



THE CURATE



December 2010



Rector's Corner

Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas?

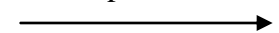
During this Advent Season, the *Daily Office* contains readings from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is a book that reveals the full measure of God's judgment and salvation. The Prophet describes God as "The Holy One of Israel" who must punish his rebellious people, but afterward will redeem them. As I read the Daily Office this morning, a phrase directed to the Jewish people from the first chapter of Isaiah hit me right between the eyes. From Isaiah 1:13-14: *Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations - I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.* These words are from God to a nation that had forgotten that their festivals should have had God at the center of them. The people had become so enamored with the mechanics of the festivals that they lost sight of the real purpose – to worship and glorify God. This passage of Scripture has caused me to reflect on the way our culture celebrates Christmas. It all begins sometime in October when the Christmas displays begin to appear in the stores, and Christmas ads begin to appear on television. Christmas decorations go up shortly thereafter on city streets and in homes. Then we are bombarded with Christmas music and exhortations to spend, spend, spend. In all of this, you rarely hear Jesus mentioned. The emphasis is on Santa Claus, Rudolph, Frosty the Snowman, the Grinch, elves, and other fictional characters.

In a recent survey in a shopping mall, shoppers were asked what they are celebrating this Christmas. Here are some of the answers:

- "I'm celebrating that I made it through another year."
- "I'm celebrating being home with my family."
- "I got a Christmas bonus."
- "I'm celebrating that I've finished all my shopping."
- "I'm not celebrating anything. I'm just trying to survive."

What about Jesus? To put it simply, Christmas is about Christ. It is a birthday party, the celebration of the most important birth in the history of the world. Have you ever been to a birthday party where the person being honored is completely ignored? That seems to be what is happening here.

I saw a cartoon the other day that pictured three grade-school-age boys sitting on chairs in front of the principal's office waiting to be disciplined. The first boy said, "I said the 'S' word." The second boy said, "I said the 'F' word." The third little boy said, "I said 'Christmas.'" When I lived in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area, the city renamed the Christmas Holidays the "Glitter Season." Many other cities across the country have quit using the name "Christmas." Now it is "Holiday Season," "Winter Festival," "Festival of Lights," or some other generic term. Many businesses instruct their employees to greet with "Happy Holidays" rather than "Merry Christmas." I guess this is all done in the name of tolerance. In our society, tolerance has become a primary value, and the worst thing one can be accused of is being intolerant. I have heard it said that a person can



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become so open-minded that all of their brains fall out.

East Texas is basically a Christian area with a traditional approach to the Christmas Season, but the national trend of taking Christ out of the holiday is gradually infiltrating our area. Advent, I know is a time for preparing for the celebration of Christ's birth with self-examination and repentance, but I love the Christmas parties and the great fellowship, the music, the food, and everything about the Christmas Season. I think that we all do, but for heaven's sake let us keep Christ at the center of our celebrating. Whether it is in lifting a toast, singing a carol, or praying a simple prayer of thanks, we should remember the greatest gift of all – the baby born in a manger who became the man who died on the Cross for us. Merry Christmas!

Vestry Nominations

By now you should have received a letter from the Senior Warden asking for nominations for the St. Philip's Vestry. Please give this some thought. Here is a checklist of expectations for a vestry member that I thought might be helpful to you as you consider your nominations.

Vestry Goals and Expectations

- Belief in Jesus Christ as Son of God, Lord and Savior.
- A spirit of servanthood with no personal agenda, seeking only God's will for the Parish.
- Commitment to support the leadership of the Rector as he seeks God's will for the Parish.
- Commitment to regular attendance at all Vestry meetings – up to 12 per year, as well as occasional special meetings.
- Coming to Vestry meetings prepared and with all assignments completed.
- Commitment to work with the Rector and fellow Vestry members with love, charity, respect, self-discipline and honesty, approaching the Rector or fellow Vestry members in private when personal issues arise.
- Willingness to respectfully and directly engage the Rector and/or fellow Vestry members in Vestry meetings when you disagree on issues of policy, but publicly support decisions once made and not seek to undercut them outside the Vestry, even if you disagree.
- Commitment to respect and maintain the confidentiality of sensitive matters.

- Sacrificial giving to God's work through St. Philip's.
- Regular attendance at worship with your family.
- Support of and attendance at parish functions.
- Working to maintain or develop your faith through regular prayer and study of Scripture, etc.
- Willingness to serve as a representative of St. Philip's and its Gospel mission to the Parish, not representing groups in the Parish to the Vestry.
- Being a missionary of the Gospel by inviting others to worship with you and seeking opportunities to demonstrate your faith by word and deed.

Christmas Carolfest – Sunday, December 19 at 9:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall

Please join me and the St. Philip's Choir for Christmas caroling in the Parish Hall on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 19 at 9:00 a.m. Hot cider and cookies will be served. Join us as we move from the anticipation and longing of Advent to the joy and celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Blessings in Christ, Ted †

Sr. Warden's Report

Leo Mizell



As we approach the end of another year, let us pause and thank God for the many blessings we all have received this year.

