

The Bell Tower

The Church of the Holy Innocents Newsletter

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December 2020

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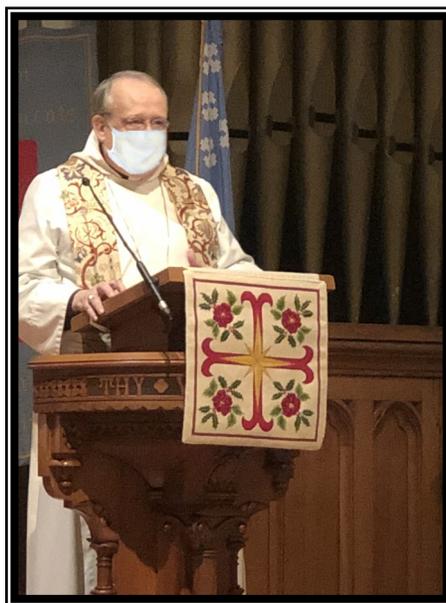
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FROM THE RECTOR

The Rev. Donald Lowery



An Advent and Christmas Like No Other

People are asking me, and rightly so, what is going to happen to Advent and Christmas services? And, as you can guess, I have a pretty useless answer, which is, "I don't know for sure." As I write, a few days before Thanksgiving, so our newsletter for December can go out in a timely fashion, it is impossible to predict. The percentage for new infections for Vance County is running at 9.9% as of today (November 20.) Our cut off point for closing church is when that number is above 6.0%. Unless there is a dramatic drop in infections we will be closed for public worship throughout Advent and Christmas. This includes Lessons and Carols at Old St. John's which is by far our most popular service at the lovely colonial church which is

our mother and the foundation of our local Episcopal history.



Here is my plan. If we are able to open, with masks and social distancing, services will be held at 5:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m. in Spanish, and 11:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and at 10:30 a.m. on Christmas Day. We will not be able to sing if we have services because of COVID-19 related restrictions but we will have music. Because of the inability to sing we probably will not have Lessons and Carols. However, don't give up yet. If I am able to formulate a plan for an alternative service for old St. John's, I will let folks know via the program we use to distribute news.



I am working on a plan for Christmas. I have not talked to possible participants yet, because honestly, I am dreaming as I write, but what I want to try is this. If I cannot have Christmas worship live and in person, I want to attempt a virtual service. We would have the liturgy with music, perhaps a soloist to sing some of the traditional hymns and the Holy Communion would be celebrated to be watched as an act of Spiritual Communion. Spiritual Communion with a celebration being observed is rather medieval and I might wear my antique, cloth of God fiddle back chasuble, which I rarely bring out anymore. For this to happen I need a musician, a soloist and I would welcome a lay reader and an acolyte. All participation will be according

From the Rector cont. pg. 2



to Diocesan guidelines for recording virtual worship. Also, it does not have to be done on Christmas Eve or Day. We could have a film session during the week leading up to Christmas and broadcast it on Christmas Eve. Volunteers would be welcome and don't worry, if no one is forthcoming, I will come asking. Again, I will keep the congregation posted via our newsletter distribution system.



If we read Luke's story of the birth of Christ Jesus, we will quickly note that he was born under difficult circumstances. As the world accounts such things, his paternity was questionable. If that sounds shocking, remember, we are believers after Jesus' life, ministry, death and the resurrection. The folks in Nazareth just knew that Mary was pregnant out of wedlock, Joseph married her anyway and they headed out of town ASAP, because a census required them to go to Joseph's home town. When they traveled the 90 some odd miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem, there was, as Luke writes, "...no room for them in the inn." Jesus was born in the stable, which, I now know because the church sent me to the Holy Land, was a cave. It wasn't a luxury accommodation. It was probably clean, because good farmers and good innkeepers kept their stables clean, and it was out of the weather so it was reasonably comfortable for the season. Even so, there was no nice crib for this new born, just a place in the manger filled with hay where the animals were fed.



