

The Epiphany Star



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Fr William Parker

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Carolyn M. LaMountain, Editor

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY
6605 Atlantic Avenue, Ventnor, NJ 08406

Dear Holy People of God at Epiphany, and our Parish Friends,

It is hard to believe, time passes so fast, but it has been exactly one year to the day that Rob and I moved to Ventnor and I started my ministry among you as rector. Can you believe that? And Rob and I both feel so at home – how could we not? The sweet, sweet smell of the Christmas Cookie Production invades my nostrils through the open window here in the rectory where I sit at my computer, reminding me of gentle memories and the goodness of life. Thank you to all in the cookie production line for your hard work, and, not as much, for your undermining my free will to loose a few pounds!

It is difficult to think on Christmas, in spite of the cookies, when the weather outside is a balmy 79 degrees here on October 15th. When I came to Ventnor, I was told that September and October were the BEST months – now I am a true convert to that local wisdom! But even with these warm days and evenings, change is in the air. The evenings are now a bit cooler (I've needed a comforter on some nights) and the intensity of the sun is not as strong as in mid-summer. The days are definitely getting shorter. The seasons change, we all change, and life moves on in its relentless march toward the fulfillment of all things in Christ, which is our hope and belief as Christians.

Not a bad thing.

Wiser people than I have stated that, at least for living things, to not change is to die. Yet we all resist change in our hearts – even to the depths of our souls. That reality is very human and normal for us. We all want things to change for the better, but we also do not really want to change. What an oxymoron our lives are: yes, but no!

Things are changing here at Epiphany – some you may see as good change, some you may see as bad change – but nonetheless, change it is. This is a natural progression as the community welcomes a new rector and his family. Any new introduction into an existing system causes some anxiety and creates change, but

as in all things we are assured of God's never-ending presence and comfort in our lives.

Over the past months we have seen some changes here at Epiphany. Both Bob Matey and Mary Lou Monihan saw a need to move on to other things from helping in the office. Both of them were of great help to me during this time of transition, and their years of dedication and hard work is known to all of you. So now we have someone new in the office to help out – Andrea (An) Nowack. She will be in the office on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and our posted office hours will be Wednesday and Thursday, 9AM to 1PM. If you are able, please make an effort to stop by and welcome An to Epiphany!

We've also seen some changes on the vestry. Last month, Steve Miller resigned. This month Br Bob resigned by letter, stating that he needed some time for self reflection and self assessment. In addition, Bob Matey resigned as Junior Warden. All three, as you know, are pillars in the life of the parish, and are dedicated to the witness of Christ here at Epiphany. I wish to thank them all for their work on the vestry, and assure them our prayers as they seek new ministries in serving Christ.

Of course, this means the vestry will be changing some. At the moment, the vacated slots will remain so, as the vestry nomination committee works toward gathering names for the Annual Meeting in January. That committee is made up of current vestry members who are not up for election next year: Jeff Hight, Rob Carty, Edith Danson and Dave Hagan. Now would be a good time to prayerfully consider whether God may be calling you so serve on the vestry. I am always available to help in your discernment if you wish – just let me know.

And now as I finish this article, an autumnal cold front has passed through and there is quite a chill in the air: Time to finally pack away the beach chairs and look forward to sitting by warm fires in the fireplace. Sometimes, change is exciting and very good.

Fr. Bill Parker



Music & Lyrics By . .

As November begins with All Saints' Day, one of the great feasts of the Christian year, it also usually ends with a beginning. As a rule, the penultimate Sunday of the month is the celebration of Christ the King, ending the Church year, for the final Sunday is almost always the beginning of Advent. Thus, the final day of November 2008 is the first day of the new year for the Western church.

Originally, All Saints' Day was a commemoration of the Roman martyrs. By the Seventh Century they numbered more than enough to fill the days in the calendar. There was no question of celebrating each one separately. The obvious solution was to honor them as a group on a single day. In the Eighth Century, Gregory III fixed that day as November 1.

The very first lesson we will hear read this month on All Saints Sunday is about some of these very martyrs for whom the feast was created. John the Divine records for us his vision of Heaven. He sees "a great multitude . . . from every nation . . . standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands." An elder explains that " . . . they . . . have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. . . . They will hunger no more and thirst no more . . . for the Lamb . . . will be their shepherd . . . and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." At the end of the First Century, John was writing to give fortitude and courage to some of the saints we now celebrate for their martyrdom. These are not dry words on a page; they have helped shape the direction and identity of the Christian Church.

Now let's skip to the last Sunday of the month. The first Advent lesson is from Isaiah. "Out of Zion shall come instruction," the prophet writes, "and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Will this prophecy be fulfilled only at the Second Coming? Our nation is now at war in two countries. What difference has the coming of the Prince of Peace made in our world? I feel again the anguish of Good Friday 2002 when new violence erupted between Israel and Palestine. Then I wrote:

<i>die once more;</i>	<i>At the hour of death you</i>
<i>rive your very heart.</i>	<i>Tanks break through and</i>
<i>you to the core.</i>	<i>Snipers' bullets pierce</i>
<i>pants the hart,</i>	<i>Long our spirits, Lord, as</i>
<i>your Grace.</i>	<i>For the living Waters of</i>
<i>Blood out again?</i>	<i>Must you pour your life's</i>
<i>wandering race?</i>	<i>Die anew to win our</i>
<i>but when, Lord, when?</i>	<i>Our Redemption comes,</i>

Fr. Doug recently commented to me that the Church calendar is one of our greatest aids in our spiritual journey. November exemplifies this well. Advent begins each year yearning for redemption; Then at year's end—once more in November—All Saints' Day celebrates redemption eternally worked out in Heaven, and we top off our annual celebrations with a joyous reminder of Christ's everlasting reign. "His Kingdom," we tell ourselves every Sunday, "shall have no end." This November many of us are facing the pain of narrowed financial straits, and other troubles perhaps intrude. "The peace of God," the hymn says, "it is no peace but strife closed in the sod." And yet. And yet our yearning for redemption is perpetually answered in the coming of the King, the King whose Kingdom will have no end. November is the whole Church year in little. Savor it.

Cheers,

Jim Tramer

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New Services at Epiphany

Evening Prayer

There will be services of Evening Prayer on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 6 PM, starting in November. These services will be followed by a light meal and fellowship time together, lasting all together about one hour – thank you Jeff for the suggestion. I hope all of you will plan to attend these services and social time, and volunteer to help out if needed. Praying the Daily Offices is a hallmark of Anglican tradition, worship and theology, and I would especially encourage those of you who are new to the Anglican tradition to experience these public worship services. Praying and praising God, then a nice meal: how much better can it get?

Society of Mary Rosary

The Society of Mary will continue praying the rosary together in the chapel on the 1st Sunday of each month at 9:30 AM. Praying the rosary is an ancient Christian prayer practice, and has always been a part of our Anglican “High-church” tradition. Please come and worship with the society in our beautiful chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Walsingham – England’s lady shrine, and bring your prayer beads if you have them.

Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Service

This year the Downbeach Interfaith Clergy Group’s Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held at Epiphany on Monday, November 24 at 7:30 PM. This will feature an interfaith prayer service lead by area clergy and choristers from the various congregations on Absecon Island. The EWC will host a light refreshment reception afterward. Hope to see you there as we welcome people of various faiths to our house of worship and offer thanks to God for our shared blessings! This service will also stand for our parish Thanksgiving Service.

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A Note From Your Editor

The December 2008 issue of The epiphany Star will be the last one I will edit. After seven years as editor, I know it is time for a change. Someone with new, fresh ideas is needed to take over the position.

Heartfelt thanks to all those who have helped make this job easier through their monthly or occasional contributions. I do not wish to list their names, because I know I would forget someone, and don’t wish to do that.

I have enjoyed my tenure as editor, but know it is time for me to retire.

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November Birthdays

- 7 Michael Bardo, Ashley Sheets
- 10 Edwina Gilbert
- 16 Mary Corbin
- 20 Peter Weiss
- 24 Andrew Lonkart
- 27 Christine Knorr, Wia Trowski
- 29 Colby Robert Carty



November Anniversaries

- 1 Dorothy & Edward Higgins
- 4 Denise & Michael Bardo
- 16 Dale & George Lonkart