



Trinity Topics

DECEMBER 2024

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“Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

—*Luke 2:11*

Every December we come to the moment that we must read the Christmas story again. Simply remembering the reason for the season is not quite sufficient. Having heard it so many times before, it's difficult to truly read it for what it actually says. We are liable to think more of our happy memories of Christmas than what is there. If we read the Christmas story for what it has to say, it has to be admitted there is darkness in the story. It begins with everyday life thrown into chaos because of the whims of a distant emperor. This forces a young couple to make a difficult journey at the worst moment of the wife's pregnancy. There is poverty, for it is hard to imagine a family of means being relegated to the stable however crowded the inn might be. There is the cold of shepherds huddled in the dark night with their flocks as they struggle to make a living. The story contains the violence of the innocent paying for the paranoia of a tyrant.

In the midst of the darkest part of the year, however, is light. The angel appears to us and says, “To you this day is born a savior!” I read a preacher who pointed out that the angel's words are very precise. The angel does not say “To humankind is born a savior,” rather he says “To you!” That does mean you and me, even 2,000 years later. Just as it was so long ago, there is darkness in our own lives today. We try to distract ourselves from it for a few weeks in December, but it is there. Just like in the Christmas story, life today contains darkness, chaos, poverty, and violence. None of this takes a break for Christmas, but nevertheless the savior is born “this day,” in the little city of Jacksonville in the year 2024. This great news is a little thing—a baby born to homeless parents. Babies are born all the time. Why should this one be different? We are assured that this one birth changes our lives entirely. In this baby God has become a human being. God is not a distant abstraction in heaven but is now our brother who joins us in our perplexity and our rejoicing. Because of this one little baby, God is with us always. The Christmas story teaches us to look for signs of this in the smallest things and in the most unexpected places.

I hope in this Christmas season we can put down our newspapers and newsfeeds, along with our stress and worries, for just a little while to look for the signs of God's presence with us in the little things of life—a phone call from a distant friend, a card and a few cookies from our neighbors, or in a visit from a family member. Jesus teaches us that we can also be the light in the darkness. Take some time this year to be this light by giving to charity, calling the lonely, and taking time for ourselves for prayer and meditation on the Christmas story, which will always be new when we take time to let it speak to us.

Fr. Zachary Brooks +

A Course in Anglican History: Part LXVIII

One of the most famous moments of the American War of Independence was General George Washington leading his troops across the icy Delaware River on Christmas evening of 1776. This allowed him to lead a surprise attack on German mercenaries the following morning in the Battle of Trenton. American religious practice played a key role in this battle. General Washington knew that the German mercenaries would be busy celebrating Christmas that evening. His American troops, on the other hand, mostly did not celebrate Christmas, a holdover from the Colonies' Puritan heritage. Though Anglicans and Lutherans continued to celebrate Christmas, the keeping of a Church-mandated calendar of observances was seen by Congregationalists and Presbyterians in that era as Catholic. Americans preferred having their community leaders declare feasts and fasts whenever they felt circumstances warranted them, which is the origin of Thanksgiving Day. Christmas was seen by most Americans as not only Catholic, but also an occasion for drunken debauchery. To be sure, it mostly was an excuse for a raucous party; the quiet, family celebration of Christmas we know today would not be invented for another century. This meant that Britain's Hessian mercenaries were distracted by their celebrating and not keeping an eye on the Delaware River that night. The Continental Army scored a resounding victory the next morning as it attacked the mercenaries recovering from those Christmas celebrations.

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

Donations for Christmas Flowers

We appreciate your donations which pay for the Christmas flowers. Envelopes are on the table in the foyer. You may write the names of those in whose memory flowers are given and place your donation inside the envelope. Of course, you may also call the Parish Office, but we thought the special envelopes might make the process easier, and they make the recordkeeping much easier.

There are also a few regular Sundays throughout the year on which we do not have regular donors. Contact the Parish Office if you would like to donate Altar Flowers. We will keep a list.

THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY

After lengthy discussions in Vestry meetings, the service on Christmas Eve will begin at 8:00 pm. We hope this will enable more people to attend.



News & Announcements

Outreach

- ECW was pleased to donate seventeen shoeboxes and \$170 toward the shipping of the boxes.
- Please remember that the Vestry has designated that all of the **Special Offerings** (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and Easter) is directed to Parish Outreach programs.

The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our ongoing ministry to the community. However, all of us know December is always a time of even greater need for many in the community. We can't rest on our laurels quite yet.

We can help in several ways:

- Make a check payable to Trinity Church with the desired recipient in the memo line.
- Bring non-perishable food items to the green tubs. As you plan your holiday meals, please add an item or two for the food center
- Ring the SALVATION ARMY bells. Abby Radcliffe has posted a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Dates are Sunday afternoons 4-6, but if you can only give an hour, that's fine too.
- Donate toys for the Salvation Army. They are being collected until DECEMBER 15. Think about a toy you might have loved getting, within reason, and see if you can locate a similar item.

Pledge / Contribution Statements

We always mail final annual statements after **December 31**; however, if you would like to know the status of your account as of now, please contact the Parish Office. Our updated software allows us to easily email a statement, and we can, of course, also send one by regular mail.

TRINITY FELLOWSHIP FOR DECEMBER 3

“The Resurrection of Jesus”

When we consider the question of the Resurrection of Jesus, we ask such questions as: What does the word “resurrection” mean, and how did it fit into the Jewish story and the Kingdom story of Jesus? Specifically, what did Christians mean when they told stories of Jesus coming back to life? And most important of all, what difference does it make for the way we think about mission, discipleship, and spirituality?

Profs. Bird and Wright discuss various questions related to these issues under three topic headings:

Greco-Roman views of the Afterlife: Why didn't the Greco-Roman view of the afterlife affirm or agree with the Christian view?

Jewish views of the Afterlife: What were some of the different Jewish views of the afterlife? What were some of the similarities and differences between the Jewish and Christian views of resurrection and the afterlife?

Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus: How do the following three themes count as “evidence” for the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?

Jesus's empty tomb

Jesus' post-resurrection appearances

The early Church's belief in and proclamation of Jesus' resurrection

This session concludes with an important discussion by Prof. Wright of the implications of belief in Jesus' resurrection for Christian faith and life.

***Please join us on Tuesday, December 3, at 7:00 pm for dessert.
The video and study will be from 7:30 to 8:30 pm.***

Trinity Fellowship
Tuesday, December 3, 7 pm
continues to study
The New Testament You Didn't Know

ECW Salad Supper
Thursday, December 12, 5:30 pm

Lectors

1 Cathy Nelson
8 Alice Tracey
15 Nancy Taylor Porter
22 Forrest Keaton
24 Eve Forrest Keaton
25 Cathy Nelson
29 Paula Woods

Acolytes:

1 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb, Ethan Scott
8 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb
15 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb
22 Clayton Robb & Volunteer
24 Eve Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb,
25
29 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb

Ushers

1 Chuck Crim & Volunteer
8 John Clancy & Jim Herget
15 Chuck Crim & Volunteer
22 Jim Herget & John Clancy
24 Eve Chuck Crim & Jeff Radcliffe
25 Volunteer
29 John Clancy & Chuck Crim

Looking ahead:

Annual Parish Meeting will be
on **Sunday, January 26.**

LITURGY FOR DECEMBER 2023

Sunday, December 1:
THE 1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, December 4:
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 8:
THE 2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, December 11:
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 15:
THE 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, December 18:
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Saturday, December 21: St. Thomas
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 22:
THE 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, December 24
THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY

8:00 pm = Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, December 25:
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Thursday, December 26: St. Stephen
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Friday, December 27: St. John
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Saturday, December 28:
The Holy Innocents
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 29:
THE 1st SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

*Morning Prayer is said at 10 o'clock
on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.*