I take comfort in all that happened surrounding the birth of the Lord. Matthew tells us that the coming of Jesus fulfills a prophecy in Isaiah that God would send a savior who would be Immanuel, which means, "God is with us." The COVID-19 Crisis has placed us in most difficult circumstances. Not since the polio scares of past generations, really, not since the great flu pandemic that began in 1918 have we faced such a terrifying disease. To all who contract it, there is great discomfort. Some make a full recovery. Others recover but have long term side effects. Sadly, some die because of the way it can ravage the body. In the midst of this time of fear and dread and even the threat of death, God is with us, by the power of the Holy

Spirit, in the person of Jesus Christ himself. At the end of Matthew, as Jesus is parted from his disciples after the resurrection, he commissions them for ministry and makes a promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Jesus is with us. We face nothing alone. If we are sick, he is our healer. If, heavens forbid, we must "...walk through the valley of the shadow of death..." he is with us to comfort us, to bring us to eternal life and to offer hope for any we may leave behind.



I would be a liar if I did not admit I am afraid at times. I am over 60, overweight though working to drop the excess, I am a type two diabetic and I have high blood pressure. With my doctor's help I am working on these issues. However, all these are "underlying conditions" that could bring complications and death should I contract COVID-19. I see my doctor regularly; I have had the flu shot and I will take the COVID vaccine if it becomes available. I have enough masks to start my own hospital. Most of all, I place my hope in God. Come what may, I believe that Jesus really is Immanuel, God with us. We will face this Advent and Christmas season with renewed hope and in turn, be led, I pray, into a better 2021. †

PARISH NEWS...

Wednesday Service

The Rev. Donald Lowery



For the time being, there is no Wednesday Communion Service. Should we be able to reopen, I will send news as soon as possible. Should we resume, there will be no healing service because that service requires the priest, during individual prayers for healing, to be in close proximity to worshippers. However, I am working on an adaptation which will allow us to use prayers for healing without the prayers that are "too close" under current COVID precautions. Again, I will keep folks posted. †

VESTRY NEWS...



Note from Senior Warden

Tom Church, Senior Warden

Due to the COVID-19 related restrictions in our Diocese, there will not be an Annual Congregational Meeting in our church this year and the Diocesan Convention has been postponed until March. The Vestry will appoint new members to replace outgoing members Roberta Scott, Rix Edwards and me at the December Vestry Meeting. If you would like to be considered or know of anyone, please let me know.



If you have not returned your pledge card to the church office, please do so as soon as possible. †



Buildings and Grounds Committee

Richard Davis



Cooper house repairs have started. Lots of interior and exterior projects are underway as we look forward to a new tenant in the near future. †

The REASON for the SEASON



Treasurer's Report

Accounts

Church Of The Holy Innocents Revenue and Expense Summary Year-to-date, Through October 2020

