

December 3, 2019



THE MOUNTAIN

A Publication of The Episcopal Church in Vermont



Congregants gathered at St. James Episcopal Church in Arlington, Vermont for a Celebration of Ministry and Welcoming of a Priest in Partnership on November 22. Photo by Michael Wisniewski.

<http://diovermont.org>



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Publication Schedule

The Mountain is distributed twice monthly. The next two editions will publish on or around December 17 and January 3. Please submit content at least 48 hours in advance. If you have questions, would like to submit news or event, or have a change of email address, [contact us](#).

[Donate](#) | [Prayer Calendar](#) | [Diocesan Convention](#) | [General Convention](#) | [Rock Point](#)





A Wrinkle in Time: An Advent Devotion

By adwoa Lewis-Wilson

The following article is an excerpt from A Season of Faith, Beauty, and Hope, a collection of Advent devotions from the voices of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Brattleboro, Vermont. [Download the free eBook here](#). And be sure to check out the events on pages 10-X13 for Advent activities across the diocese.

Advent is an immensely evocative season in our Faith and for Time itself. On the one hand, it is our New Year – we open our hearts in the darkening season to the coming of the Light. In this hemisphere's harsh cold, we await a gentle infant to warm our hearts. God comes and dwells on earth, a hopeful beginning. On the other hand, it is also an awe-full end. God will come again to the earth and we await that second unequivocal Advent – the glorious end of a long-arc that started from before time began, promising to bring into submission all 'powers' of darkness and to set us free. In Advent we sit stretched between the poles of a dual hope.

But to say this as a people of sacrament – people who re-member Christ by each practice of prayer, fellowship, service, or worship – we must recognize that Advent is not just the hope but the *actual manifestation* of Christ's first coming as well as the actual restoration of all in the second coming of the Risen One, albeit under a veil. "Faith is the substance of the thing it hopes for," says St. Paul.

Of course, even to say this pushes us further along an edge, does it not? For God's Advent on earth is continuous. God breathed a long sigh and spoke the contours of divinity into the form of Creation. God breathed another sigh into formed dust, and humanity took the divine image in a particular way. As God has breathed into prophets, poets, wombs, and martyrs, God has continually come to dwell among us. And God continually will, world without end.

Stretched between 'first' and 'consummate' coming, Advent is nothing less than the collapse of eternity into the present moment and our consent to be watchful for the truth that the Divine coming is constant in every moment

of life, or Life simply would not Be. Laurence Hull Stookey gives a beautiful analogy of this concept in the image of a woven tapestry. What we see hanging on the wall is indeed a masterpiece. But, if we are clever enough to turn it over, we see the myriad threads, invisible on the front, where the thread touched the cloth in order to make the image that we actually see. As we settle into Advent awaiting – no, let us say 'expecting' for this latter has potential energy that itself participates in the

gestation of what is to come – may we take the time not only to be watchful for the patterns in the tapestry's image but also to turn it over. Turn ourselves over in order to notice, reverence, and give thanks for the countless unseen strands that God has woven on the underside of our own lives, our collective history, and our seasons of darkness. May this Season scandalize us awake to the One who was, AND IS, and is to come. Emmanuel.

Advent Resources Online

As a reminder, new and updated Advent resources for congregations, dioceses, and communities of faith are [available online here](#).

- Digital Invitation Kit for Advent
- Journeying the Way of Love Advent Curriculum & Calendar
- AdventWord
- Sermons for Advent and Christmas
- Bulletin Inserts
- Advent Reflections
- Christmas Eve Programs



Spiritual Reflection: What's the Good News?

By the Rev. John Morris

Today's spiritual reflection is a transcript of a sermon preached by the Rev. John Morris at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in St. Johnsbury on November 17, 2019. The texts for that day, which are referenced in the sermon, were [Malachi 4:1-2a](#) and [Luke 21:5-19](#).

Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky was an amazing person. Reared in the 19th century in a Jewish family in Lithuania, he ended up as an Episcopal priest in the United States and then a Bible translator in China. The page about him in [A Great Cloud of Witnesses](#), our Church's commemorations of significant figures in the history of The Episcopal Church, is well worth reading.

The work that Diane Montague, currently serving as Senior Warden here at St. Andrew's Church, did from 1971 to 2001 in Mexico is also worth noting. She and her co-workers from Wycliffe Bible Translators translated the New Testament into three indigenous languages.

[A Great Cloud of Witnesses](#) also mentions a remarkable group of people who dedicated their lives to translating the Bible into the language of various peoples. Many missionaries' work of translation is documented, as well as the translation work done by people like John Wyclif and Martin Luther. Related to this work of Bible translation is the work of Thomas Gallaudet and Henry Syles who worked with congregations of deaf people to preach the Good News in their language, sign language.

Note: there is no denying that sometimes the work of missionaries and Bible translators was intertwined with imperialist and colonialist endeavors. However, that tragic reality is for another sermon.

Making the Good News more accessible to people in their own language is important, because it enables them to, in

the words of today's Collect, "hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Holy Scripture."

We'll get to the Good News in today's texts in a few minutes, but first it is worth referring to [a cover article that appeared in the September 25 issue of Seven Days](#). The very extensive article was entitled "Good News?" and reported on how "evangelicals are planting dozens of churches in the rocky soil of Vermont."

