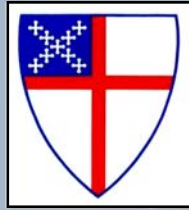


The Builder

Making Disciples for Jesus Christ

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church
(540) 672-3761
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Editor: Ann Wood

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Issue No. 10

From the Pastor

I remember something a bishop wrote well over a decade ago, but it has remained with me ever since, mostly because it seemed unusual. The bishop admitted that unlike Christmas or Easter, “**Advent**” was his favorite season of the Christian year. He admitted that the *Season of Advent* boasts no dramatic events—no humble birth or regal visits; no Lenten journey of prayer, fasting, and self-denial; no triumphal entry; no final meal; no tragic but ultimately redemptive death; no stunning resurrection that re-orders creation; and no Pentecostal pyrotechnics. Rather, he noted that “**Advent**” is about.... waiting. Period. Something *is* going to happen (Jesus will come again; Jesus will be born in Bethlehem); but these events haven’t yet occurred. And so, we “wait” and, as a result, Advent mirrors “real life,” the in-between time in which nothing important seems to be happening and we simply go about the daily business of following Jesus as faithfully as we can.

At the center of Advent stands John the Baptist, the last Old Testament figure and the first New Testament prophet, looking back at Israel’s history and looking forward to Israel’s redemption (and ours). His message is a question for this mysterious “in-between” time: What do we *do* as we wait? A great Advent hymn captures the answer:

On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry announces that the Lord is nigh; awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings. [Hymn 76, v.1]

John the Baptist looks forward to the mystical “not yet.” He sees the Savior coming, and in the meantime he waits.

Then cleansed be every breast from sin; make straight the way for God within, and let each heart prepare a home where such a mighty guest may come. [v.2]

I remember that the bishop’s point was that Advent waiting is not “pointless”—far from it. The coming Savior yearns to live in our hearts. “*Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking,*” Jesus says; “*if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.*” [Revelation 3:20].

For thou art our salvation, Lord, our refuge and our great reward; without thy grace we waste away like flowers that wither and decay. [v. 3]

The same Old Testament chapter that prefigures the ministry of John the Baptist (Isaiah 40) also reminds us that we are utterly dependent on God. John’s stern message of repentance points us to the only one who can restore us to a relationship with the Father—it points us to Jesus.

To heal the sick, stretch out thine hand, and bid the fallen sinner stand; shine forth, and let thy light restore earth’s own true loveliness once more. [v.4]

The point is: Yes! We are waiting for our own salvation, our own healing. Yet, we are also “waiting” for so much more. In the end, God will renew the whole universe, beginning with us.

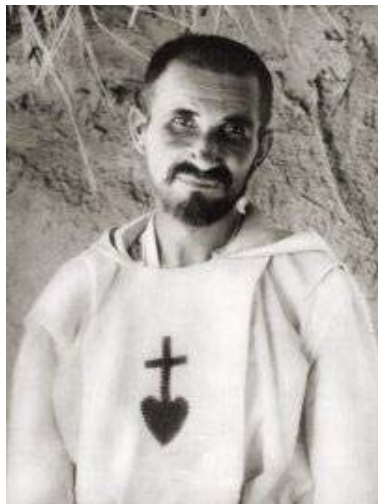
All praise, eternal Son, to thee, whose advent doth thy people free; whom with the Father we adore and Holy Spirit ever more. [v.5]

So how do we wait? What do we *do*? Above all, we **worship!** An ordinary Sunday Eucharist in our simple, historic, yet ordinary parish is a place where heaven and earth meet; where we encounter the living God; where Jesus feeds his people and prepares us for his service; where together we learn how to follow Jesus into the future.

Pastor Lin +

For All the Saints...

Charles de Foucauld, Hermit and Martyr in the Sahara, 1916 ~ December 1



Charles de Foucauld, sometimes referred to as Brother Charles of Jesus, was the inspiration behind the founding of new religious communities for both men and women and is often credited with the revival of desert spirituality in the early twentieth century.

Born in France in 1858, Charles was orphaned at age six and raised by his grandparents. As a young man he lost his faith, and in spite of the discipline of his grandfather, whom he deeply respected, Charles lived a life that was a curious mix of laxity and stubbornness. Against advice, he took a risk-laden journey to Morocco in the early 1880's. There he encountered devout Muslims whose practice of their faith inspired Charles to begin a search for the faith that was his own. Upon returning to France, he continued his quest, and in 1886, at age 28, re-discovered God and made a new commitment that would guide the rest of his life. A pilgrimage to the Holy Land deepened his commitment still further.

Charles entered the Cisterian Order of Strict Observance, the Trappists, first in France and then in Syria, a commitment of seven years. He then returned to the Holy Land and lived as a servant to the convent of the Poor Clares in Nazareth. It was there that he began to develop a life of solitude, prayer, and adoration. The Poor Clares saw in him a vocation to the priesthood, encouraged him in spite of his reluctance, and Charles was ordained a priest in 1901.

