be recalled through dance, mime, drama, bell choir music, and song. This is an ecumenical effort with six area churches participating in the presentation: Christ Episcopal Church of Budd Lake, St. James Episcopal Church of Hackettstown, Abiding Peace Lutheran Church of Budd Lake, St. John's United Methodist Church of Wharton, the Teabo United Methodist Church of Rockaway Township and Port Morris United Methodist Church. The event is free and all are welcomed to attend. Afterwards there will be refreshments and Christmas artwork and art projects from local churches on display in the Fellowship Hall. The church is located at 296 Center Street in Landing.

Elsie Walker, Certified Layspeaker,
Port Morris United Methodist Church

Christmas in the Choir

Pam Laura, Choir Director extends an invitation to adults or high school singers willing to join with the choir on an occasional basis. If you are available for Christmas Eve, please start coming to Wednesday rehearsals on December 4 at 7:15 - 8:45 PM in the Mitcham House. The friendly folk of the choir will welcome you with open arms

***Church Office will be closed –
December 24 to January 1***

The Rector will be on **study leave** at the College of Preachers in Washington DC, Monday through Friday, December 2-6. Pastoral coverage will be provided for emergencies; please call the church office.

Stewardship

Most have been faithful about getting pledge cards in for Harvest Home Sunday so the Finance Committee can complete their work; Your vestry members have all completed their pledges, and they join us in asking that if you have not returned your card, please do so; if you need a new card, they are available in the narthex, or contact the church office and one will be mailed to you

Upcoming WRNJ appearances

Cathy Deats will be Frank Fowler's guest Monday December 23 at 10 AM. His show is called "Let's Talk About It." The topic is Christmas. On Monday, January 13, (same time, same station) our kids will talk about their experiences repairing homes in Appalachia with EAM (Episcopal Appalachian Ministries).

Bible study

every Sunday morning at 9:15 AM in the chapel except Family Sundays. This is an informal "drop-in" study of current week's readings; you are welcome for one week or every week (Note: no Bible study on Sunday, December 29)

Counters Needed

Additional volunteers are needed to help with counting on Sundays after the Church service. Counters count in teams of two. Please call Janice Cipriani or the church office to offer your services or for more information.

LOOKING AHEAD

December 29 - Holy Innocents
January 5 - Holy Name of Jesus
January 5 - Family Breakfast 9:15 AM
January 12 - Baptism
January 19 - One service at 9:00 AM

Annual meeting follows service at approximately 10:15 AM. Coffee hour served in the church. Children will be cared for by Youth Group members in Parish Hall

We will be celebrating the following feast days on Sundays (descriptions are taken from the [Calendar of the Church Year](http://satucket.com/lectionary/Calendar.htm), web author Charles Wohlers <http://satucket.com/lectionary/Calendar.htm>):

Sunday December 29th Holy Innocents

We read in Matthew 2 that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, King Herod, fearing for his throne, ordered that all the male infants of Bethlehem be killed. These children are regarded as martyrs for the Gospel -- "martyrs in fact though not in will." Augustine called them "buds, killed by the frost of persecution the moment they showed themselves."

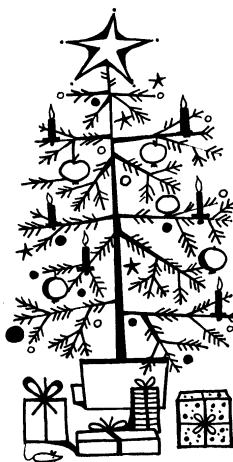
Sunday January 5 Holy Name of Jesus

On January 1st, we celebrate the Circumcision of Christ. Since we are more squeamish than our ancestors, modern calendars often list it as the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, but the other emphasis is the older. Every Jewish boy was circumcised (and formally named) on the eighth day of his life.

Pam Laura will be performing in a concert on December 15 at 3:30PM. It's a performance with the Sussex County Oratorio Society. They'll be doing the Bach "Magnificat" as the primary piece and Pam is doing one of the Alto solos and the Alto/Tenor duet (as the Alto!). The rest of the program will feature familiar and not-so-familiar Christmas pieces along with a small chamber orchestra. Tickets are \$10 (Seniors/Students are \$5) and the performance will be at the First Presbyterian Church, 54 High St, Newton.