The reporter, Chelsea Edgar, traveled throughout the state and interviewed many people—clergy and laity—who are involved in these church plants. She shows that these evangelical churches are reaching many people who are turned off by the mainline churches. Millennials and GenZ are finding their way to these church plants, especially if they are looking for "an organizing principle in their often chaotic lives." The results are impressive. But the article raises several important questions and it is noteworthy that *Seven Days* adds a question mark to the headline: "Good News?"

Making the Good News more accessible to people in their own language is important, because it enables them to, in the words of today's Collect, "hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest Holy Scripture."

Is it Good News for people who want to read the Bible seriously, but not literally? I submit that a Fundamentalist approach to the Bible is not especially Good News for people who want to read Scripture with an open mind and use the resources of historical, literary, and linguistic studies.

For example, in the new movie *Harriet*, about the amazing and heroic life of Harriet Tubman, an early scene shows a gathering of enslaved people on a plantation in Maryland. An African American preacher is standing on the steps of the porch, with the plantation owner, his wife, and his son seated with them. They listen as the preacher uses *Colossians 3:22* as his sermon text: "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything..." This is not Good News for someone like Harriet, who wants to be liberated from slavery.

Fortunately, we find out that the preacher is actually deeply involved in the Underground Railroad and hides runaway slaves in this church while they wait to continue further north to freedom. The literal text of *Colossians* is not Good News. But Harriet recognizes that there is a larger message in Scripture, and God calls her to live out that larger message. She helps at least 70 enslaved people es-

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FEATURES (CONTINUED)

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cape over many years. Her nickname, Moses, shows that she had “inwardly digested” the Good News of liberation which is at the heart of Scripture.

This story is an example of the comment made by William Sloan Coffin, Jr. several years ago: “Too many Christians use the Bible the same way a drunk uses a lamppost—for support, but not for illumination.”

Is it Good News for women in this evangelical movement who are barred from leadership roles in evangelical congregations? All of the pastors interviewed for the Seven Days article are men. I don’t have any inherent bias against men serving in leadership roles—I see one every time I look in the mirror!—but I don’t think it is Good News to tell women that they cannot serve in leadership roles.

Is it Good News for members of the LGBTQ+ community to hear that God does NOT love them? The reporter writes, “I identify as queer, and being around a bunch of happy, nice Christians whose belief system precludes me from entering their idea of heaven made for some existentially bizarre moments.” Understandably, it doesn’t sound like that reporter heard Good News.

Is it Good News for Jews, Buddhists, and other non-Christians to be told that they are going to Hell? My good friend, Michael Caldwell, former pastor of the East Corinth Congregational Church, raises this question in a letter to the Editor of Seven Days about the article on church planting. He writes, “How can we stomach an approach to our Jewish and Buddhist neighbors that classifies them as ‘unsaved’ and implicitly condemns them to hell unless they mouth a contrived formula for salvation.” I especially appreciate Michael’s verb in this letter—stomach—because it is an echo of today’s Collect about inwardly digesting Holy Scripture. But when the Bible is used for exclusion, and even hatred, isn’t it quite indigestible?

Is it Good News for people who want to wrestle with the very complex and tragic issues related to abortion? Is it sufficient to just quote Psalm 139 and think that the issue is settled? What about the 13-year old girl who has been raped by her stepfather and is now pregnant? Is Psalm 139 going to be Good News for that young girl?

Enough about the article. I encourage you to [read it](#). In my comments here, I do not want to be arrogant and self-righteous about our evangelical siblings, but I think the aforementioned questions are appropriate.

Those of us in mainline denominations certainly have many questions about our churches. For example, why do

many of the people quoted in the Seven Days article find our congregations “lifeless” and “joyless?” Why do people in younger generations find very little in our congregations that might attract them? Why do some people think that all too often in our congregations there is more time and energy put into potluck suppers instead of helping people inwardly digest Holy Scripture? What is the Good News for us in today’s texts?

Why do some people think that all too often in our congregations there is more time and energy put into potluck suppers instead of helping people inwardly digest Holy Scripture?

We join the prophet Malachi in looking for ["the sun of righteousness"](#) to arise. As so beautifully stated in Hymn #7 in our hymnal, we look for “Christ whose glory fills the skies... to triumph o'er the shades of night...” We look with hope for that to happen, trusting in the God who is the source of all healing—the healing of our bodies, the healing of our broken spirits, and healing of the divisions in our society and our church. That hope is genuine, and that is Good News.

Jesus reassures us that, even in apocalyptic times, we do not need to be terrified or anxious or afraid. Of course, we have those feelings. They are unavoidable in these times, but they are not the final reality. Even when things and values we cherish are under attack, we can endure. In the first century, the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. The symbol of God’s presence on earth and in history was gone. Did that mean God was absent? [Jesus says no; we will be given wisdom and strength to persevere, even in dark times.](#)

In the United States, we are seeing serious attacks on our democratic institutions by the very people who are supposed to be protecting us and our institutions. This week, we saw State Department diplomats and ambassadors who work tirelessly in foreign countries on our behalf. Yet many of these highly capable people are being smeared and removed from their positions. That is tragic. But by the grace of God and by the wisdom of some of our leaders, we can make things better. That is encouraging.