Charles then moved to the Sahara where his desire was to live a “ministry of presence” among “the furthest removed, the most abandoned.” He believed his call was to live among those whose faith and culture differed from his own. To witness to Christ among them was not to be eloquent preaching or missionary demands, but “*to shout the Gospel with his life.*” Charles sought to live so that those who saw his life would ask, “*If such is the servant, what must the Master be like?*”

The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, ~ January 6



The name “*Epiphany*” is derived from a Greek word meaning “manifestation” or “appearing.” Anglican Prayer Books interpret the word with an alternative title, “The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.” The last phrase, of course, is a reference to the story of the Wise Men from the East.

A Christian observance on January 6 is found as early as the end of the second century in Egypt. The feast combined commemorations of the visit of the Magi, led by the star of Bethlehem; the Baptism of Jesus in the waters of the River Jordan; and Jesus’ first recorded miracle, the changing of water into wine at the marriage of Cana of Galilee—all thought of as “manifestations” of the incarnate Lord.

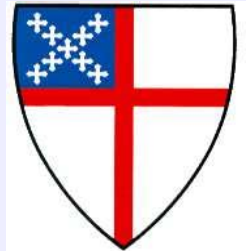
The Epiphany remains the primary Feast of the Incarnation in Eastern Churches, and the three-fold emphasis is still prominent. In the West, however, including Anglican Churches, the story of the Wise Men has tended to overshadow the other two events. Modern lectionary reform, reflected in the 1979 Prayer Book, has recovered the primitive trilogy, by setting the event of the Baptism as the theme of the First Sunday after the Epiphany in all three years, and by providing the story of the Miracle at Cana as the Gospel for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany in Year C, which coincidentally is our current year.



MORE, “101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian”—

Reason # 29: “The signs that say, “The Episcopal Church Welcomes You” mean it.” *Nick Humez, Diocese of Newark*

Reason # 39: “From Miami to Manchester, from Lima to London, from Brisbane to Birmingham, Singapore to San Francisco, I can go to church and fit right in.” *John F. Schwaller, Diocese of Minnesota*



Thank you to everyone who participated in this month’s **Community Mission Project to support the Orange Love Outreach Food Pantry!**

Once again, the members of our St. Thomas Parish family came through with a plethora of food items and paper products for families in need right here in our own Orange County. An amazing **346 pounds!** And over 430 items. What an incredible response and one that will truly make a wonderful Thanksgiving to so many others. **Thank You to everyone who contributed!**

Grateful Appreciation is offered to those who give to the **Rector’s Discretionary Fund (RDF)**. This past month we were able to help a young woman who has been unable to work in her last trimester of her pregnancy is rent assistance. She recently delivered a healthy baby and, thanks to your continued generosity, we were able to provide additional resources for her. **Thank You!**



Christmas Eve Service



Given the continued fluctuations in local COVID infections and deaths, we will hold **ONE COVID-Friendly, Family-Friendly, Christmas Eve Service on FRIDAY, December 24th at 6pm, OUTSIDE** with **Candlelight and Prayers and Carols** in **FRONT of the Church**. The Manger and Advent Wreath will be outside our Church doors.

At the scheduled time, families and individuals will be invited to come forward to light their church-provided hand-candles from the white Christ Candle in the Advent Wreath and say the names of one or two people they miss this year—perhaps because they are away, cannot come home, or have died. Our organist will play several popular Carols on the Organ, while we sing along to celebrate this joyous day. We will conclude by singing, *Silent Night* to candlelight.

We hope to see you there!





Thanksgiving Donations—Thank you!

We were so grateful for church members very generous donations! We delivered 436 items which weighed in at 324 lbs. In addition, we issued a check for \$125.00 to the food pantry from our Community Missions In/Out fund. We also received \$200.00 in donations for the food drive, which we sent to Love Outreach to help fill any gaps they might be experiencing.



Community Missions at OES

In late October and early November we purchased 62 items of clothing - leggings, shirts, socks, sweatpants- for the children at OES. A very generous donation allowed us to take advantage of some timely sales. Items of clothing listed above in sizes 4-18 are an ongoing need at OES. We will continue to shop and welcome donations to help keep our little neighbors warm.

Community Missions and OC Children's Toy Box



Community Missions also made a donation to the Orange County Children's Toy Box. This program does an outstanding job of providing a memorable Christmas to so many children in our community and we are proud to support their effort.



Music Anyone?

Please join us for a concert on January 16, 2022 at 4pm at St. Thomas.

The concert is free and open to all.

More details to follow in the Sunday Bulletin and via email.



Order your Christmas Poinsettias today!

Order forms are available in the church office. You may also place orders by email to stthomas3@verizon.net or phone to 540-672-3761. Please indicate if you wish your poinsettia to be placed “In memory of” or “In thanksgiving for” a loved one. We ask that orders and payment (\$15 per plant) be placed with the church office by **December 17**.



