



# DECEMBER TIDINGS

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December 2023

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## A Reflection by your Priest –in –Charge

At a time when the headlines warn us of a dark and difficult future we look to the promise of a midnight star. With this promise comes a quiet excitement, a tentative stirring of our hearts, a glimpse of unlimited and unexpected possibilities.

By the light of this star, we clear away the clutter in our hearts—

our doubts and fears about the future  
our attachment to what other people think  
our fantasy of what the holidays *should* be  
our illusions about what perfect families do  
our resentments, our regrets, our failures.

By the light of this star, we see the Christ waiting to born in our own hearts. A new lightness of being, wonder at the exquisite beauty of the ordinary. And with the awe of new-born faith, we say the words that God has been waiting to hear from the beginning of time . . . .

*Welcome, Beloved One.*

*The Star Signal* by Andrew King

*Not every journey toward the Christ  
starts like the magi's in darkness,  
but there might come  
a time when, in the empty hours  
of an otherwise unremarkable night,  
you have happened to look up at the usual sky,  
and noticed, almost by accident, between  
passages of gray beasts of slow-moving cloud  
the bright bloom of a strange star flowering*

*and something begins to open a little  
somewhere beneath your skin,  
as if that new wedge of light in the sky  
had inserted itself into your soul,  
not enough to cause you any hurt, but just  
enough that you feel a pang, the twinge  
of something like longing, as if your eyes  
in the silence have become ears  
in the darkness, and you are hearing  
a holy summons,  
distant but ringing like a silver trumpet  
in the chambers of your listening heart.*





**Join Us!**

Holy Trinity will host a **Holiday Concert**

**The Blue Shades Clarinets**

**Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> @ 2 PM**



The Blue Shades Clarinets will present a concert of holiday music and other classics here at Holy Trinity on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. Please save the date. Bring your family and friends!!

Refreshments will be served after the concert.

A Free Will Offering will be designated for Rosilda's Kitchen at the First Methodist Church of Southbridge to support their weekly meal program.

Established in 2015 and based in Norwell, Blue Shades Clarinets performs a wide-ranging repertoire arranged for clarinet choir, including American jazz, ragtime and light classics. They have performed throughout Southeastern Massachusetts and as part of the Brockton Symphony Orchestra's Chamber Concert series. The members of the Blue Shades Clarinets also perform regularly with the Brockton Symphony, the Rivers Symphony, and the Metropolitan Wind Symphony.

Parish participation will help make the concert a success. If you are able to assist with the reception please contact Karron Lacey or Joe DiSalvatore or leave a message at the office.

We are grateful to

**Cornerstone Bank of Southbridge, Savers Bank of Southbridge, Hyde Tools, & Dexter-Russell**  
for their generous sponsorship of this concert.