Likewise as we approach a new year, let's join in asking God to continue to bless and guide St. Philip's as we endeavor to do His will.

I thank each of you for giving your time, for sharing your God-given talents, and for supporting our Parish. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very blessed New Year.

Treasurer's Report

Norwood Brenneke

	October	Year-to-Date
Beginning Balance	34,738.65	49,461.53
Total Income	26,864.72	194,161.82
Total Expenses	32,702.29	214,981.37
Ending Balance	28,901.08	28,901.08

In order to receive credit for 2010 contributions, the funds must be postmarked or received by the Church no later than December 31. If you have questions, please call me. Thanks, Norwood Brenneke, Treasurer

Jr. Warden's Report

Curt Winkler

Everything is going well, and we hope everyone has a great holiday season.



ECW

Katherin Wardlaw



On November 9, 2010, we had a wonderful meeting hosted by Mary Kolstad. Mary prepared an exceptional banquet that included a special oyster dish. After the meeting, many people asked for her recipes. Beverly Beck gave a heartfelt devotional on holiness and prayer life. Martha Styner, Treasurer, reported that we might have a surplus of money at the end of 2010 in the ECW Fund. We discussed that this surplus might subsidize some of the expenses for the upcoming Fiesta. Martha also added that anyone who wanted to contribute to the UTO Fund should turn in their envelope or box to the church office.

Mary Kolstad explained the results of the Fiesta Board meeting. She said the board amended its term from three years to two years. Pam Denson and Joann Evans were recognized for volunteering to join the Fiesta Board. Ann Davis volunteered to Chair the chili-making committee. Mary Kolstad announced that Fiesta will be Tuesday, February 8, 2011, and the tickets will be seven dollars each. This year we will accept no checks for pies. Everyone who signs up to provide pies will need to bring a homemade or store-bought pie to the Parish Hall. For convenience, please cut the pies into servings before you deliver them to the Church. Chili donators, please note that you will need to use 15 pounds of meat. We will have two occasions where chili providers can bring their ingredients to the church kitchen and prepare their chili with a group. One of these days will be on a Friday, and another on a Saturday. Dates will be announced. At the meeting, we sent sign-up sheets around for chili and pies. Ann Welty graciously volunteered to be the Fiesta Chairperson for 2011. This was a moment of great excitement, and she has everyone's support.

The nominating committee will meet the week after Thanksgiving to prepare a slate of officers to present at the December 14 meeting.

We will hold the meeting in the Parish Hall instead of Ann Welty's home. ECW will be voting for the 2011 officers at this time.

Linda Walton gave an amazing program on Labyrinths. She gave the history, the practices, and the value of Labyrinth meditation. She provided the group with handouts and information, along with her own Finger Labyrinth to illustrate. During the meeting, many of the women expressed interest in traveling to a Labyrinth for personal experience. You can find more information at www.labyrinthonline.com. We thank Linda for this well-presented program. As noted, the next meeting will be December 14, 2010, at the Parish Hall, with Ann Welty hosting. As aforementioned, we will be electing officers, so we hope to have a large attendance.

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!!

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is preparing for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Advent is a time of prayer, repentance, and watchful waiting for the birth of the Child who would take away sin.

In the twelve days of Christmas, the birth of Jesus is celebrated. The altar hangings are blue for Advent and white for Christmas. The Advent wreath marks time until His birth.

The Altar Guild continues to have need of more members. Please contact Beverly Beck (903)723.8874 or (903) 391.4479 or contact any altar guild member.



ECW Christmas Party

*All the women of St. Philip's Episcopal
Church are invited
To the Episcopal Church Women's
Christmas Party
Hosted by Ann Welty
Tuesday, December 14, 2010
9:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall
Please join us for Christmas Cheer and
Fellowship*

Food Catered by Chef Lee Boyd



Altar Flowers

2010 Christmas Altar Flower Memorials and Thanksgivings

To join in the tradition of adorning St. Philip's Episcopal Church with greens and Poinsettias during the Christmas season, please return the form below. Be sure to list those you are remembering or honoring in order for the names to appear in the service bulletin.

2010 Christmas Offering

Your Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Flowers given in loving memory of:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Flowers given in thanksgiving of:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My check for \$ _____ payable to **St. Philip's Altar Flowers** is enclosed.

Mail to: Altar Guild Flowers, St. Philip's Church, 106 E. Crawford, Palestine, TX 75801.

Please return form by December 13, 2010.

Cursillo

The Campsite Cursillo held on November 11-14 was a great success! The weather was beautiful, and both team and participants felt the Lord's presence in this inspirational setting.

Jenny Cunningham sponsored one person from St. Philip's, and we understand that she had a lovely time.

I will have the dates for the 2011 Cursillos soon and will publish them in the January Curate. May the Lord bless each of you during the Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas season.