Greening of the Church

“Greening of the Church” will be on **December 21** but may be staggered to ensure social distancing is possible. Bring greens and magnolia or boxwood leaves if you have them.



Angel Tree

Angel Tree sign up information was sent to Parishioners via email. Please bring wrapped presents to the church by **December 12** in order for the gifts to be delivered in time for Christmas. Please include a tag with the child’s name but no other information. The gifts will be given from the child’s own parent, who could not otherwise provide a gift. If you would like to help and have not received the sign up email, please contact the church office.

NOW SHOWING



On Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese forces launch a devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. naval base in Hawaii. Six months later, the Battle of Midway commences on June 4, 1942, as the Japanese navy once again plans a strike against American ships in the Pacific. For the next three days, the U.S. Navy and a squad of brave fighter pilots engage the enemy in one of the most important and decisive battles of World War II. Midway was directed by Roland Emmerich and stars Ed Skrein, Patrick Wilson, Luke Evans, Aaron Eckhart, Nick Jonas, Mandy Moore, Dennis Quaid, Tadanobu Asano, Darren Criss, and Woody Harrelson. ~ IMDB

Friday, January 28th at 7pm in Robertson Hall

~ cost of admission is one non-perishable food item ~



~December & January Anniversaries ~

Jennifer & Kip Porter

~December Birthdays~

12/03 Evan Wagner
12/08 Gareth Lee
12/09 Brandon Barfield
12/17 Kate Amos
12/17 Steve Cushman
12/19 Amelia Lee
12/24 Peter Amos

~January Birthdays~

01/01 Daniel Robinson
01/02 Graham Barton
01/03 Andrew Garnett
01/04 Charles Seilheimer
01/05 Diane Line
01/07 Barbara Garnett
01/10 Catherine Gillespie
01/11 Kris Brockman
01/11 Ally Keating
01/12 Christopher Dulin
01/15 Kenneth Taormina
01/20 Becca Amos
01/20 Randy Merrick
01/24 Doc Garnett
01/29 Virginia Donnelly

Food Pantry

The special request for December is **laundry detergent, body soap, and dry pasta**. The special request for January is **dish detergent, toilet paper, and canned soup**. All food items and cash gifts are always welcome and appreciated. You can drop off donations at the Love Outreach Food Pantry each Tuesday from 9:00-10:30 and on Wednesday from 8:30-12:00.

Their mailing address is: Love Outreach Food Pantry, Inc., P.O. Box 788, Orange, 22960. You may also bring any donations to the church to be delivered.



Prayer List

We pray especially for our church's leadership:

Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury Michael, Presiding Bishop Susan, Jennifer, & Porter, bishops for this diocese

Our country: President Joe, Vice President Kamala, & Governor Ralph

For the men and women in our armed forces serving our nation around the world.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation:

For: Barbara, Bateman, Ellen, Harriet, Liz, Margaret, Susan, Susie, Terrell, and William

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you and be
gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give
you peace.*

Want to add something to The Builder? Contact Ann Wood at annwood304@gmail.com by January 24, 2022 with your information!



December 2021

St. Thomas Church



Key: Chapel (C); Conference Room (CR); Holy Communion (HC); Rector's Study (RS); Robertson Hall (RH); Youth Room (YR)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 <i>Funeral service for Brian Hall Elmwood Farm 1 PM</i>
5 The Second Sunday of Advent 8:00 am HE I 10:15 am HE II 	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 The Third Sunday of Advent 8:00 am HE I 10:15 am HE II 	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 The Fourth Sunday of Advent 8:00 am HE I 10:15 am HE II 	20	21 <i>Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle</i>	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve candle light service and music 6 PM</i>	25 Christmas Day
26 The Frist Sunday after Christmas Day 8:00 am Morning Prayer Rite I 10:15 am Morning Prayer Rite II 	27	28	29	30	31 	



January 2022

St. Thomas Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 New Year's Day
2 <i>The Second Sunday after Christmas Day</i> 8:00 am Morning Prayer Rite I 10:15 am Morning Prayer Rite II	3 Office closed, New Year's Holiday	4	5	6 <i>The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ</i>	7	8
9 <i>The First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ</i> 8:00 am Morning Prayer Rite I 10:15 am Morning Prayer Rite II	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 <i>The Second Sunday after the Epiphany</i> 8:00 am Morning Prayer Rite I 10:15 am Morning Prayer Rite II	17 Office closed for MLK holiday	18	19	20	21	22
23 <i>The Third Sunday after the Epiphany</i> 8:00 am HE I 10:15 am HE II	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 <i>The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany</i> 8:00 am HE I 10:15 am HE II Proposed Annual Meeting Date	31					

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
119 Caroline Street
Orange, VA 22960

Dec 2021/Jan 2022