One of my all-time favorite cartoons shows a herd of buffalo out on the prairie. The herd stands together, but one lone buffalo is off to the side. A buffalo in the herd asks, “What’s wrong with him?” Another buffalo replies, “He just heard a discouraging word.”

“Oh give me a home, where the buffalo roam, and the deer

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and the antelope play, where seldom is heard a discouraging word and the skies are not cloudy all day."

There are many dark clouds in our country these days and lots of discouragement. The Good News is that those are not the final realities.

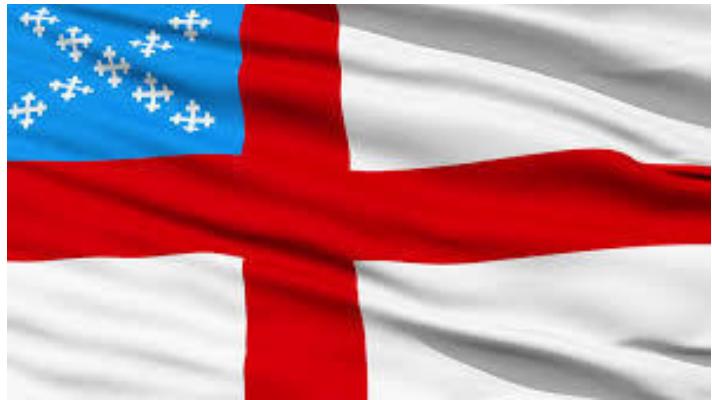
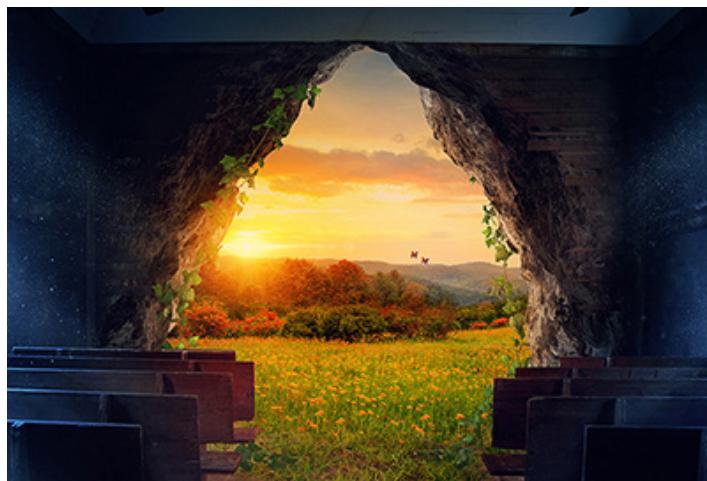
Holy Scripture can be tremendously valuable in this time. It can be, as Hymn #627 says, a "lamp of our feet... living water to drink...bread for our souls...our anchor and stay....and a pillar of fire in our dark time." So, I commend Holy Scripture to you. May you "hear, read, mark, and inwardly digest" the Good News today and always.

A final story: I read it many years ago and can't quite remember all the details, but it has to do with a Bible translator who was working, as I recall, in a tribe near the Arctic. The text under consideration said something like "the apostles returned joyfully," but the translator could not find one single word comparable to "joyfully" to translate into the local language. So, they ended up with a translation that said "the apostles returned wagging their tails!"

May you leave this Eucharist wagging your tails and be filled with the Good News so you can go forth to share that Good News any way you can.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. John Morris been a priest in the Diocese of Vermont since 1971. He earned his living for many years as a public school teacher while serving St. Mary's in the Mountains in Wilmington. He retired from teaching in 1999 and then served St. Luke's Church in Chester as Interim Rector for two years before becoming Rector of St. Martin's Church in Fairlee in 2002. He retired from St. Martin's in 2013. Currently, the Rev. Morris presides and preaches at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in St. Johnsbury once a month, as well as St. Peter's Episcopal church in Lyndonville twice a month.



Updates from the Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs

Join Episcopal Migration Ministries on December 12, 4-5:30pm ET, for an overview and introduction to *Supporting Asylum Seekers: A Toolkit for Congregations*. Presenters and practitioners will speak to group discernment, ministry models, and important considerations when engaging in ministry with asylum seekers. Registration is required. [Read More](#)

Episcopal Migration Ministries is also offering a seven-lesson Epiphany curriculum for individuals and congregations. [Read More](#)

Forward Movement, along with partners from The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, announces the Good Book Club, a churchwide Bible reading initiative. The Good Book Club will focus on the Gospel of John, with participants reading a section of scripture each day during the Epiphany season, starting on January 6, 2020. [Read More](#)

The Episcopal Diocese of Taiwan has received notification that Bishop-Elect Lennon Yuan-Rung Chang has received the required majority of consents in the canonical consent process detailed in Canon III.11.3. [Read More](#)

Traveling the Way of Love, Episode 7: Learn, the final installment of the first season of the Way of Love video series from The Episcopal Church Office of Communication, premieres December 3, 3:00pm EDT on The Episcopal Church website and on The Episcopal Church Facebook page. [Read More](#)

The venue for the 2020 Episcopal Youth Event has been changed to the University of Maryland, College Park. The location remains within the Diocese of Washington and the dates, July 7-11, 2020, are unchanged. [Read More](#)



GIVING TUESDAY

Things That Make You Say, "Alleluia!"

