

The Bell Tower

The Church of the Holy Innocents Newsletter

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December 2018

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FROM THE RECTOR

The Rev. Donald Lowery



**Come Lord Jesus, be our guest,
let these gifts to us be blest.
Amen**

The words of the title are one of the variations of a blessing before meals traditional in Lutheran and Moravian families and used by many Episcopalians as well. There are slight variants in wording but the text above captures the gist of the prayer. This prayer strikes me as being an appropriate basis for meditating on the meaning of Advent and Christmas.

We long for the coming of Jesus. Advent remembers both the first coming of Jesus as a babe in Bethlehem who will grow up to be the Savior of the World and the hope of the second coming. The world needs a whole lot of saving these

days. From catastrophic storms and fires to violence in some places in the world, it is clear the world as we know it is less than perfect and place where both natural evil and human sin can wreak havoc. The hope of the second coming is a reminder that in the end, it is God who will have the final word over human history. God's human face is revealed in the life, actions, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus reveals a divine love so powerful it cannot be overcome

From the Rector cont. pg. 2



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES

(in addition to normal Sunday Schedule)

ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS
- Sunday, December 16 -
5:00 p.m. Old St. John's

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
- Monday, December 24 -
5:00 p.m. Early Christmas Eve

6:30 p.m. Noche Buena
10:30 p.m. Choir will sing Christmas music prior to service
11:00 p.m. Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE
- Tuesday, December 25 -
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Quiet service)

NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE
Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
- Tuesday, January 1 -
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Quiet Service)



even by death. Jesus will fulfill and complete human history and that completion will be the triumph of Love.

“...be our guest...” Even as we long for the manifestation of Jesus in all his glory at the end of all things, he is not absent from our lives now. Jesus is present in our lives by the power of his Holy Spirit. We are never abandoned nor are we ever left alone. There may be times when we feel abandoned, indeed, I have had times like that in my own life. What I have learned in living through those times is Jesus is with us even in the darkest hours of our lives. Jesus knew the feelings of abandonment, hence his cry on the cross, “My God, My God, why have your forsaken me” yet in the end, he was vindicated by resurrection to eternal life and lives on now as part of the reality of God. Jesus is the eternal guest in our hearts and the unseen guest in every aspect of our lives.

“...let these gifts to us be blessed.” I know it is a cliché and a not a very literary or elegant one in its phrasing, but the bumper sticker, “Jesus is the reason for the season” is true. This is not just a cheery winter festival to push back against the darkness and gloom of early winter. Though our rapidly secularizing culture would gut Christmas of its meaning, Jesus remains the heart of our celebration. Presents are nice and honestly, I love all the glitz and tinsel on the street, in the shops and on our trees. But if all that were to fade away, Jesus would remain as God’s blessing to his people and to this troubled world, a beacon of eternal hope in the gloom that sometimes seems to surround us. †



PARISH NEWS...



The Rev. Donald Lowery

As of press time, Charlie Vaughn and I have not had a chance to match notes on our Advent and Christmas season Schedule. We will notify youth group members electronically of meeting times. †



The Rev. Donald Lowery

We will have our Wednesday Communion Service at 5:30 p.m. on all Wednesdays except December 26th. The Healing Service with Holy Communion will be on the first Wednesday of the month. †

Father Lowery Away



The Rev. Donald Lowery

I will be leaving town after the Christmas Day service to visit my mother in the nursing home in Maryland. I will return on December 31. December 30th service will be Morning Prayer at both 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. and the Spanish Service will be Ante-Communion led by our Deacon.

Note: I will be making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from January 21 – February 4, 2019. †

Parish Finances

The Rev. Donald Lowery

We are coming up on the end of the year, and as happens sometimes, we are behind in the collection of pledges. If you are behind, please make every effort to bring your pledge donations current by the end of the year. If one is not able to complete a pledge made, please let the treasurer know. He will keep this information confidential.

Sometimes life circumstances take us by surprise and we must make adjustments. There is no disgrace in dealing with reality as it happens.

Also, we are looking at our pledged income for 2019. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. We have also discovered that some pledge cards that we mailed did not arrive at people’s homes. If you did not receive a pledge card, please let the office know.

