

The Stone's Throw

Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church

9191 Daly Road

Cincinnati, Ohio 45231

(513) 522-8628

<http://www.ststephens-cinci.org>

office@ststephens-cinci.org

Father David B. Bailey

310-0127 revdbb@aol.com

Monica E. Neiderman, publications secretary

937-474-2732 sewnsew313@yahoo.com



December

The Rector's Focus

ADVENT

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. – Collect for the First Sunday of Advent

Dear Friends,

My Focus is (relatively) brief this month, so that I can make sure that my main points don't get lost in verbiage!

First, Advent is NOT about preparing for Christmas! Advent is a season in which we cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light as we prepare for Christ to come again in glory. The word "Advent" comes from the Latin "Adventus", which in turn is the Latin translation of the Greek word "parousia", which in church language refers to the second coming of Christ. Until recently, the Book of Common Prayer directed the Collect referenced above to be prayed at EVERY service of the Church throughout Advent. The Collect itself is based on Romans 13: 11-12, which is an urgent appeal from the Apostle Paul to prepare for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Two thousand years later, that appeal is still as urgent!

In Advent we reflect on moving from darkness to light, and on preparing for the coming of the King. In our worship we reduce the number of candles we use in order to mark this progression from darkness to light. The candles lit during our Advent services are the two candles on the Altar, the Sanctuary Lamp (which reminds us of the abiding Presence of Christ in our midst), and the candles on the Advent wreath. As each Sunday goes by, one more candle is lit on the wreath, signifying the Light of Christ entering into our world. The ancient color used in the English Church for Advent was blue, and we have restored that color for our Advent services. Blue signifies the Kingship of Christ, and the dark blue of the priest's vestments also reminds us of the darkness right before the dawn.

It is traditional (but not mandatory) to fast during Advent, and so I am calling on all of us to fast from BUSYNESS. Slow down and spend every day in quiet reflection, even if it is only for a few minutes. If you have an Advent Wreath at home, light it during the evening meals. Read Matthew 1:18-2:23, Luke 1:1-2:52, John 1:1-34, and especially Psalm 62. Try to take the time to light at least one candle (in quiet and darkness) every evening, and let your thoughts move from the frenzy of modern life to the wonder of Jesus Christ. As you light candles, you may find this prayer helpful:

O gracious Light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.
May your advent be blessed!

Faithfully, your brother in Christ,
David+

Shop at 10,000 Villages & Raise Money for IHN!

Shop for unique gift items at Ten Thousand Villages on Sunday, December 4th, and a portion of your purchase will go to support IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network). 10,000 Villages is a nonprofit fair trade gift shop featuring handcrafted gift items, personal accessories and home décor from artisans in developing regions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. The shop is located at 2011 Madison Rd. in O'Bryonville, and the IHN event will be from 12-5 pm. Make sure you mention IHN when you make your purchase!

Stewardship Campaign Update

Thank you to everyone who attended our brunch and meeting on Sunday, Nov 13th, to discuss our finances and our 2012 'estimates of giving'. So far we have received 18 completed pledge cards for a total amount of \$87,540 pledged. We still have a few people that we haven't heard from, and pledge cards have been mailed or given to them. If you did NOT receive a pledge card but would like to contribute something (any amount is welcome), please contact Pieter Elmendorf, Nancy McCarthy or Father David.

Pieter Elmendorf, Finance Chair

Common Ministry News

For those of you who attended the meeting on Stewardship Sunday, I provided a recap of our most recent workshop at Procter Center on November 5th. Basically, we spent some time at that meeting discussing church size and how it impacts everything we do – from making decisions to welcoming new people to engaging in ministry. We also discussed church life cycles, and how all churches move through a cycle that includes birth, formation, stability, decline and, possibly, death. We were assured that death is not a necessary end to the life cycle. If a parish is motivated and willing to do some self assessment, we can re-direct the life cycle by one of three ways – redefinition (tweaks and adjustments), redevelopment (assess, change, revitalize), or rebirth (the old way dies so that a new, different way can emerge).

The final part of that day's program was a discussion on how to do a "Community Needs Assessment." The idea is that if we truly want to engage in effective ministry in our community, we should know what that community looks like – and not just act on assumptions. There are many churches, like ours, who have a community outside their doors that don't actually attend their worship services. Our team is currently meeting to decide how best to conduct that assessment, but ideas include reviewing census data, Hamilton County website data, talking with other churches, and interviewing community leaders. We hope to have a report on our findings in time for the annual meeting in January.