Since the launch of this year's AlleluiaFund appeal this past Easter, we are now just \$2,000 shy of our \$40,000 goal! This #GivingTuesday, consider making an online contribution to help fund "Things That Make You Say, Alleluia!" Every dollar goes directly to ministries agreed upon at the Diocesan Convention. This year's beneficiaries include Rock Point Commons, Rock Point Camp, and ministries related to the priorities set by our Presiding Bishop and General Convention, which include reconciliation, evangelism, and creation care.

[Make a Donation](#)

diovermont.org/alleluiafund



Rock Point School Offers #GivingTuesday Matching Funds

On December 3, Rock Point School is excited to participate in Giving Tuesday. This global day of giving invites individuals to celebrate the holiday season by giving back and creating change in their communities and their world.

At Rock Point School, students change their lives. A parent of an alumni, says this about her son's experience:

I chose to enroll my son at Rock Point because he had tried everything that was available at public school. This place was a miracle for my son. I saw him smile for the first time in years after he had been here just a few weeks.

At Rock Point, my son was better able to handle his social anxiety, he was better able to advocate for himself. He could tackle educational things that were anxiety provoking for him. He did that by partnering with teachers and taking it step by step. They challenged him just enough to keep him moving forward and not so much that he would retreat back to his room. He made friends here and he still has those friends after graduation, which is a big deal.

I spent years pushing for services for him [in public school]. Nothing worked, until Rock Point. It was a miracle; I got my son back."

Your donation helps our students transform their lives. They learn skills that can be used long after they graduate and they make friendships that nourish them beyond high school.

Any donation you give to Rock Point School between now and December 4th will be matched by a generous donor in honor of Giving Tuesday! Thank you for considering us in your holiday giving. [Donate Now](#)



Learning from Hurricane Experiences, Getting Prepared

The Episcopal Farmworker Ministry, a partner of [Episcopal Relief & Development](#), works with migrant and seasonal farmworkers, a group disproportionately affected by disasters. The ministry supported farmworkers with food, water and supplies after Hurricane Dorian this year, Hurricane Florence last year, and Hurricane Matthew in 2016. They recently held a focus group to learn from those who had received assistance in order to refine their trainings and shift the focus of their advocacy work. [Read More](#)

ARE YOU PREPARED? November began with severe storms that caused flooding, downed trees and power lines, and extensive property damage throughout Vermont. To provide structure and process for restoration following disasters, the Diocese maintains a disaster preparedness plan, which can be found at <https://dovermont.org/disaster-preparedness/> and includes contact information for the Diocesan Disaster Preparedness Team.

THE EPISCOPAL ASSET MAP plays an essential role in disaster preparedness by listing the resources local churches can provide in times of need. Make sure your church's listing is current, or propose changes. [Visit the Asset Map.](#)

“Tis the Season for Cybersecurity

With the holidays come various opportunities for cyber-scrooges to exploit. While users prepare for the festivities, cybercriminals look for opportunities to scam holiday shoppers with various tricks. [Read this article by cybersecurity company McAfee](#) for a better understanding of online scams of Christmas past, present, and future.



Diocesan Council Reports Strong Progress in Final Meeting of 2019; Gears up for 2020 Restart

By the Rev. Mark Preece, reporter

The scheduled gathering of Diocesan Council on Thursday, October 17 was a virtual meeting, held via Zoom. It was Bishop Shannon's first Council meeting as Bishop of Vermont, and was Council's last meeting of 2019. The meeting mostly focused on preparing for the 187th Diocesan Convention, which took place nine days later. The proceedings began and concluded in prayer.

Treasurer Gerry Davis presented his report, which was largely positive. Revenues and expenditures are in balance and on pace for the budget year. The FY2020 budget resolution to be presented to Convention proposed a budget that is level with this year's. It came in at \$1,013,505, with the same four-tiered contribution system for congregations.

The Church Pension Group's Medical Trust announced a 7% health insurance premium increase. (By the time of this article's publication, Financial Administrator Rich Sangu had sent information about the open enrollment period to congregations.)

Council learned during this meeting that a plan was coming together to partner with Vanco, an eGiving software developer and payment processor, to provide a mechanism for parishes, the diocese, and others to accept electronic payments. The fee would be \$5 per month for organizations opting to use the system, plus a transaction fee of 2.75% (for gifts via credit cards) or 1% (for bank transfers). The eGiving program has now launched, and enrollment information has been made available to parishes and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/episcopalVT-eGiving>

Council voted to accept the Treasurer's report, and to approve the diocesan health plan options, which are unchanged from 2019.