My Utmost for His Highest

A selected reading by Oswald Chambers

"And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin..." John 16:8

Very few of us know anything about conviction of sin; we know the experience of being disturbed because of having done wrong things; but conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit blots out every relationship on earth and leaves one relationship only... "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned!" When a man is convicted of sin in this way, he knows with every power of his conscience that God dare not forgive him; if God did forgive him, the man would have a stronger sense of justice than God. God does forgive, but it cost the rending of His heart in the Death of Christ to enable Him to do so. The great miracle of the grace of God is that He forgives sin, and it is the death of Jesus Christ alone that enables the divine nature to forgive and to remain true to itself in doing so. It is shallow nonsense to say that God forgives us because He is love. When we have been convicted of sin, we will never say this again. The love of God means Calvary, and nothing less; the love of God is spelt on the Cross and nowhere else. The only ground on which God can forgive me is through the Cross of my Lord. There, His conscience is satisfied.

Forgiveness means not merely that I am saved from hell and made right for heaven (no man would accept forgiveness on such a level); forgiveness means that I am forgiven into a re-created relationship, into identification with God in Christ. The miracle of redemption is that God turns me, the unholy one, into the standard of Himself, the Holy One, by putting into me a new disposition, the disposition of Jesus Christ.

DOK

Kathleen Smith

The DOK will not meet in December.





ECW Pictures



Lhis is a drawing of the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France. It was incorporated into the floor of the cathedral about 1220. This is the most common labyrinth used today and is the pattern of the ones that are painted on canvas that are portable to be used inside or outside in various places.





Alpha Pictures



Alpha II - It is hard to believe that on December 6 we will be wrapping up the second Alpha Course at St. Philip's. Thanks to Barbara Kolstad for organizing the meals for the 10-week course and to all of the people who so kindly did the cooking and serving. Thank you to small group leaders Tucker Royall, Meador Montgomery, Beverly and Bob Beck, Martha Polasek and Kathryn Fagalde. Forty-seven (47) people completed the course last June and another 25 will finish this month. Alpha is a huge commitment and St. Philip's can be proud of the two successful courses.





December 2010



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9a Staff Mtg. 10a Bible Study 5:30p Euch/Heal 6:30p Choir	2	3 8:00a Men's Cursillo Group	4
5 7:30a Euch Rite I 8:45a Christian Ed Study 10a Euch Rite II	6 6p OT Study 6p Alpha	7	8 9a Staff Mtg. 10a Bible Study 5:30p Euch/Heal 6:30p Choir	9 No DOK Mtg in Dec	10 8:00a Men's Cursillo Group	11
12 7:30a Euch Rite I 8:45a Christian Ed Study 10a Euch Rite II	13 St. Mary's Guild 5:30p Women's Cursillo Group 6p OT Study	14 9:30 ECW Christmas Party 6p Vestry Mtg.	15 9a Staff Mtg. 10a Bible Study 5:30p Euch/Heal 6:30p Choir	16	17 8:00a Men's Cursillo Group	18
19 7:30a Euch Rite I 9a Christmas Carolfest 10a Euch Rite II	20 5:30p Women's Cursillo Group 6p OT Study	21	22 9a Staff Mtg. 10a Bible Study 5:30p Euch/Heal 6:30p Choir	23	24 Christmas Eve 6p Euch Rite II 10p Euch Rite I	25 9a Euch Rite I Christmas Day
26 7:30a Euch Rite I 10a Euch Rite II	27 6p OT Study Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29 5:30p Euch/Heal Office Closed	30 Office Closed	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed	

November 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

January 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Braden Minton | 19 | Jim Boone |
| 1 | Judy Bradly | 21 | Billy Minton |
| 2 | Michael Gorby | 22 | Frank Polasek |
| 3 | Andrew Mitchell | 23 | John Norton |
| 6 | Joe Ann Leggett | 23 | Jimmy Blackwell |
| 7 | Rose Nemer | | |
| 9 | Tome'Nell Gregg | | |
| 11 | John Boone | | |
| 11 | Ian Nicholson | | |
| 14 | Bill Fraser | | |
| 15 | Linda Paul | | |
| 17 | Julie Law | | |



Anniversaries

- 27 Bart & Cathy Norton
29 Ken & Jane McConnell



CHURCH INFORMATION

St. Philip's Staff

Rector Ted Welty
 Church Administrator Kelan Eckerman
 Organist/Choirmaster Clarissa Delany
 Sexton Chris Rogers

Leo Mizell (Senior Warden)
 Curt Winkler (Junior Warden)
 Norwood Brenneke (Treasurer)
 Mark Davis (Vestry Clerk)

Bob Blackwell Kay Chapman
 Frank George Sparky Kolstad
 Ann Royall Maffitt Martha Styner
 Charlie Nichols Albert Holmes

Parish Office Hours

Monday -Thursday 9a-5p
 Friday 9a-12p
Closed Federal Holidays
Phone: 903-729-4214
Fax: 903-729-8691

Church Office email:

Priest: twelty4235@aol.com
Church Administrator: kelan@stphilipepiscopalchurch.org
stphilipsalastine@embarqmail.com
Website: stphilipepiscopalchurch.org
Curate: ma_polasek@earthlink.net

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