Our next workshop will be at Procter on January 14th, when we will be reviewing the results of the Community Needs project, and working on Vision and Mission statements and Congregational Values.

Lisa Elmendorf, Common Ministry team

Local Churches Offer Advent & Christmas Music

Dec. 3 – “A Chanticleer Christmas.” Ring in the holidays with this Grammy-winning vocal ensemble, Chanticleer, in a program of profound and joyous music, 8 p.m., Saint Peter in Chains Cathedral, Downtown.

Dec. 4 – Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols, Cathedral Bishop’s Choir and Cathedral organs, 3 p.m., Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Covington.

Dec. 10 – “A Candlelit Christmas with the Vocal Arts Ensemble.” Tunes of the season in a quiet, reflective atmosphere, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Saint Boniface Catholic Church, Northside.

Dec. 10-11 – “And the Glory of the Lord.” Cincinnati Boychoir, Christ Church Cathedral Chancel Choir, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, Vivaldi’s “Gloria” and Handel’s “Messiah”, 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 5 p.m. Sunday, Christ Church Cathedral, Downtown

Dec. 16 – “O Holy Night: An Evening of Holiday Song,” the Choir of Saint Peter in Chains Cathedral, 8 p.m., Saint Peter in Chains Cathedral, Downtown.

Dec. 21 – Christmas Carol Sing in the historic surroundings of Trinity Episcopal Church, 12:15 pm, 326 Madison Ave., Covington. A brass quintet joins organist John A. Deaver.

Christmas Eve Reception

We will continue our annual tradition of a reception immediately following the service on Christmas Eve. Please see the sign-up sheet on the hall bulletin board if you can help with cookies, appetizers, fruit trays, punch, etc. We’ll also need help to clean up afterwards. Thank you.

Christmas Services

The Christmas Services this year are as follows:

Saturday, December 24: Christmas Carols and Music (7:30 PM), Christmas Eve Mass (Rite II, 8:00PM)

Sunday, December 25: ONE SERVICE Christmas Day Mass (Rite I, 10:30 AM)

Christmas Flower Donations

During Christmas Season our parishioners have long enjoyed our tradition of adorning the altar with a colorful arrangement of Christmas Flowers. As the season is fast approaching, we are again asking our church family to contribute to our altar display. A contribution of \$25 will underwrite the cost of one flower. Contributors may take possession of their flower at the beginning of the season of Epiphany. Order forms may be found in Sunday’s Bulletin and may be returned by Sunday December 18.

Electronic Delivery of the Stone's Throw

In an effort to cut down on the printing of the Stone's Throw, we are making the following changes in our distribution routes, effective with the January Stone's Throw.

1) If you are a current member of St. Stephen's, and we have a "good" email address for you, you will receive a copy of the December Stone's Throw by email. Many of you will also receive the Stone's Throw by paper copy as well. If you have not already indicated that you want to receive the Stone's Throw by email only, you will continue to receive both the paper copy and the email version. You may always "opt in" to receiving the Stone's Throw by email only.

2) For our friends, former parishioners, and the churches that receive copies of the Stone's Throw by snail mail, we will deliver the January Stone's Throw to you by email only IF we have a "good" email address for you. You can always request to receive the Stone's Throw by mail by contacting us at office@ststephens-cinci.org

3) If you don't have an email address, don't worry, nothing will happen! You will still receive the Stone's Throw by snail mail.

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

December

<http://www.ststephens-cinci.org>
office@ststephens-cinci.org
 Father David B. Bailey
 310-0127 revdbb@aol.com
 Monica E. Neiderman, publications secretary
 937-474-2732 sewnsew313@yahoo.com