Reports from Council's standing priority teams were given, with these updates:

Green Mountain Witness would like to talk about Evangelism with each individual parish. Please spread the word, and be in touch with the Rev. Titus Presler or another member of the team to set something up. More information is available here: <https://diovermont.org/next-step-green-mountain-witness-connecting-congregations/>

Facilitators of the **Racial Reconciliation & Racial Healing Network** will meet with Bishop Shannon to discuss their vision and plans going forward. Additionally, as part of the diocese's commitment to racial reconciliation and racial healing, Bishop Shannon stated her intention to attend the NAACP dinner in Brattleboro on November 16. A photo recap of the even is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/episcopalVT-NAACP>

Material from the **Immigration & Refugees** priority group's recent presentation is available on the diocesan website, here: <https://diovermont.org/2019/08/20/immigrants-refugees/>

The **Rock Point Commons** team reported that new Board President Shawn Bryan is going a great job. The Rev. Paul Habersang spoke of his excitement as he begins his tenure as Executive Director of Rock Point. (He will be missed on Council!)

The **Standing Committee** will hold a meeting in early December to debrief about the transition process now happily concluded. Representation from Council may be invited.

Love God, Love Neighbor: Advocacy in Action, an advocacy training event hosted by the church's Office of Government Relations and Episcopal Migration Ministries in Washington, DC, will be attended by at least one representative of the diocese of Vermont.

The next Council meeting will be an annual retreat and planning session on January 16-17, 2020, at Rock Point. The 2020 meeting schedule will be published following that gathering.

The next Diocesan Council meeting will be an annual retreat and planning session on January 16-17, 2020, at Rock Point.

EVENTS: ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

PLATTSBURGH STATE GOSPEL CHOIR

SOULFUL CHRISTMAS

MOTOWN CHRISTMAS

WITH AFRICAN UNITY AND DANCE CORPS
FEATURED SINGER DR. LEARIE NURSE



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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 AT 4PM

E. GLENN GILTZ AUDITORIUM, HAWKINS HALL

55 BEEKMAN STREET, PLATTSBURGH, NY



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Door Tickets Students \$10 / General \$20 • tickets.plattsburgh.edu

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from the Student Association through the Campus Arts Council.





REGISTER NOW for Seeing with the Heart: An Advent Retreat at Rock Point, December 13-14

BURLINGTON, VT - Join us for an evening and a day of silent contemplation interspersed with meditations led by Bob Thiefels. The theme for this year's Advent Retreat is *Seeing with the Heart*. The event will commence from Friday, December 13 at 4:00 p.m. until Saturday, December 14 at 4:00 pm.

*It is only with the heart that one can see rightly
What is essential is invisible to the eye*

The retreat facilitator, Robert Thiefels, will explore the Advent themes of metanoia (going beyond the heart mind into the larger heart mind); receptivity (Let what you have said be done to me, Luke 1:38), and reflection (...Pondered them in her heart, Luke 2:19) grounded in a heart practice. The meditations will be framed with centering prayer, sacred dance and chant, worship and free time. Participants will be drawing on work by Cynthia Bourgeault and Gregg Braden's *How to Harmonize Heart and Brain*.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

- **Friday.** Register, supper, first meditation, Great Silence begins.
- **Saturday AM.** Morning prayer, breakfast, second meditation, free time
- **Saturday PM.** Lunch, third meditation, free time, worship (including fourth meditation)

ABOUT ROBERT THIEFELS

Robert Thiefels holds an MSW from the University of Michigan School of Social Work and an MA/CAS in Theology from St. Michael's College in Colchester, VT. He was an Adjunct Professor in Religious Studies and the Graduate Theology program at St. Michael's. He has been involved with the Wisdom School at Rock Point for the past two years.

REGISTRATION

- The retreat cost is \$100 for Commuters; \$145 for a shared room; \$180 for a single.
- Register with Jackie Arbuckle (JackieinVT@gmail.com). A non-refundable deposit of \$50 must accompany registration.

[Click here to download the flyer.](#)

Now Underway: Book Study, Discussion for Advent & Epiphany

ESSEX JUNCTION, VT - Jesus was born over 2,000 years ago. How might he be reborn in our hearts today? What might the future of Christian faith be along with the Church that has nourished his message for two millennia? Are you longing for a deeper, more engaged Christmas season? St. James, Essex Junction is exploring these topics in a multi-week study and discussion of *The Rebirthing of God* by John Philip Newell on Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings. [Read More](#)

St. Thomas & Grace Church to Host Holiday Fair, December 7

BRANDON, VT - St. Thomas & Grace Episcopal Church (corner of Route 7 and Prospect Street) is holding a Holiday Fair on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Additionally, the church will be collecting new or gently used mittens that will be distributed to schools in the Otter Valley Unified Union School District for this winter. [Read More](#)

St. Andrew's Colchester Offers 'Blue Christmas,' December 11

COLCHESTER, VT - Is the Christmas Season a time when you feel sad, lonely, or depressed? We invite you to join us at this service to acknowledge these feelings and share in a time of reflection on the pain, sadness, or loneliness you may feel. We pray that you will find hope and comfort in knowing that you are not alone. All are welcome to *Loss, Healing, and Hope: A Blue Christmas Service* on Wednesday, December 11 at 7:00 PM at St. Andrew's Church, 1063 Prim Rd., Colchester, VT.