**BIRTHDAYS**

2 – Heather Bousquet  
4 – Marion Piltzecker  
11—Mick Kalber  
11—Violet Spooner  
11 – Mary Bridget Burns  
17 – Bill Pieczynski  
25—Jesus Christ  
25—Ed Bair

~~~SAVE THE DATE~~~

**Annual  
Parish Meeting  
Sunday, January 28**



## Faith Formation: Children and Youth

**Family Worship: 9:30 am** Children and Youth will lead the service  
**December 3<sup>rd</sup>** 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent  
**January 7<sup>th</sup>** The Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord [transferred]  
**VBS Sundays: 9:30 – 10:30 am**  
**December 10<sup>th</sup>** Preparing for Christmas & Epiphany  
**January 28<sup>th</sup>** Annual Parish Meeting  
**Children's Chapel: 9:15 am**  
**December 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**January 14<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>**



**Youth Formation: Grades 7-12** December 3<sup>rd</sup> & January 7<sup>th</sup> after the service

**Christmas Eve** 4:00 pm Family Service with Carols and Storytelling  
**January 7<sup>th</sup>** Epiphany of Our Lord: Family Worship with Dramatic Reading of the Gospel

**Adult Formation:** Our groups will not meet in December.



*The Last day for Winter Coat Closet is*

*December 16<sup>th</sup>*

*Thank you for your support this season!*



## Daughters of the King

*I am but one, but I am one.  
 I cannot do everything, but I can do something.  
 What I can do, I ought to do.  
 What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.  
 Lord, what will you have me do?*



The Daughters would like to thank everyone for their support and participation in our Military Christmas Card outreach. The cards that you all worked on were beautiful and filled with heartfelt messages to our service men & women. The cards have arrived at their destination on time, and we thank you for helping us send beautiful messages and Christmas cheer to our military.

The discernment process for new Daughters of the King is now nearing the end. It is hard to believe that we only have two more weeks of lessons & then we will be planning the admission ceremony. The weekly meetings and discussions have been enlightening, enjoyable, refreshing, freeing & confidence-building, and, shining the light on different ways of looking at scripture. Insightful!

I would like to remind everyone, that if you have someone that you would like to add to the prayer list, please speak with one of the Daughters, or Mother Judith. Also, there is a box in the back of the church with forms that you can fill out to ask for prayers. We will happily add your individual to our daily prayers. Please also include if this individual should be on the long-term or short-term list.

FHS

Robin Yates, DOK President

# Holy Trinity Vestry

## Mutual Ministry Review

November 8, 2023

### SUMMARY

#### **PART I: We began with dinner conversation centering on three topics:**

##### **My most meaningful experience at Holy Trinity in 2023 was . . . because . . .**

- Clearing and replanting the garden in the front of the church: the collegiality, the creative energy, and reaffirming the message of beauty and vibrant life at the church
- Bishop's Visitation & Confirmation: seeing the youth grow in faith and fellowship; redoing the chapel with their images to reflect and express their faith; coming together as a community of faith
- The energy of our children and youth, especially as reflected in their leadership in the liturgy on first Sundays and the Blessing of the Backpacks. They clearly understand that they are full members of the congregation, and we all understand that we are imperfect human beings worshipping and serving God together in love.
- Daughters of the King discernment and participation of new members
- The process of choosing and purchasing new green vestments – a sign of new life that affirmed our history
- Small group discussions and reading groups were occasions for learning and renewal
- The Transition Discernment Process – from the CAT to small groups, to parish meetings, to meeting with clergy serving in alternative models of ministry

##### **If I could change one thing about Holy Trinity it would be . . . because . . .**

- We would have more members so we could sustain our mission & our building more effectively
- We would have a larger choir who sang more frequently – because we have so many people with musical talent in the congregation – even though we don't have the numbers or the time to realize this hope
- Unlimited funds so that we could maintain and utilize our building more effectively
- Our building used by community members/groups throughout the week

##### **My deepest hope for Holy Trinity is . . . because . . .**

- That we will be faithful stewards, following Jesus in the Way of Love
- That we continue to worship together into the future, and that we embrace together the path that God puts before us, whatever that may be and even if it is not a path we might personally choose
- That the path before us be clear and that we follow it together
- That we face the transition with grace, mercy, hope, and optimism
- That we be unencumbered by financial burdens so that we are free to grow into our mission
- That we make our decision with the future generations in mind, not just for ourselves

#### **PART II: We addressed the 3 topics that we had identified as key issues at our Vestry Retreat**

##### **Finances**

- **What do we know?**
  - ◊ Preview of the 2024 Budget shows that our financial position has not changed significantly for several years. We are stable and healthy, even with a deficit budget
  - ◊ Our finances allow us to maintain where we are, but do not allow for growth.
- **What do we need to learn?**
  - ◊ We will know the 2024 pledge income at the end of the year and will have a better understanding of our projected financial position for 2024
  - ◊ There may be people with the skills and talents to do some work that could be cut from the budget. (We have taken this approach with hospitality, landscaping and groundskeeping, and VBS curriculum)
  - ◊ We know what we need to know
  - ◊ We don't know what we don't know

- **How can we learn what we need to know?**

- ◊ Reevaluate at the end of 2023, based on 2023 income and pledges for 2024
- ◊ Interview and invite wider participation by members of the congregation



## **The Building**

### **What do we know?**

- ◊ Conversations with Tri Valley about possible use by Meals on Wheels show that our accessibility and limited parking are hindrances to renting the building to other organizations
- ◊ The expense of maintaining the building is a significant portion of our budget, even with cost-saving measures, & it impedes our mission.

- **What do we need to learn?**

- ◊ Is there a market for selling the building to an organization that would fulfill our vision of the building and our mission? This might include a purchase that would allow us to lease back for worship and parish meetings
- ◊ Have we exhausted the market for leasing space to other organizations?
- ◊ Is there the possibility to partner with other churches in mission?

- **How can we learn what we need to know?**

- ◊ Interview local marketing specialists
- ◊ Interview other nonprofits who have been able to lease space in order to meet the costs of maintenance

## **Alternative Models for Ministry**

- **What do we know?**

- ◊ We need a new model that may allow for a quarter-time priest and partnering with another congregation.
- ◊ We learned a lot from our zoom meeting with other clergy serving in different models (Episcopal-Episcopal partnerships & merging; Episcopal-Lutheran partnerships and merging)

- **What do we need to learn?**

- ◊ What would ministry with a quarter-time priest involve?
- ◊ Are there other Episcopal congregations who might be open to sharing a priest?