				1 10:30 Bible Study	2	3
4 2 Advent 8:00 H E I 10:30 HE II 11:30 Fellowship	5 8:00 PM Al Anon	6 7:00 Lexington Heights Civic Association	7 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	8 10:30 Bible Study	9	10
11 3 Advent 8:00 H E I 10:30 HE II 11:30 Fellowship Vestry meeting	12 8:00 PM Al Anon	13 5:30 Springfield Twp Trustees	14 12:00PM Serendipity 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	15 10:30 Bible Study	16	17
18 4 Advent 8:00 H E I 10:30 HE II 11:30 Fellowship	19 8:00 PM Al Anon	20	21 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	22 10:30 Bible Study	23	24 7:30 Carol Sing 8:00 Christmas Eve Mass
25 Christmas 10:30 HE II 11:30 Fellowship	26 8:00 PM Al Anon	27 3:30 Building & Grounds	28 6:30 PM Evening Prayer	29	30	31



Serving Our Lord at Saint Stephen's December 2011



ALTAR GUILD (Altar-Linens):

December 4	Joan DeLisse
December 11	Lisa Elmendorf
December 18	Bebe Hales
December 24	ALL

Lay Ministers

Lectors (L), Intercessors (I), Chalice Bearers (C)

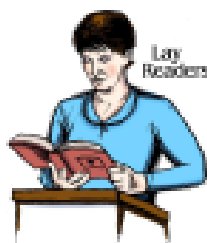
December 4 Molly Bailey, Pieter Elmendorf, Lisa Elmendorf

December 11 Don Welti, Vivian Templin, Molly Bailey

December 18 Pieter Elmendorf, Lisa Elmendorf, Don Welti

December 24 Vivian Templin, Molly Bailey, Pieter Elmendorf

L&I = Lector (first lesson) and Prayers of the People. Please check with Fr. David before the service for the form to be used for the prayers.



Fellowship Hour

December 4 Pieter & Lisa Elmendorf

December 11 Tom & Sharon Franklin

December 18 Don Welti & Nancy McCarthy

December 24 Reception - ALL

Greeters

December 4 Arlene Gahn

December 18 Joan DeLisse

November 20 Arlene Gahn

December 24 Joan DeLisse

Head Usher Tom Franklin

Reaching Fr. David

The best (and most effective) way to reach Fr. David is by calling his cell phone (310-0127). When Fr. David is out of town or otherwise unavailable, please call the Sr. Warden who will contact the priest on call. Please do not call Fr. David's home telephone number for pastoral care issues.

Anita and Michael Dohn, Missionaries in Health Ministries

August 2010 Mission E-mail

Web-site: <http://dohnfamily.org>

E-mail: DohnFamily@sams-usa.org

REMEMBER OUR
Missionaries



Takin' out the trash

News cast in mid-September, 2011

“You are listening to the BBC World Service. Amidst the continuing fighting in Tripoli, regular garbage collection has resumed this morning. Garbage trucks with attendants in uniform are following their regular routes.”

The worldview of the BBC may be a little bit different. As far as we could determine, no other international news service lead with that story (or even mentioned it). However, what better indication, perhaps, of a returning to normalcy in Tripoli, Libya, than the resumption of regular trash collection service?

There are some challenges living here (electric outages, general strikes, water shortages, crime, food and water borne disease, tropical diseases, mosquitos, corruption, etc.). However, our garbage collection has been excellent. We are in a middle-class neighborhood and Tuesday is our garbage day, with pickup almost always between 7:45 and 8:30 AM.

Several years ago when government action here had devastated the country's economy, we had months with no more than two hours of electric service a day, water service for an hour or so once or twice a week, empty store shelves, closed gas stations for lack of gasoline, the regional hospital used candles at night because there was no fuel for its electric generators ... it was a mess. But our trash was collected every Tuesday morning, usually between 7:45 and 8:30 AM! We were absolutely flabbergasted considering the general state of affairs.

This is all to say that it is generally recognized how important it is to take out the trash.

We met a Southern Baptist evangelist during our missionary preparation. He maintained that missionary service was more often adversely affected or devastated by hanging on to bad feelings, resentments, transgressions, frustrations, hurts and wounds than by anything else. Periodically you have to get rid of all that. Or as he said it, “You gotta stay 'fessed up!”

Whether formal or informal, reflection with a realistic appraisal and confession is a good idea. I suppose that we all got trash to take out.

Keep praying, Michael





Birthdays

Carina Spendel
Tim Scholz
Lee Irvine
Eric Sittner
Dorothy Boyd

December 5
December 6
December 14
December 18
December 31



Lee and Sudy Irvine

December 14

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Address Correction Requested