St. Michael's Brattleboro: Very Special Lessons & Carols, Dec. 15

BRATTLEBORO, VT - A very special Lessons & Carols is coming to St. Michael's (16 Bradley Ave., Brattleboro) on Sunday, Dec. 15 at 4:00 p.m. The mystery, beauty, and deep joy that the Advent season brings is often distilled into great clarity each year as we gather to celebrate the liturgy known as Lessons & Carols. This year, our choir is journeying even more fully into the radiant season, as we present and share with you the "Great O Antiphons" of Advent. These 7 ancient chants date back to the 6th century and were such an important part of the early Christian community's experience that it was said that during Advent, one "kept the Great O" in preparation for the day of the incarnation. [Read More](#)

EVENTS: ADVENT/CHRISTMAS (CONTINUED)

Anam Cara Sojourners to Host Winter Solstice & Simple Supper, December 21

ST. ALBANS, VT - Join Anam Cara Sojourners and Holy Hikes-VT for a celebration of the Winter Solstice on Saturday, December 21 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Wally and Natalie Good's house, 12 Lakemount Dr., St. Albans, VT. This event replaces the usual Holy Hike for the month of December. We'll meet up at the Good's house, take a short walk to view the setting sun on the shortest day of the year, and then gather in front of a fire for a simple supper and Celtic-themed music. What better way to welcome the return of the sun as we also await the coming of the Savior? For more information and to RSVP, contact Kim Hardy at revkimhardy@gmail.com.

St. Michael's Brattleboro Announces New Year's Concerts: Bach Cello Suites, Dec. 31 & Jan. 1

NEW YEAR'S CONCERTS: BACH CELLO SUITES

St. Michael's Episcopal Church
16 Bradley Ave, Brattleboro
December 31 @ 7:30 p.m. & January 1 @ 3:00 p.m.

BRATTLEBORO, VT - "What do YOU do on New Year's Eve and Day? How about celebrating by hearing a magnificent cellist play some of the most remarkable music ever penned? In the magical space of our sanctuary? On New Year's Eve, December 31 at 7:30 pm, and on New Year's Day, January 1 at 3 pm, you can reflect on the passing of this Old and welcome the potential of the New with one of the greatest artistic gifts to humanity: the Bach Cello Suites.

It is with great excitement and gratitude, that we welcome cellist Paul Cohen, a friend and colleague, and one of the most beautiful players I have had the privilege of hearing. Paul will play three of the suites on New Year's Eve and another three on New Year's Day. You may attend one program or both; but I guarantee you, if you come for the first one, you'll be back for the next! Paul's playing is lustrous, communicative, and emotionally rich; his stage presence is gracious; and I know that these will be programs to remember!" - Susan Dedell, Director of Music

For a complete listing of St. Michael's Advent activities, [click here](#).

St. Mary's Wilmington Hosts Fourth Annual Red Door Carol Sing Supporting Friends of the Pettee Memorial Library, December 14

Once again, St. Mary's in the Mountains invites one and all to our Annual Red Door Community Carol Sing. Join the entire community on the afternoon of December 14, to celebrate the Season, singing traditional carols and seasonal favorites, and enjoying musical performances by Deerfield Valley musicians, tasty treats, and surprises.

The Red Doors on East Main Street will open at 3:15 p.m., with hot cider and snacks available. Beginning at 3:30, guests will be entertained by singers and musical ensembles, offering seasonal classical, choral, and even more modern music, in a wide variety of styles. Then, starting at 4:00 p.m., the audience is invited to join in singing Christmas Carols and seasonal songs, accompanied on piano, guitar, and St. Mary's beautiful pipe organ. Among the performers and accompanists will be Valley Voices (an eight -voice women's chorus led by Sue Maddern), clarinetist Kathleen Loomis-Ward, violinist Bekka Eowind, pianist Barbara Lipstadt, organist John Terauds, Eithne and Mike Eldred, Evon Mack, Holly & Joe Fortner, and others. Lyric books will be available for all, and interspersed with the sing-along will be performances of seasonal music by singers and instrumentalists.

This is the Fourth Red Door Carol Sing, and the 14th in St. Mary's series of Red Door Concerts, each of which has raised money for local organizations that help our friends and neighbors. This year, all donations to the Carol Sing will support the Friends of Pettee Memorial Library. The Library – which traces its ancestry back to 1796 – houses 16,000 materials in its collection, has over 2800 active users, and provides the community an invaluable resource for reading, computer usage, and meetings of local groups.

Admission is by free will donation, with all proceeds going to Friends of Pettee Library. Hot drinks, gingerbread, cookies and other treats will be available.

The event is on December 14 at the Red Doors at 13 E. Main Street, in Wilmington. Doors open at 3:15 p.m., music starts at 3:30 p.m., with the singalong beginning at 4:00 p.m. Plan to arrive early so you do not miss any of the festivities, and have a chance to taste the snacks.

For more information, please visit the St. Mary's website, smmvvt.org/red-door-concerts, or the St. Mary's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/StMarysVT/>

Each Red Door Concert has raised money for local organizations that help our friends and neighbors.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL
CHURCH PRESENTS

THURSDAY NOON ADVENT CONCERT SERIES

Dec. 5th- George Matthew Jr., Organist
Playing works of Buxtehude, Demessieux, Karg-Elert,
Otto Malling and Fridthjof Anderssen
Dec. 12th- The Addison String Quartet
Directed by Emily Sunderman, featuring the premier
of a new composition, Lux Aeterna, by Middlebury's
own Jorge Martin, plus Mozart's String Quartet K421
in D minor.
Dec. 19th- Jack DesBois, Bass
In a program of solos from Handel's Messiah
and other Christmas works

12:15pm-1pm
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
3 Main St. on the Green
Free to the Public!