- ◊ How might we begin to explore a broader partnership with Bethlehem Lutheran (with whom we have a long relationship and currently share programs)?

- **How can we learn what we need to know?**

- ◊ Consult with Canon Simpson about possible Episcopal partners and about how to initiate & structure a conversation with Bethlehem Lutheran.
- ◊ Are there congregations across the border in the Diocese of Connecticut who might be open to sharing a priest?
- ◊ Contact the Rev. Elliot Moss and the Rev. Vicki Ix to schedule a conversation with them and at least one of their Wardens or Vestry members about what quarter-time ministry involves.

## Christmas Memorials

During Christmas services this year, you may wish to have a loved one remembered or to express special thanks to God for the blessings in your life. To do so, please complete this form and return it with your donation to the Church office **by Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**. The money for these memorials is used for flowers given to God's glory as we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord.

### Exact wording of memorial will be:

Christmas gifts for flowers are given to the Glory of God...

### If this gift is in memory of some one who has died, choose one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ *in Thanksgiving for the life of* \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of your loved one or ones)

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_ *in Loving Memory of* \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of your loved one or ones)

**OR**

### If this gift is in Thanksgiving for a living person, choose the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ *in Thanksgiving for the Blessing of* \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of person or blessing)

### **ALL DEDICATIONS: PLEASE NOTE WHO THE MEMORIAL/THANKSGIVING IS GIVEN BY:**

*Given by* \_\_\_\_\_ Your Name/Names

(Please use exact wording you would like to have published. You may, for example, use "by his family" or "by her husband" followed by your name or you may simply use your name(s).

Please return this information sheet, along with your offering (no donation is too small), to the church office or drop it into the offering plate by **Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**. Please make checks payable to **Holy Trinity Church** with the notation **Christmas Memorials** on the memo line.

**\*\*Do you know someone who would appreciate Christmas flowers from the church? Please write their name and address here so that arrangements can be made to bring them flowers:**





## Greening the Church



Join us in the age-old tradition of greening the church.

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**

**11:00 am to Noon**

We will decorate the sanctuary with “greens” adorning the windows, pews, Advent wreath, lectern and altar. Bringing the symbol of life into the sanctuary is an age-old tradition symbolizing the new life in us as we celebrate

Christ’s birthday.

## Winter Parking on Hamilton Street

From December 1 through April 1, Southbridge limits parking on Hamilton Street

On EVEN dates: Midnight to 7pm, park on the ODD side of the street;

7pm to midnight park on the EVEN side of the street.

On ODD dates: Midnight to 7pm park on the EVEN side of the street;

7pm to midnight park on the ODD side of the street.



**AdventWord: On each day of Advent, let the Word-of-the-Day inspire you**

|              |                |               |                |              |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 3<br>WIND    | 4<br>HIDDEN    | 5<br>PRESENCE | 6<br>PEACE     | 7<br>GRACE   |
| 8<br>WATCH   | 9<br>AWAKE     | 10<br>GLORY   | 11<br>HERALD   | 12<br>VALLEY |
| 13<br>TRUTH  | 14<br>PATIENCE | 15<br>HASTEN  | 16<br>BEGIN    | 17<br>SPIRIT |
| 18<br>REPAIR | 19<br>GIVE     | 20<br>DREAM   | 21<br>LAUGHTER | 22<br>QUENCH |
| 23<br>PONDER | 24<br>COVENANT | 25<br>LIGHT   |                |              |



## Sundays in December: Advent

|                                 |                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>December 3</b>               | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent</b>                                           |
|                                 | 9:30 am <b>Family Worship</b>                                                    |
|                                 | 10:30-11:30 am Teens (Grades 7-12) meet downstairs                               |
|                                 | 11:15 am      Choir Rehearsal                                                    |
| <b>December 10</b>              | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b>                                           |
|                                 | 9:30-10:15 am VBS Downstairs                                                     |
|                                 | 9:30 am      Holy Eucharist                                                      |
|                                 | 11:15 am      Choir Rehearsal                                                    |
|                                 | 2:00 pm      Blue Shades Clarinet Concert                                        |
| <b>December 17</b>              | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent</b>                                           |
|                                 | 9:15 am      Children's Chapel                                                   |
|                                 | 9:30 am      Holy Eucharist                                                      |
|                                 | 11:00 am      Greening of the Church after the service                           |
|                                 | 11:15 am      Choir Rehearsal                                                    |
|                                 | 5:00 pm      Regional Episcopal Blue Christmas Service @ St. Matthew's-Worcester |
| <b>December 24th</b>            | <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent &amp; Christmas Eve</b>                       |
|                                 | 9:30 am      Holy Eucharist for the 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent             |
|                                 | 4:00 pm      Holy Eucharist for the Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord              |
|                                 | A Family Service with Carols and Storytelling                                    |
| <b>December 25<sup>th</sup></b> | Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord                                                |
|                                 | 9:30 am      Holy Eucharist                                                      |
| <b>December 31<sup>st</sup></b> | <b>First Sunday after Christmas</b>                                              |
|                                 | 9:30 am      Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion                              |

## Mark your calendars:

|                               |                                                                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January 7<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord [transferred]</b>                     |
|                               | 9:30 am      Family Worship with a dramatic reading of the Gospel          |
| <b>January 28th</b>           | <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany      Annual Parish Meeting</b> |





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(trinity)

**The Episcopal Diocese of Western  
Massachusetts**

The Rt. Reverend Douglas Fisher

**Sunday Services**  
**9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist**

**Priest –in-Charge**  
**The Reverend Judith Lee**



Website



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Tithely—Giving