The Giving Tree

St. James' Mission Strategy Committee in cooperation with local schools will again host a Giving Tree that provides Christmas gifts to some families in need. Our goal is to "adopt" two families in the Hackettstown area and give each member a number of gifts. We have been in contact with schools in Hackettstown and Allamuchy and have received requests for clothing and toys. The identities of the families are confidential and unknown to our committee members.



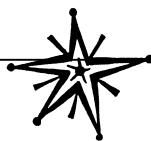
The Giving Tree can be found next to the entrance in the Narthex on December 1, 2002. Candy canes are placed on the tree with two paper slips. The first is a gift tag. It has two parts. At the end of this slip are an item number and a place to sign. Please tear these off at the dotted line, sign and place them in the red gift box on the counter. The inner part, close to the cane, contains the gift request with the gender and size of a clothing item or a toy. The other slip that is taped to the candy cane contains directions similar to these. You may keep and enjoy the candy cane. Please purchase, wrap, re-tape the identification tag on the package and return the gift **no later than December 15, 2002**. The gifts need to be gathered in advance of Christmas so that they can be distributed by the school before closing for Christmas vacation.

The congregation of St. James has been very generous in the past and provided wonderful presents with beautiful wrappings. The care that is taken in participating in this ministry is very much appreciated by the families involved and projects a positive, loving example of Christian outreach into the community.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact a Mission Strategy Committee member or *Paul Bartkus* at church or home (908-852-6302). Thank you, in advance, and have a reflective Advent in anticipation of a joyous Christmas.

Congratulations to:

*Debbie & DJ Mills on the birth of their son
Collin Ridgway Mills*



CARES

CARES is a group of people who CARE! We prepare meals for parishioners who need them (due to illness or other circumstance), transport parishioners for special appointments and to and from church services

Consider pledging some flexible time to CARES! No committee meetings! Help us reach out to those in this community who have a need we can provide for.

Pasta Party Particularly Pleasant as Per those Present

If you were in the Parish Hall on Saturday evening, Nov. 23, then you know that St. James' hosted another successful social evening. The Parish Hall had been transformed into an Italian-style dining experience, complete with red-checked tablecloths, candles and "Italian Music" sung by Frank Sinatra.

Wine and beverages were available while diners nibbled on breadsticks and antipasta. While awaiting the arrival of our rector, Cathy Deats, who had officiated at a wedding, we devoured a delicious salad and enjoyed the company of St. James' friends – old and new!

When Cathy arrived and prayed a blessing, the main course was served – pasta, any way you like it! There was a choice of Pasta Primavera, Meat Lasagne & Penne w/ Vodka Cream Sauce – all catered by Two Chefs Deli of Budd Lake. Most of us sampled and enjoyed some of each.

Desserts were provided by the attendees, and ranged probably from A to Z – I know I saw apple pie and perhaps there was some zucchini bread? Those present were delighted to join in wishing Jim Eskow a happy birthday – complete with a lighted candle and a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" conducted by Frank Johnson (where's the choir when you really need them????).

Special thanks go out to Candy Brewster, and helpers : Mary & Steve Johnston, Paul & Phyllis Bartkus, David & Barbara Olesen and Jenny Vuono who put together this delightful evening of fine dining and fellowship.

Pat Hawkins

p.s. from Hospitality:

We are looking forward to a Winter escape evening sometime late January, early February.

Inside this issue



Advent Services and events

Wreath making, Taizé Service, Greening of the Church, Children's Bell Choir and more!

Christmas Eve Services

4:30 PM Children's Nativity Service
7:00 PM Holy Eucharist Rite II
10:30 PM Music
11:00 PM Solemn Holy Eucharist Rite I

Christmas Day

10:00 AM Holy Eucharist

Staff & Vestry

Rector: The Rev.Dr. Cathy L. Deats
Sr. Warden: Janice Cipriani
Jr. Warden: Paul Bartkus
Treasurer: Ellen Nerbak
Music Director: Pam Laura
Sexton: Pauline Volkert
Parish Administrator: Linda Murray
Vestry: Peg Faust
David Heistand
Val Hoskins
Frank Johnson
Greg Malejko
Dawn Modugno
Candy Norris-Brewster
Barb Olesen
Jack Reade

**St. James' Journal January articles
due: Friday, December 27**

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