Festival of Santa Lucia Concert



Friday, December 13th at 7:30 pm
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
3 Main St Middlebury, VT

Directed by Rostan Swenson, featuring the youth of St. Stephen's in
the roles of Lucia and her attendants, and the members of the
Nordic Chorus of Londonderry, VT



VT Racial Justice Alliance Co-sponsors '1619: Arrival of the First Africans' Traveling Exhibit, December 6-15

By the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance

BURLINGTON, VT - [The Vermont Racial Justice Alliance](#) and [Fletcher Free Library](#) will be presenting the [1619: Arrival of the First Africans Traveling Exhibit](#) from the Hampton History Museum (VA). Drawing on the latest research, this exhibit tells the story of the Africans' home in Angola, how they came to be enslaved aboard a Spanish slave ship San Juan Bautista, the terrible 10,000 nautical mile voyage that brought them to Virginia, and their lives on the farms and plantations in the new colony.

This exhibit follows the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance sponsored [First African Landing Vermont Commemoration](#) (August 24, 2019) and is designed to honor the spirit of the [400 Year African American History Commission](#) - to recognize and highlight the resilience and contributions of African-Americans since 1619; acknowledge the impact that slavery and laws that enforced racial discrimination [have] on the United States; and educate the public about the arrival of Africans to the [English colonial] United States and the contributions of African-Americans to the United States.

The exhibit will open at Fletcher Free Library on December 6th at 1:00 PM with a community reception and remain on display until a closing community commemorative ceremony on December 15th at 5:00 PM. Read the [press release here](#).

Details on how you can sponsor or support the event can be found [here](#).

Stone Church Center Presents...

To follow are a few upcoming events sponsored by our friends at Stone Church Center:

Rushad Eggleston, cello, vocals, and tomfoolery

7:30 p.m., Friday, Dec 6
The Chapel, Bellows Falls, VT

Eugene Friesen says, "Rushad Eggleston is a vibrantly creative original solo artist who uses cello, language and fun to mesmerize". Rushad Eggleston plays fluffy rainbow unicorn metal from a magic green dimension whose mystic tongues growl the delapitude of the future across speedy spectrums of the wildest astral cello landscapes with oceans of glee, skies full of bats and forests full of strange melody monsters: does it even exist? Rusharguanox is a fierce maverick of nonsense magic and potatoes. [Tickets](#)

Down in Yon Forest Elizabeth Rogers and Eugene Friesen

7:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 7
The Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew Greenfield, MA

This CD-release concert features Vermont-based singer/songwriter Elizabeth Rogers and cellist Eugene Friesen. The duo brings their soulful collaboration to a repertoire of Celtic-infused holiday songs and instrumentals from their new recording "Down in Yon Forest." The combination of Rogers' voice - aptly described as "pure silver" - and Friesen's innovative cello creates music that is at once mesmerizing and heart-opening. PLEASE NOTE: This concert is in Greenfield, MA at The Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew, 8 Church St. on the corner of Church and Federal streets. There is parking behind the church off Church St. [Tickets](#)

Fear of Singing Breakthrough Workshop

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 8
Currier Hall, Bellows Falls, VT

If you've wanted to sing in a chorus, wished you could sing along with friends, wanted to feel more comfortable singing the Happy Birthday song, or even just get more out of singing by yourself, this full-day workshop is the perfect first step! [Info/Register](#)

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

Engaging the Enneagram as Wisdom Practice with Jeanine Siler Jones, March 12-15, 2020

Engaging the Enneagram as Wisdom Practice with Jeanine Siler Jones, March 12 - 15, 2020
Rock Point Center | Burlington, Vermont

BURLINGTON, VT - Join us for a practical engagement of the Wisdom lineage through the lens of the Enneagram. How can this map illuminate our habitual patterns so that we might soften our identification? How might it guide us in tracking all three centers of knowing so that we bring more of ourselves into Presence? How might we surrender more fully our attachments and habits as we shift the quality of our attention? [Read More](#)



Journeying with God: A Holiday Retreat on Lake Como, Italy, October 11-16, 2020

LAKE COMO, ITALY - *Journeying with God*, a guided holiday retreat at Church of the Ascension on Lake Caomo, Italy, will take place October 11-16 and is now accepting registrations. The lakeside church serves a large community of summer visitors and a small community of full-time residents and holiday home-owners. Although part of the Church of England, Church of the Ascension attracts attendees from all over the world. The priest and retreat leader, the Rev. Roger Williams, is from Australia. [Read More](#)

ROCK POINT INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY WISDOM PRACTICE CIRCLE

Semi-monthly Meetings
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. First Thursdays
5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Fourth Mondays
Except when otherwise noted.

Rock Point Center
20 Rock Point Rd., Burlington, VT

Next Meeting:
Thursday, December 5 @ 5:30 p.m.



Rock Point Intentional Community Monthly Eucharist

Eucharist takes place on 2nd Fridays at noon except in summer and when otherwise noted.

Located in the Chapel of St. Michael & All Angels at Rock Point Center
20 Rock Point Road, Burlington

Next Eucharist:
Friday, December 13 @ noon



CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

For additional details, visit the [Diocesan Calendar](#).

The first Wednesday of every other month at 6:15 p.m., *Connections for Change* dinner/discussion for anyone concerned about or struggling with substance use disorder. Church of the Good Shepherd, 39 Washington St., Barre. [Read More](#)

Every third Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., Celtic Evensong at St. Mark's, 44 2nd St, Newport. [Read More](#)

December 3 at 10:00 a.m. *The Rebirthing of God* book study, Pt. 3 Reconnecting With The Light. [Read More](#)

December 3 VRJA event: Being a Muslim in America. [Read More](#)

December 5 from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. free Advent/Christmas concert at St. Stephen's, 3 Main St., Middlebury, feat. George Matthew Jr., organist. [Read More](#)

December 5 at 7:00 p.m. *The Rebirthing of God* book study, Pt. 3 Reconnecting With The Light. [Read More](#)

December 6 at 7:30 p.m. Stone Church Center presents Rushad Eggleston in Bellows Falls. [Read More](#)

December 6-15 Traveling exhibit, *1619: Arrival of the First Africans* at the Fletcher Free Library, Burlington. [Read More](#)

December 7 from 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Safe Church Training at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. [Read More](#)

December 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. St. Thomas & Grace Holiday Fair in Brandon. [Read More](#)

December 7 at 7:30 p.m. Stone Church Center presents Elizabeth Rogers & Eugene Friesen in Greenfield, MA. [Read More](#)

December 8: Justice for All film viewing: The Hate You Give. [Read More](#)

December 8 Stone Church Center presents Fear of Singing Breakthrough Workshop in Bellows Falls. [Read More](#)

December 8 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. SUNY Plattsburg Gospel Choir presents A Mowtown Christmas. [Read More](#)

December 8 at 8:00 p.m. Chavez Forum Webinar: Sen. John Kerry's "Winter Soldier Testimony" and Military Veterans' Wellbeing. [Read More](#)

December 10 at 10:00 a.m. *The Rebirthing of God* book study, Pt. 4 Reconnecting With The Journey. [Read More](#)

December 11 at 7:00 p.m. Loss, Healing & Hope: A Blue Christmas Service at St. Andrew's, Colchester. [Read More](#)

December 12 from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. free concert at St. Stephen's, 3 Main St., Middlebury, feat. the Addison String Quartet. [Read More](#)

December 12 at 7:00 p.m. *The Rebirthing of God* book study, Pt. 4 Reconnecting With The Journey. [Read More](#)

December 13 at 7:30 p.m., a celebration of the Festival of Santa Lucia at St. Stephen's, 3 Main St., Middlebury, directed by Rostan Swenson, feat. the youth of St. Stephen's and members of the Nordic Chorus of Londonderry. [Read More](#)

December 13-14 Rock Point Advent Retreat. [Read More](#)

December 14 at 3:15 p.m. Red Door Carol Sing at St. Mary's in Wilmington. [Read More](#)

December 15 at 4:00 p.m. *A Very Special Lessons & Carols* at St. Micheal's, Brattleboro. [Read More](#)

December 15 at 8:00 p.m. Chavez Forum Webinar: Peter Singer's "Animal Liberation" and Protecting Animals' Interests. [Read More](#)

December 19 from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. free concert at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church 3 Main St., Middlebury, VT feat. Jack DesBois, basso. [Read More](#)

December 21 Winter Solstice & Simple Supper event hosted by Anam Cara Sojourners & Holy Hikes-VT in St. Albans. [Read More](#)

December 31 at 7:30 p.m. New Year's Concert, Bach Cello Suites at St. Michael's, Brattleboro. [Read More](#)

January 1 at 3:00 p.m. New Year's Concert, Bach Cello Suites at St. Michael's, Brattleboro. [Read More](#)



BISHOP SHANNON'S VISITATION SCHEDULE

The Bishop's visitation schedule is subject to change. Visit the [Bishop's Page](#) for the latest updates.

December 15 - St. John the Baptist, Hardwick

January 12 - St. Stephen's, Middlebury

January 19 - St. Paul's, WRJ

January 26 - St. Paul's, Wells

February 2 - St. Matthew's, Enosburg Falls

February 16 - St. James, Essex

March 1 - St. Mary's in the Mountains, Wilmington

March 8 - Trinity, Shelburne

May 3 - Church of the Good Shepherd, Barre

May 10 - All Saints, South Burlington

May 17 - Holy Trinity, Swanton

May 24 - Grace Church, Sheldon

May 31 - St. John's in the Mountains, Stowe

June 7 - Trinity, Rutland

June 11 - St. Barnabas, Norwich

June 14 - Christ Church, Montpelier

June 21 - St. Martin's, Fairlee

June 28 - St. Paul's, Windsor

July 12 - St. Luke's, St. Albans

News in Pictures



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