We are projecting a possible \$20,000.00 deficit for 2019. At first this can sound frightening. However, if every family or person that pledges (about 69 pledging units as we call them) could increase their pledge by \$24.00 per month we can close that gap. The total amount

can seem overwhelming, broken down into an increase per pledge, it becomes manageable. Some may be able to give a bit more, some a bit less, but an average of \$24.00 per month will meet the goal. I give my pledge by a monthly payroll deduction, one of the advantages of being a church employee. I plan to ask the treasurer to increase my pledge by \$24.00 per month. Will you consider joining me? †

Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Rev. Donald Lowery



One of the great festivals in Latino/Latina Tradition is Our Lady of Guadalupe. The legend is that Juan Diego received a vision from the Virgin Mary assuring him that Jesus loved his native children. At a time when the Spanish were mistreating the natives of Central and South America this message was received as a word of hope assuring them of God’s love. In turn, this lead to extensive conversions of the Christian Faith as received by Roman Catholics. Our Latino and Latina brothers and sisters brought this wonderful tradition with them into the Episcopal Church. There will be a wonderful Guadalupe celebration at Holy Innocents. Details were not firm as of press time, but we will share details by an email flash as soon as we have them. The celebration is open to all, and includes not only worship but traditional Mexican folk dances. It is an extravaganza of faith and traditional culture. †

Acolyte/Crucifer Installation



Yolanda Yoder

The annual acolyte/crucifer installation will be on January 6. All acolytes, crucifers and their family are encouraged to attend.

We will also recognize the Holy Innocents Order of John Eaton to celebrate our longer serving acolytes. These acolytes are seasoned servers who help our younger acolytes and have proven their dedication to Holy Innocents. Please plan to be there to thank and congratulate these acolytes. †



VESTRY NEWS...

Senior Warden's Report

Nick Long, Senior Warden

I have had the pleasure of serving as your Senior Warden this year. I work with a creative and talented group of leaders who assist Don and Harrel in keeping the "business side" of the Church operating properly. Each month your Vestry meets to address such tasks as budgeting, establishing and applying policies and procedures, developing action plans, and maintaining our beautiful church buildings and property.

As a church, we continue our long history and tradition of welcoming diversity while fostering mutual respect through worship, Christian education, outreach, and stewardship. Father Don, Harrel, Vestry members and parishioners give tirelessly of their time supporting our local and diocesan community through such organizations as ACTS, migrant ministries, various scholarship funds and community projects.

As is customary each year, we have three Vestry members who will be rotating off Vestry after having served their three year term. Richard Davis has served for three years as our Junior Warden. In that capacity, he has worked closely with our sexton, Keith Aiken, to keep the physical plant in tip-top shape. Catherine Olmert has been active with Christian Education during her term on the Vestry and served as our Vestry Clerk this year. Our third outgoing member, Hunter Roberson, chaired the Outreach Committee and also assisted Richard with tasks around the facility. Thanks to all three for their service as members of our Vestry.

One of the innovations I suggested at the Vestry Retreat, which seems to have been successful, has been the practice of tracking Vestry Action Items from month to month, to be sure that good ideas didn't get "lost in the shuffle" and that we had good follow through on our intentions to improve the parish. From the Vestry Retreat in February, through the October Vestry meeting, we identified nearly 60 items to address, and completed more than 50 of them. I think this tool has been helpful to the Vestry as a whole in keeping us

focused on the things we need to accomplish.

The last couple of Vestry meetings have focused on developing a more formalized relationship with our very successful Pre-School program. We have a program which has been in existence for over 35 years, with a staff, led by Tammy Manning, who serve the youngest members of our church and the community. We are committed to developing a Board to assist Tammy with management of the Pre-School and job descriptions and a more formalized relationship with the other employees of the Pre-School.

Please keep your Vestry in your thoughts and prayers as we labor to provide the parish with the support that makes 'Holy Innocents' a very special place. Let me know if you have any questions about what we do, or if you think that you would like to serve on the Vestry in the future.

I also want to thank the Vestry for their hard work and support of me. Additionally, I add a special thanks to Keith Aiken, our outstanding Sexton, Tammy Manning, our Pre-School Director and Susie Pahl, our fabulous church secretary. †

The Bishop is Coming!

