



Trinity Topics

January 2024

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“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”—Matthew 20-21

It's January, and the Lord has given us a fresh, new year. Let us receive it with gladness and eager anticipation for the gifts it has in store! Many of us are making resolutions for how this year will be different from the last. Likewise, we must take this time to consider what our mission for the next year will be here for our life together here Trinity Church. We should consider not only the coming year, but the future overall. Looking at the year that is past, we have seen a steady recovery of our attendance and participation in parish activities since the hard break with the norm that the pandemic was for all of us. Attendance at Sunday services is not what it was before the pandemic, but it is steadily improving. We've restored most of our traditional programs that had gone into hiatus, but it must be admitted there has been some struggle to find enough hands for these many tasks. I think this may be the year that this steady recovery from the pandemic becomes momentum for the future of our community.

Of course, numbers and programs are not everything. There are many happy and holy churches that are smaller than ours with fewer activities. What even small communities can have, and we must always be mindful of in our community, is parish health. Our greatest resource is our zeal for our life together, which comes from our faith in God, our lives of prayer, and our knowledge of scripture. A new year, as I believe I have said in this newsletter every January to date, is the perfect time to take up a new regimen of daily prayer and scripture reading. I am certain the future of Trinity Church would be ensured if we all prayed and read our bibles every day.

While it is true that parish health is of foremost important, the future of our parish will require having souls to come together for fellowship and worship. I hope this year we can continue our rebound in worship attendance. If, during the pandemic, you've fallen out of the habit of weekly attendance, I hope this is the year that we resume a healthy life of worship. Like going to the gym, the best results will be found when church attendance is done regularly. When you exercise regularly you begin to miss it when you cannot get your work out in, and it's the same with spiritual fitness. Church is not merely another activity for a busy week but sustenance for the rest of the week. This appeal to attend worship is not only to current members. To ensure parish health in the future we must always reach out for new members. Resolve this year to invite friends and family to come to church with you—the vast majority of people who attend church will choose a community based on invitations from family and friends. In 2024, we all must take responsibility for filling our pews.

I hope this is also the year that we see greater engagement from our members in parish activities. Here I must stop to acknowledge our members who are already greatly invested in the day-to-day operation of our parish. The Lord receives your service with joy! We are, on the other hand, always ready to receive new volunteers and ministers for activities in our community. Unfortunately, practically every activity and ministry at Trinity is struggling to find members and volunteers. It is a great privilege to serve in God's Church, and I hope more of us will make the time to support out community through service.

Rest assured the Lord has given us all we need as a community—the question is whether individuals will offer their time and energy to the parish. If we all can become so invested in our life together, through our prayers, our time, and our gifts, I am certain 2024 can be another year of growth in God's grace for Trinity Church.

Fr. Zachary Brooks

A Course in Anglican History: Part LVIII

Observance of the Christmas season in the American Colonies was quieter than in Britain, which itself had a quieter Christmas than Europe. In the Medieval era Christmas was a month-long blowout from Christmas Day to Candlemas on February 2. Christmas remained a raucous celebration across Europe, along with other associated observances like St. Lucy Day, St. Nicholas Day, and Epiphany. In English speaking countries, the legacy of the Puritans (who regarded Christmas as a non-biblical, Catholic holiday that celebrated drunkenness and gluttony) had considerably muted Christmas festivities. The Church of England maintained the celebration, though in the early 18th century it was by no means expected that workers would have it off. It didn't interrupt day to day life, but it remained a day to attend church, give alms to the poor, and throw parties for one's workers and tenants. In Presbyterian Scotland Christmas was little remarked upon, with all the winter celebration and cheer being reserved for New Year's Day (called Hogmanay). Christmas was little celebrated in the New World. Americans preferred to declare days of celebration whenever circumstances merited them, which is the origin of Thanksgiving Day. Christmas was outright banned in Massachusetts from 1659 to 1681, and it didn't become a public holiday there until 1856. In other places Christmas was celebrated mainly by Anglicans, who were a small portion of the population even in officially Anglican colonies, and Catholics, an even smaller portion of the population. During the American Revolution, George Washington rightly decided Christmas Eve was the perfect time to cross the Delaware River because his mostly Congregationalist and Presbyterian troops would still be fresh and ready for battle, while the German mercenaries hired by the British would be busy drinking heavily while celebrating the birth of the Savior. While Christmas would eventually see a resurgence in the United States, there remain today echoes of Puritanical concerns about drunkenness and gluttony on Christmas in continual reminders about "the reason for the season" against crass materialism.