Bob Nelson, Treasurer

	MTD Actual (This Year)	MTD Budget (This Year)	YTD Actual (This Year)	YTD Budget (This Year)
Revenues				
Pledged Income	\$6,898.00	\$12,000.00	\$132,525.32	\$155,000.00
Other Income	(\$54.00)	\$400.00	(\$137.00)	\$4,300.00
Total Revenues	\$6,844.00	\$12,400.00	\$132,388.32	\$159,300.00
Expenses				
Compensation				
Salaries	\$2,582.34	\$2,600.00	\$24,431.40	\$25,600.00
Employee Expenses				
Rector's Expenses	\$705.05	\$900.00	\$8,753.99	\$9,000.00
Other Employee Expenses	\$3,274.61	\$3,300.00	\$32,639.62	\$34,000.00
Total Employee Expenses	\$3,979.66	\$4,200.00	\$41,393.61	\$43,000.00
Total Compensation	\$6,562.00	\$6,800.00	\$65,825.01	\$68,600.00
Administrative				
Supplies	(\$83.30)	\$200.00	\$1,004.99	\$2,250.00
Preschool Income/Expense	\$1,250.08	\$3,200.00	\$7,332.16	\$2,800.00
General Insurance	\$2,240.50	\$1,000.00	\$11,131.00	\$10,000.00
Other Administrative Expenses	(\$383.45)	\$200.00	\$1,145.03	\$1,850.00
Total Administrative	\$3,023.83	\$4,600.00	\$20,613.18	\$16,900.00
Utilities	\$1,112.99	\$2,100.00	\$15,210.22	\$21,000.00
Maintenance	\$1,433.41	\$1,950.00	\$17,485.13	\$18,900.00
Parish Life	\$80.00	\$400.00	\$319.06	\$4,300.00
Diocesan & Seminary Support	\$2,740.50	\$2,700.00	\$27,405.00	\$27,500.00
Outreach	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenses	\$14,952.73	\$18,550.00	\$146,857.60	\$157,200.00
Net Total	(\$8,108.73)	(\$6,150.00)	(\$14,469.28)	\$2,100.00



Note from the Editor...

Marsha Nelson

The next church newsletter will be issued in January. Please email news items by **December 29 to:**

mjnelson@nc.rr.com

Current and past issues of the newsletter are available on the church website at:

www.churchoftheholynnocents.org

Thanks for your support!

Amazon Smile is a branch of the regular Amazon.com site, except all of the purchases that are made through smile.amazon.com will automatically donate ½% of the purchase (most everything is eligible) to a charity of your choosing. We are asking parishioners to consider making Holy Innocents that charity. Below is a link that will take you to the Amazon Smile site, and it should ask you to confirm that you wish to support Holy Innocents as your Smile charity. It's an easy way to add to your contribution without additional expense. †

Direct charity link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-0554227>

For questions or help, visit <http://smile.amazon.com/about>





Merry Christmas



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

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

Remember In Your Prayers

Pray for Healing and Comfort:

Cynthia Shaw, Trayce Wheless,
 Barbara Collins, Staci Barnett,
 Barbara Madigan, Melody Shear-
 in, Mary Shearin, Meghan Bunn,
 Vivie Drake, Bill Mast, Veneal
 Williams, Nancy Rogers, William
 Stancil, Thomas Stancil, Sheila
 Roberts, Berkeley Ellis, Theo,
 Graham Cawthorne, Bo Jones,
 and Rose Flannagan.



Special Dates

- Second Sunday of Advent
December 6, 2020
- Third Sunday of Advent
December 13, 2020
- Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 20, 2020
- First Day of Winter
December 21, 2020
- Christmas Eve
December 24, 2020
- Christmas Day
December 25, 2020
- Feast Day of the Holy Innocents
December 29, 2020

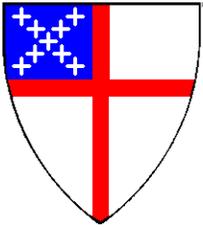


DECEMBER SERVING SCHEDULE

DEC	ACOLYTES	USHERS	LAY READER / CHALICE BEARER	ALTAR GUILD
6	~SERVICES ARE VIRTUAL ONLY~			
13	CHURCH SERVICES ARE PROVIDED ONLINE BY OUR DIOCESE AND BY THE WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES & WEBSITE ADDRESSES:			
20	10:00 AM, Online—Episcopal Diocese of NC — www.episdionc.org 11:15 AM, Online— Washington National Cathedral — www.cathedral.org (Links to above websites are provided on our church website at www.churchoftheholyyinnocents.org)			
24	5:00 p.m. TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
	6:30 p.m. Spanish Service	TBD	TBD	
	11:00 p.m. TBD	TBD	TBD	
If we do Virtual Service for Christmas Eve instead of in-church service, it will be available for viewing on church Facebook page.				
25	10:30 a.m.	MERRY CHRISTMAS		TBD
27	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

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





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