Nick Long, Senior Warden



In anticipation of the first ever visit by Bishop Sam Rodman, Twelfth Bishop Diocesan of North Carolina, on March 24th, we would like to have a large number of persons confirmed and received into the Church during his visit. This will take planning and preparation.

Youth Confirmation training, under the direction of Senior Warden Nick Long, will begin shortly. The confirmation classes will be set at a time convenient to most of the participants, (probably on Sundays, but whether at

9:30 a.m. before services or at 12:30 p.m., just after church, is still to be determined).

Interested youth (and their parents) should contact Nick at nlong2@nc.rr.com or let Father Don know by this Sunday so they can be included in the planning. The curriculum will follow the course of the past few Confirmation classes, with an in-depth study of what we, as Episcopalians, believe, with an emphasis on helping each youth to develop their own faith system and individual beliefs. We will look at the use of symbolism in the Church, what it means to be a Christian in the modern world, and how we can act out our beliefs in our everyday lives. Over twelve weeks of classes, we will investigate how our Episcopal beliefs came into being by a close examination of the Nicene Creed and its biblical foundations.

Father Don will also be teaching a series of guided readings and discussion groups for adults who may wish to be confirmed, or who have been confirmed previously but may want to clarify and strengthen their faith through a period of reflection and study. †

Adult Confirmation / Reception Class

The Rev. Donald Lowery

How does one join the Episcopal Church? For lifetime members, it is usually by baptism, followed by confirmation. Then, as one moves around, membership is transferred from one parish to another upon request by the person in question. For those who come from other denominations with whom we are in full communion, that is the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Moravian Church, a letter of transfer is sufficient, though some choose to be received as is explained below. For those coming from Churches who retained the Apostolic Succession by the tactile passing of the office of Bishop from one generation to another, reception is the normal route. In this part of the rite, the person's confirmation is recognized and the Bishop welcomes them into the church. For those who come from denominations without bishops in the Apostolic Succession, it is normal to be confirmed by the Bishop and it is time to begin preparing for this visit. If one is an adult who wishes to be confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church, we will have a meeting on December 6, from 7:00 – 8:00 pm. We will have a first class and schedule other classes as best suits the group. If Thursdays work, we will meet on the 13th and the 20th at that time. More details will follow, once we have identified the participants in both the youth and adult confirmation classes. †



Treasurer's Report

11/05/2018

Church Of The Holy Innocents
Revenue and Expense Summary
Year-to-date, Through October 2018

Bob Nelson, Treasurer

Accounts	MTD Actual (This Year)	MTD Budget (This Year)	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)
Revenues				
Pledged Income	\$9,498.00	\$12,500.00	\$163,681.78	\$170,500.00
Other Income	\$225.00	\$650.00	\$3,858.00	\$6,500.00
Total Revenues	\$9,723.00	\$13,150.00	\$167,539.78	\$177,000.00
Expenses				
Compensation				
Salaries	\$7,329.81	\$7,200.00	\$72,510.57	\$72,200.00
Employee Expenses				
Rector's Expenses	\$938.21	\$1,050.00	\$9,973.00	\$10,500.00
Other Employee Expenses	\$4,346.26	\$3,450.00	\$37,605.08	\$36,700.00
Total Employee Expenses	\$5,284.47	\$4,500.00	\$47,578.08	\$47,200.00
Total Compensation	\$12,614.28	\$11,700.00	\$120,088.65	\$119,400.00
Administrative				
Supplies	\$364.77	\$200.00	\$1,165.15	\$2,250.00
Preschool Income/Expense	\$3,631.58	(\$1,400.00)	\$432.71	(\$5,600.00)
General Insurance	\$2,230.00	\$1,000.00	\$10,817.50	\$10,000.00
Other Administrative Expenses	\$274.92	\$150.00	\$2,647.69	\$1,400.00
Total Administrative	\$6,501.27	(\$50.00)	\$15,063.05	\$8,050.00
Utilities	\$1,867.58	\$1,600.00	\$20,853.41	\$16,300.00
Maintenance	\$90.00	\$300.00	\$2,185.33	\$2,400.00
Parish Life	\$1,014.12	\$550.00	\$4,136.16	\$5,800.00
Diocesan & Seminary Support	\$2,263.00	\$2,300.00	\$22,634.56	\$22,700.00
Outreach	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenses	\$24,350.25	\$16,400.00	\$184,961.16	\$174,650.00
Net Total	(\$14,627.25)	(\$3,250.00)	(\$17,421.38)	\$2,350.00



Betsy Seifert, President

ECW will not meet during the month of December. Please join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, January 22 at 10:00 a.m. More details to follow in the January Newsletter. †

Altar Guild News

Margaret Williamson, Chairman

The Altar Guild will decorate the sanctuary for Christmas on Saturday, December 22nd at 10:00 a.m. We would welcome any members who could help with this.