This column is a monthly series on the history of Anglicanism and the Episcopal Church.

Annual Parish Meeting

Please make every effort to attend our Parish Meeting, on Sunday, January 28. It gives us an opportunity to review all the activities of our parish during 2023.

We will also elect three new Vestry Members and two Synod & Deanery Delegates. These persons must be confirmed Communicants in Good Standing, at least eighteen years of age.

Parish Meeting Reports

It is essential that we have written reports turned into the Parish Office by Wednesday, **January 24**. Although brief oral comments are welcomed at the meeting, the printed reports are attached to the minutes and filed for posterity. Without written reports, our history does not reflect an accurate picture of the life and times of Trinity Church.



News & Announcements

Bishop's Visit

Bishop Brian Burgess will visit us on Sunday, January 14. As is the custom, there will be a special collection for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. The ECW will host a special reception for him after the 10 o'clock service.

Outreach

Our Outreach Chairman Laura Evans coordinated two initiatives during Advent. First, she organized groups of members to ring the bells for the Salvation Army. Then she adopted a family for Christmas through the Salvation Army. Members were very generous. Thank you, Laura, and thanks to all who donated goods and their time. *Remember:* We always have a container for you to donate food items to the Jacksonville Area Food Center throughout the year.

Doorbell Dinners

Trinity Church will be delivering Doorbell Dinners the week of January 14-19. Please mark your calendars.

Special Offerings

The Thanksgiving Offering was \$170; the Christmas Offering was \$594. Please remember that all money from special offerings goes to **Outreach**.

Episcopal Church Women

Thanks to the hard work and generosity of many, the Christmas luncheon was a huge success. Although we are still waiting on a couple invoices, it looks like we will have a great profit. A detailed report will be submitted at the annual parish meeting. These funds will help the ECW fulfill their many duties in the coming year, in addition to making contributions to local outreach programs. All women of the parish are encouraged to participate in the ECW activities. Even if you are unable to attend the monthly salad supper meetings, you can offer to help with receptions and jobs in the kitchen.

Coffee Hour

There is a sign next to the kitchen serving counter so that members can sign up to host a simple coffee hour after the Sunday 10 o'clock service. It is good for us to enjoy some safe fellowship in these days.



**If you have news you wish to share, please contact the Parish Office.*

Lectors:

January 7: Alice Tracey
January 14: Nancy Taylor Porter
January 21: Forrest Keaton
January 28: Paula Woods

Acolytes: (Please let Jo Ann know when available.)

January 7: Bruce Evans & Clayton Robb
January 14: Bruce Evans & Clayton Robb
January 21: Bruce Evans & Clayton Robb
January 28: Bruce Evans & Clayton Robb

Ushers:

January 7: Chuck Crim & Volunteer
January 14: John Clancy & Volunteer
January 21: Jeff Radcliffe & Chuck Crim
January 28: Jim Herget & Volunteer

Trinity Fellowship

Tuesday, January 2
5:30 pm

ECW Supper Meeting

Monday, January 15
5:30 pm

Bishop's Visit

Sunday, January 14

Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, January 28
11:30 am

Blanket Sunday

To benefit Church World Service
January 28

Pledge / Contribution Statements
will be mailed the first week of January.

LITURGY FOR JANUARY 2024

Monday, January 1:

THE HOLY NAME

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 3:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Saturday, January 6:

The Epiphany of Our Lord

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 7:

The 1st Sunday after The Epiphany:

The Baptism of Our Lord

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 10:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 14:

EPIPHANY II

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 17:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Thursday, January 18:

The Confession of St. Peter

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 21:

EPHIFANY III

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 24:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Thursday, January 25:

The Conversion of St. Paul

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, January 28:

EPHIFANY IV

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, January 31:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist