



Church of the Holy Comforter

December 2016

# THE DOVE

## The Rector's Column *The Rev. Dr. Jason Parkin, Rector*

### **Stop. Look. Listen.**

My Aunt Maxine died last year on December 7. As she was the last remaining member of my parents' generation on either side of our family—save my own Mom, thank God—I travelled to southcentral Iowa to attend Maxine's funeral and represent our part of the extended clan, as did my third brother, Jon, who drove out from St. Louis. As I was driving back from the interment in the cemetery in the tiny town of Garden Grove where most of my mother's family are buried, I visited the graveyard where almost all of my father's relatives are interred, a place with the wonderfully evocative name of Last Chance Cemetery. Pulling away from Last Chance, I approached a freight train rail line crossing rather obscured by a copse of woods. There were no railings or lights to warn of oncoming trains. Instead, a simple sign stood there with the simple warning: Stop. Look. Listen.

Stop. Look. Listen. That is as succinct and as appropriate a message for the season of Advent as I can imagine. For during this poignant season, God—through the voices of John the Baptist, the teenaged Mary and her cousin Elizabeth, through prophets and other messengers—urges us to take inventory of our lives, and to stop whatever is that is keeping us from God; to stop whatever is keeping us isolated from other people; to stop following roads that make us less than we were created and are called to be. God also summons us to look: to look for the arrival and the presence of the Coming One who has been promised, however and wherever he may come; to look for him in the midst of our daily lives and routines and rhythms. And God exhorts us in this Advent season, finally, to listen: to listen for the stirring of the Spirit inciting us to new growth and faith and mercy; to listen for the ways in which we can help God expand the kingdom and promote peace, justice, compassion, and love; to listen for the ways in which God is calling us forward into a different life and a richer, deeper way of being.

Stop. Look. Listen. This is the message of the entire Advent season: to be awake, to be alert, to be alive to the incoming Kingdom of God and the ways in which God is even now active among us. God has come, in Christ Jesus. God will come again. God is always with us. May Advent be a time of stopping, of looking, of listening for God's life and love in ever new forms and ways.

### **Cocoa and Carols: Sunday, December 18**

By now, surely all are aware of one of our most festive and joyous celebrations at Holy Comforter: the annual Christmas Carol sing-a-long on the 4th Sunday of Advent during the Christian Formation hour. On December 18, gather with friends and family in the Great Room for a lively, spirited, even raucous time, and raise your voice in merriment and revelry! And start pondering now how you will act out one of the 12 Days of Christmas....

### **Special Schedule for New Year's Day: The Feast of the Holy Name**

Approximately every six years, New Year's Day falls on a Sunday. Such is the case as we begin 2017. Many are not aware that January 1st, in addition to being the start of the new secular year, is also a significant feast day in the Church's calendar, for it is the Feast of the Holy Name, the commemoration of the day, a week after his birth, on which Jesus was officially given his name by his parents in the temple.

**On Sunday, January 1, there will be only one morning Eucharist. This celebration will take place at 10:00.** Because the Feast of the Holy Name rarely occurs on a Sunday, this will be a unique opportunity to hear lessons we do not otherwise encounter and to ponder an event that is, too often, obscured both by the Church's own calendar and by secular activities. Although it is New Year's Day, please join us at 10:00 on January 1 to commemorate the Holy Name of our Lord.

### Christmas Flowers

Very, very few parishes can boast of a Flower Ministry as talented and dedicated as the one we are blessed to enjoy at Holy Comforter. This group of gifted arrangers and designers takes great care with all of our decorations and arrangements year round, and most especially at the great festive times of the year. For centuries, people of faith have decorated their local parish churches for Christmas with flowers and greens. If you would like to help beautify Holy Comforter for the Feast of the Nativity this year through donations supporting Christmas greens and flowers, please send a check to the church, payable to the parish, with a note in the memo section for "Christmas flowers." Please also indicate in a note if you are giving the flowers in memory or honor of someone. We need to receive donations by Monday, December 19, in order to get dedications in the Christmas bulletins.

## Adult Forum in December

In December we will continue "*Digging Deep and Rising High*" with two very special presentations by Vicki Garvey. She will engage us all on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> with a program entitled "*Romping Through Isaiah for Fun and Prophet.*" This is what she says about her presentation:

*"With the beginning of Advent each year, we turn to a whole new set of biblical readings for our edification and formation in the next liturgical year. This year, we turn from a year of Luke to a year of Matthew, and during the four weeks of Advent, we hear each week from the Book of the prophet Isaiah. So what, you may ask, does an ancient, dusty, sometimes grouchy, sometimes exuberantly happy prophet have to say to us in this little corner of Cook County in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? It turns out, quite a lot."*

The texts that she will use are **the First Reading for each Sunday of Advent:** Isaiah 2:1-5, Isaiah 11:1-10, Isaiah 35:1-10, and Isaiah 7:10-16. We hope you will take a look at these passages before you come to the forum. This group of passages fits very nicely with Dr. Adam Miglio's presentation on *Isaiah and the Assyrians*.

### Christmas Offerings and Outreach Opportunities

During the Christmas season, we ask our parish households to contribute to the open plate offering and the special Christmas collection. Our outreach budget is entirely funded at present by the seasonal offerings at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Please remember that every dollar you contribute helps provide support to agencies requesting our aid, and be as generous as possible. Your gift will make a difference for these organizations, and help us to sustain the level of giving we have attained in the past. Your Jesse Tree donations are gifts of hope and joy for families supported by Connections for the Homeless in Evanston and students at Holy Family School in Chicago. Please be sure to return your unwrapped and tagged gift to the parlor by December 18.

Thank you for your kind generosity during this blessed holiday season.

On December 18<sup>th</sup> we have our annual Cocoa and Carols sing-a-long which is a much-anticipated event this time of year. Since the Episcopal Church does not sing Christmas Carols before Christmas, this is a good time to get those songs out of your system with the help of each other.

December 4 Vicki Garvey:  
"*Romping through Isaiah for Fun and Prophet*"

December 11 Vicki Garvey:  
"*Romping through Isaiah for Fun and Prophet*"

December 18 Cocoa and Carols

December 25 Christmas Day, No Adult Forum

This will be another great month where we will be "*Digging Deep and Rising High.*" Please join us so we can "Rise High" together.

# Advent and Christmas Schedule

**Sunday, December 4 \* Advent Lessons & Carols at 5:00 p.m.**

A special Liturgy with readings and hymns of the Season, featuring the Adult Choir

**Sunday, December 18 \* Christmas Cocoa and Carols: 10:00 a.m.**

An annual tradition for the entire parish; in the Great Hall.

**Friday, December 23**

Christmas Pageant rehearsal; 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday, December 24 \* Christmas Eve Liturgies**

Children's Christmas Pageant and Eucharist at 4:00 p.m.

Choral Eucharists at 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.,

with prelude music beginning 30 minutes before each liturgy (7:30 and 10:30 p.m.)

**Sunday, December 25 \* Christmas Day**

Sung Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday December 26 - 28, 30-31**

Holy Eucharist at 9:00 a.m.

**Thursday, December 29** Holy Eucharist and Healing Service at 7:00 a.m.

**Sunday, January 1 \* The Feast of the Holy Name**

Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m. only

**Monday, December 26 through Friday, December 30**

Offices open 8:30 a.m.— 10:00 a.m. only

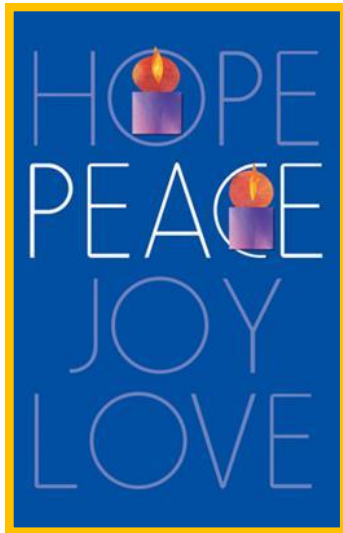
## Trust *Heath Howe*

*Learning to let go of our notions of how things should be and finding freedom to work with things as they are will bring us peace and freedom. Believe that God is at work in every person, in every situation, and trust God's promise to bring new life out of that which we had assumed was dead.*

Br. David Vryhof

I found the above in my email box on Friday, November 18th. I enrolled in the Society for St. John the Evangelist' series *Brother Give Us the Word* which means I receive an email daily with a word to consider and a small reflection on the word from one the brothers. I find the word "trust" and the thoughts Brother David shares very comforting at this time in our country. "...God is at work in every person, in every situation..." Yes. God is at work. God has not forgotten us. God is still at work in the world. As a result, I can trust that life and love will never end.

I also find this word and quote very powerful as we begin our Advent journey to the cradle in Bethlehem. At Holy Comforter we recognize four spiritual gifts during the four weeks of Advent. They are Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. All four are important and we could spend a year, not only a week, studying and contemplating each one.