It's time to order Christmas poinsettias to honor or memorialize special people. These are used to decorate the church. Order forms should be turned in to the church office by December 13th. The cost will be \$14 each.†



January Newsletter Deadline - Dec. 21

Please submit any news items either to the church office or e-mail them to:
MJNELSON@nc.rr.com

Printed copies of the newsletter are located in the Bell Tower for you if you have problems with email access. There is also a link to both current and past issues of our newsletter at:
www.churchoftheholyyinnocents.org



Christmas Day

December Schedule of Events

Choir Weekly Practice Schedule

Hand Bell Choir — Wed. at 6:00 PM
Parish Choir — Sun. at 9:00 AM

Sunday – December 2

8:00 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite I
10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite II
12:30 PM, La Misa Servicio

Wednesday – December 5

5:30 PM, Healing Service
Holy Eucharist

Sunday – December 9

8:00 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite I
10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite II
12:30 PM, La Misa Servicio

Wednesday – December 12

3:00 PM, Nursing Home Ministry
5:30 PM, Holy Eucharist

Sunday – December 16

8:00 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite I
10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite II
12:30 PM, La Misa Servicio

****ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS****

5:00 PM, St. John's, Williamsboro

Wednesday – December 19

5:30 PM, Holy Eucharist

Sunday – December 23

8:00 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite I
10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist - Rite II
12:30 PM, La Misa Servicio

Monday - December 24

****CHISTMAS EVE SERVICES****

5:00 PM, Holy Eucharist -- Children's Homily
6:30 PM, Noche Buena Misa
10:30 PM, Christmas Music
11:00 PM, Midnight Mass

Tuesday, December 25

****CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE****

10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (Quiet Service)

Sunday - December 30

8:00 AM, Christmas I - Morning Prayer
10:30 AM, Christmas I - Morning Prayer
12:30 PM, La Misa Servicio
Anti- Communion

Tuesday - January 1

FEAST of the HOLY NAME of JESUS

10:30 AM, Holy Eucharist (Quiet Service)





The Deacon's Bench

December 2018

by the Rev. Harrel Johnson



In most of these United States, the stores have unleashed a frenzy of sales events, special promotions, and cheery ads featuring Santa and his reindeer.

The Hallmark Channel is advertising its Countdown to Christmas movie fest, which began on November 1st. And now there are folks insisting that the twelve days of Christmas begin on December 14 –so they can *end* on Christmas Day. Traditionally, of course, the first day of Christmas is December 25, and at the end of the twelve days, we have the feast of the Epiphany, on January 6. And all of this is not about the birth of a Savior, it's about spending, spending, spending. And spending a *lot*.....



Remember the song *I'll Be Home for Christmas*? It's a Bing Crosby song from 1943. It speaks of “presents *on* the tree.” These were just little and usually handmade trinkets. Not presents *under* the tree, huge stacks and piles of purchased merchandise—but simple little gifts that could be hung on the tree’s branches. And in the midst of all this, the church offers the season of Advent, which is definitely *not* about shopping for presents. As we hear in a gospel story, “People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory.”

This is a prophecy of the end of times, a.k.a. the apocalypse, the Omega, Armageddon, Parousia, the End Times, the promised return of Jesus to judge both the living and the dead. It makes you feel a bit Scrooge-like, doesn’t it? But yet for us Christians it is the season when we hopefully watch and wait for the coming of the Messiah. Oh welcome joyous Advent!



Brinkley Report

Scott continues to improve and recover from his surgery but has discovered that it is not as easy as it was when he was younger. Thanksgiving is behind them now and Christmas is fast approaching. Please keep them in your prayers and hearts.