However, thanks to Brother David, I think trust might be the spiritual gift we need first. Before we can receive the wonder of Hope, the quiet of Peace, the thrill of Joy, and the romance of Love, we need to trust. Trust that God is still alive, at work, and in motion in all of creation today, not just two thousand years ago. It is true that, during Advent we prepare for the

Incarnation of God at Christmas; however, that preparation is not simply for a celebration of an event from long ago. We are not only recalling the Incarnation of God, we are also remembering it in ourselves today. Such remembering asks for us to trust. Trust that God is in fact still in love with creation and humanity. When we trust, we let go of our small narrow view and are better able to see the vastness of God's desire for us all.

It can be challenging to trust, especially for those of us who are used to being in charge or for those of us impatient to see God fully at work. Is God really at work in the world? Does God really know what God is up to? Will I recognize it if God is? Will God be born once again? Can God's love bring us back into community and relationship with one another? Are Hope, Peace, Joy and Love possible at all right now? If these are the questions you hold right now or if you have others like these, bring them along the journey this Advent season. Place them on the altar on Sunday. Open your hands at the Eucharist and let go. Receive at least a small bite and a simple sip that can nourish the trust within your heart. With a trusting heart and soul, the gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love will be more easily recognized, received, and passed to another.

Below are links to five different tools for your consideration this season. The first is a link to The Society of Saint John the Evangelist's website. You, too, may enjoy receiving their emails. The second is a link to Richard Rohr's site. He also offers daily reflections that are thought provoking and powerful. The third is a booklet I created for you to use in your personal or family prayers around you Advent wreath. The last two, Vibrant Faith@Home and Heath's Chapel Pinterest Board offer crafts and activities for families to do to enhance the lessons of Advent and Christmas at home. I hope these tools are helpful.

May the manger of your heart be bedded with trust so that Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love may be incarnated in you this Christmas.

Advent blessings,  
Heath

<http://ssje.org/adventword>

<https://cac.org/richard-rohr/daily-meditations>

<http://www.vibrantfaithathome.org/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/jcklu/heaths-chapel-lessons/>



**COCOA AND CAROLS!  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER  
18 AT 10:00 A.M.**

**AN ANNUAL  
TRADITION FOR THE  
ENTIRE PARISH  
IN THE GREAT HALL.**

## Lessons and Carols *Derek Nickels*



One of the most famous of Christmas Carols is *Joy to the World*, a rousing expression of the joy of Christmas. While it is one of the universally known carols that has been translated around the globe, its origins are often overlooked and taken for granted. Found in *Hymnal 1982* as Hymn 100, “Joy to the World” is a compilation of several authors and musical sources that included Isaac Watts, Lowell Mason and the venerable George Frederic Handel. Many nineteenth century hymnal editors including Lowell Mason would borrow melodies taken from larger works of the great masters, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, and others, to match with texts of their own choice.

The prolific hymn author Isaac Watts (1674-1748) had paraphrased Psalm 98 for the 1719 publication *Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*. In this paraphrase, Watts attempted to make the psalm more Christian by the reference of “Lord” to mean

“Messiah.” This paraphrase had been altered for several hymnals but appears in its original poetic verse in *Hymnal 1982*. For many years Lowell Mason was credited for arranging the tune *Antioch* from Handel’s *Messiah* chorus “Lift up your heads.” This tune also appeared in a collection edited by the conductor of the Choir at St. Clement’s Church in Manchester, England, William Holford. Holford’s version bears a stronger resemblance to Handel’s *Messiah* version. By 1837 this tune and Watts’ text were published in Lowell Mason’s *Occasional Psalm and Hymn Tunes, Selected and Original* in Boston. It was identified as “an arrangement of Handel” and named *Antioch*.

Ironically, the *Hymnal 1940* includes this text but matches it with the tune of *Richmond*, a tune we often associate with the text of “Hark! The glad sound! The Savior comes,” and one of the hymns we sing every year at our annual Advent Lessons and Carols.

Please join us at our annual Lessons and Carols this Sunday, December 4, at 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. There will be a light reception in the parlor to follow.

## Write the Vision *Charlotte Long, Youth Ministry*

Not for nothing have I been praying over how best to teach our children about discrimination. It is the world they are living in now and it is the world they inherit from us. The year of 2016 has been a toughie for even me, the middle-class white artist with a stable job – not to mention for those who live in real fear in our nation. I want our kids to be good at calling out injustice, at seeing humanity from God’s eyes. But how \*does\* God see us? How does God see ALL of us?

A few weeks ago, our Sunday school class talked about how the Bible is a document of “bottom-up” thinking – that is, a historical and holy text surrounding how God calls the marginalized, the oppressed, the poor and the “unclean” to be at the forefront of grace and love (Richard Rohr; Howard Zinn). God chooses the rejected son, or the leper, or the sinner. As Rohr says, *“While much of history is written from the top down, one of the few subversive texts in history... is the Bible! **The Bible is most extraordinary because it repeatedly and invariably legitimizes the people on the bottom, and not the people on the top.**”* The Bible is interested in those who feel powerless, because from that place of openness God can create a new kind of power – a power we are probably unable to recognize in most instances. Sometimes it looks like plain old *sharing* – whose turn is it, etc. Sometimes it might look like we are losing something that we thought was precious. Sometimes it might look chaotic. Sometimes it might make us question who we are.

## Stephen Ministry

*“God is our refuge and strength,  
An ever-present help in trouble.”* Psalm 46:1

We all need God’s strength at one time or another. Sometimes we need God’s strength in the shape of a trusted confidant. Stephen Ministers are available to be that source of strength and help. The Holy Comforter Stephen Ministers have been trained in the art of listening and Christian caring. The Stephen Ministers meet with parishioners on a one to one,

I asked the question of our Sunday School class that I try to ask of myself: who is invisible in our world? And if I am one of the visible, what does God – what does Love – call me to be for the invisible?

I do not pretend to know anyone else’s politics, nor do I think God cares much about the human hierarchy we’ve created to run ourselves. God does care about Love – the words we say in Love and the actions we take in the name of Love. After all, Love is just another name for God itself.

There is no getting around this statement, for me; there is no addendum, no fine print, no sub-clause. If there is any argument that somehow gets around it, I cannot in good conscious see how it is of God.

And how to begin? We want actions, we want direction. It is hard to know how to translate the parables. I usually don’t know. Except a few weeks ago in church, an easily-missed Old Testament scripture called out to me at the 9AM service while I was thinking about breakfast. The voice from the pulpit called out,

*“Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it.”* (Habakkuk 2:2, NRSV)

It may mean something different to you, but for me it meant: speak Love now, speak it clearly and without stuttering. Make the world see what it means and do it quickly.

strictly confidential basis for as long as you need someone to walk with you during a difficult time. We all need extra support from time to time with life’s challenges. For more information, please contact a member of the clergy or please call Carrie Smart, Stephen Ministry Referral Coordinator 847-501-3954 or Stephen Leader Team Coordinator, Jean Britt 847-256-2372.



## Everybody Needs Sam *Mary Johnson, Children's and Youth Ministries*

At this time of year, I work with various members of the CHC staff to put together the cast for the Christmas Eve Pageant. We have been using the same script for a number of years and in my tenure, the excitement over which role is "the best" one changes from year to year. Some years all the boys want to be Joseph, other years, King Herod. The girls alternate between wanting to be Mary, the Angel Gabriel, or Elizabeth. And with a children's production you never know what will happen: many in the angel choir may be climbing under the choir pews, Mary often forgets the Baby Jesus doll when she and Joseph flee Bethlehem, and it is guaranteed that lines will be altered in the most delightful ways.



While the main cast of characters in the pageant will change from year to year there is one person who will have the same role the fifth time. This will be the 5th year Sam will lead the procession into the sanctuary as he carries the star and proclaims: "People who walk in darkness have seen a great light." Sam has been in roles previous to this continuing one of leading the procession.

When he was very young, he loved to be the cow. Then he was a shepherd for a couple of years.

I think this is the role that best describes Sam. Sam is a light for me. He has the greatest smile. In fact, in youth group one night, when the students were asked to identify a gift that God gave them, Sam replied "my smile." He loves trains, music, plays the piano, loves to dance, and is on the high school cross



country team. He is on the honor roll and sings in the High School choir. Sam is enthusiastic and non-judgmental, he wakes up happy every morning, and he is a person with autism. Everything I just described is Sam; a light to celebrate. Everyone needs to know Sam and emulate his day-to-day outlook on life.

In a world where there may be darkness or despair, and we hear words that are divisive or cruel, I think of Sam. Those words are not in his vocabulary. We celebrate this season when a Light came into the world to give Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. My prayer is that we celebrate that which is important this Christmas season and all the days of the year. That we remember our own "Inner Sam" and are a light for all those we meet.

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

Luke 2:14

# The Vineyard

The Celebration of the Life of Will Kellogg was held on Friday, November 18, at 3:00 p.m. here at Church of the Holy Comforter., followed by an interment and reception. May God enfold Will in light and love eternal.

Welcome to our Holy Comforter Family  
and the Family of God!  
Baptized at the All Saint's Day  
celebration on Sunday, November 6th

*Connor Trenary Kelly*  
*and*  
*James Rutherford Wilson*



Church of the Holy Comforter

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