Birthdays

Tommy Roberson.....	12/10
John Palamar.....	12/14
Keith Aiken	12/16
Tom Church	12/16
Harrison Ford	12/18
Tricia Seitzer	12/20
Linda Ellis	12/26
Parkins Davis.....	12/30

Altar Flowers

Sharon & Bill Stark.....	12/02
Mildred & D. Boyd Kimball	12/09
Brenda & Hut Wester	12/16
Martha & John Zollicoffer	12/23
Roberta Scott	12/30



Remember In Your Prayers

Pray for Healing and Comfort:

Cynthia Shaw, Tracey Wheless, Barbara Collins, Staci Barnett, Barbara Madigan, Melody Shearin, Carolyn Lowery, Mary Shearin, Meghan Bunn, Frances Saunders, Vivie Drake, Lisa Adcock, C.G. Williams, Griselle Woodward, Graham Shearin, Nancy Rogers, Tommy Greenway, Bill Mast, William Stancil, Thomas Stancil, Bettie Cooper, Sheila Roberts, Berkeley Ellis, Graham Cawthorne, Jackson Wesley, Bo Jones, Jr., Megan Jones, Jane Carnes, Andrew Gray, Troy Peoples, Perry Ennis, Stephanie White, C.H. Ball, Cooper Brake, Will Mustian, Dorothy Maynard, Carolyn Farmer, Eve Harris, Anne Berry, Ron Dorsey, and Deuce Slater.



Anniversaries

Meredith & Kermit Ellis	12/09
Catherine & Steve Watkins.....	12/15
Sharon & Bill Stark.....	12/17
Shelby & John vanVenrooy	12/22
Cathie & Craig Clodfelter	12/27
Joie & Hal Mahler	12/27

Special Dates

- First Sunday of Advent
December 2, 2018
- Second Sunday of Advent
December 9, 2018
- Third Sunday of Advent
December 16, 2018
- First Day of Winter
December 21, 2018
- Forth Sunday of Advent
December 23, 2018
- Christmas Day
December 25, 2018
- Feast Day of the Holy Innocents
December 28, 2018

DECEMBER UNIFIED SERVING SCHEDULE

—COFFEE WILL BE SERVED IN THE GREAT HALL AFTER THE 10:30 AM SERVICE —

DEC	BEARERS	ACOLYTES	CRUCIFER	LAY READER / CHALICE BEARER	USHERS	ALTAR GUILD	VESTRY GREETER
2		Beau Burnette Chap Burnette	Sarah Parish	8:00am—Bob Nelson 10:30am—Ruth Hartness	Donald Seifert Hal Mahler	Shirley Young	Nick Long
09		Kaitlyn Paynter Jack Paynter	Mary Parish	8:00am—Rick Palamar 10:30am—Nick Long	Donald Seifert Hal Mahler	Shirley Young	Tom Church
16		Tucker Olmert Brennan Olmert	Ethan Holloway	8:00am—Hut Wester 10:30am—Richard Davis	Donald Seifert Hall Mahler	Anora Rainey	Catherine Olmert
23		Sarah Parish Mary Parish	Genie Parish	8:00am—Rix Edwards 10:30am—Tom Church	Donald Seifert Hal Mahler	Anora Rainey	Sarah Paynter
24	Kaitlyn Paynter (Tintinabulus) Jack Paynter (Book)			5:00pm—Nancy Whitt	Donald Seifert Hal Mahler	Anora Rainey	
				11:00pm—Al Stainback			
25	10:30 a.m.		MERRY CHRISTMAS			Quiet Service	
30	Morning Prayer	Lucy Catherine Olmert	8:00am—Greg Taylor 10:30am—Linda Shaw	Donald Seifert Hal Mahler	Mariana Davis	Hunter Roberson	

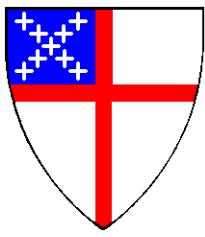
NOTE: IF YOU ARE SCHEDULED TO SERVE AND HAVE A CONFLICT, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR OWN REPLACEMENT AND NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE.





Merry Christmas





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The Church of the Holy Innocents

