



The Preparer

The Episcopal Church St. John the Baptist
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November 2011

Christmas is Coming at St. John's!

ADVENT

Advent is a season of opening doors so that the divine can shine through us offering a welcome to others—like a neon sign on our hearts that says “Please, come in!”



The Greening of the Church

Saturday, December 3rd --9:00 am

Join us for **The Greening of the Church**. . . .
the preparation of the church for Christmas.
Wear jeans and bring your gloves.

Christmas Poinsettia Dedications

Sign-up sheets for Christmas Poinsettias
will be in the church hall.
The dedications will be included
in our Christmas bulletins.

Christmas Eve

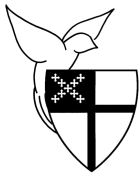
Family Service, 6:30 pm
Festal Eucharist, 10 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to assist during the service.

Get Ready for

Christmas!

Fellow members of Christ's community,



Our Stewardship Ministry leaders have developed our church's stewardship theme for the year 2012. It is "Embracing God's Plan For Our Future." We must embrace it and

support it. Stewardship is the use of God-given resources for the accomplishment of God-given goals. And we are God's stewards. Everything we have, and I mean EVERYTHING, belongs to God. God gives us resources and we are to use those for the glory and accomplishment of the kingdom of God. He has "loaned" us the things we have to use for His glory, as well as for our living. We, as Christ's servants, are required to use God's property – which is all that is entrusted to us – not just to meet the needs of our lives, but to make a proper return to Him through our gifts, our tithes, our pledges, and our offerings to His church.

Jesus started His church as the foundation from which to build His kingdom. We have been called to work in the greatest work of all time and eternity – the establishment of the kingdom of God. We are thus called to use what we have been entrusted to benefit that kingdom, to build up His church, to build the Body of Christ, and to do so with a proper return of His investment in us. That's why scripture established the principle of the tithe. The tithe is the returning of 1/10th of what is His – 1/10th of what He has entrusted to us - to honor Him as God. So, we must strive to grow as believers to where we give 10% of the treasure that God has provided to us, as our investment in the establishment of His kingdom – the growth of His church and its ministries.

On many Sundays, and in emails and newsletters, here at St. John's, we read, see and hear of ministries in action and service. And we are growing and developing new ones all the time. We are provided with opportunities to go into the world to serve the needy and bring the message of Christ to them and many others. We participate in worthwhile and spiritual worship, and in opportunities to study His precious Word with other believers. We are, and will be, baptizing new members into Christ's community. We are, and will increasingly be, a welcoming house to community organizations, showing the community Christian love.

Our giving and our pledging are cheerful expressions of thanksgiving and are also

spontaneous reaching out to give out of our love for Christ – a first fruit, a tithe that is the result of our blessings. God has trusted us with His property. Let us trust Him by giving back to His church and her mission, as our investment in His kingdom and its growth. I urge you to generously support our church this coming year by "Embracing God's Plan For Our Future."

Your brother in Christ,

MILITARY PERSONNEL

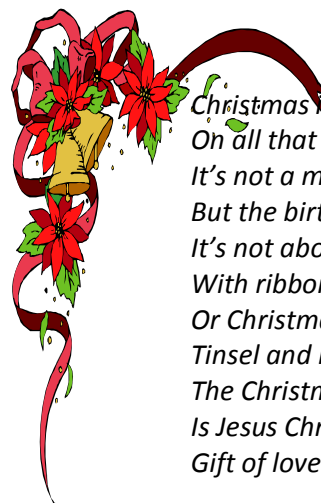


1st Lt. Claudia Alday; PFC Charles Barker, Sgt. Lisa Beckett, Cpt. John M. Bergener; Cpl. Jeffrey Bolland, Paul Brezinski, Lt. Col. Stephen Brown, SSgt. John Burgess, SPC. Adam Chase, Sgt. Sean Cook, SPC Andrew C. Diaz, A1C Mary Ellen Ellis; Sgt. Daniel Franklin, 2nd Lt. Nathan Franklin, LCPL Ryan Gardner; PFC Christopher Gates; MA1 Bernadette M. Gaul, Dr. Tim Goodrich, Cpl. Michael Jacobs, Matthew Lees; Brian Long; LCPL Michael Matter; PFC James McElligott; SPC Brett McGillen, Lt. Col. Laurence W.G. McSheffrey, Lt. Col. Marion Moxley, Lt. Col. William Moxley, 2nd Lt. Evan Munson, Maj. Kim Nail, SSgt. Benjamin Nelson, LCpl. Nicholas Drew Michael Nobel; Brian Ragsdale, Chris Ragsdale, Nicholas Ragsdale, Maj. Steven Santamaria, PFC Michael Shoemaker; PFC Bradley Spencer; Sgt. Tim Stoner, Sgt. Jon Michael Stresing, P3 D. J. Tussing, Christopher VanSteeter; SPC Adam Wood; Josh. Staff Sergeant Ahmed Kousay Altaie

captured October 2006 (Iraq)

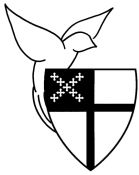
SPC E4 Bove Robert Bergdahl

captured June 2009 (Afghanistan)



*Christmas is a time to reflect
On all that God has done
It's not a matter of what we get
But the birth of the Holy one
It's not about gifts
With ribbons and bows
Or Christmas trees
Tinsel and mistletoe
The Christmas gift given to us
Is Jesus Christ's
Gift of love*

© By M.S.Lowndes



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Recently I've heard comments about how early Christmas shopping is being promoted. I've noticed that the Hallmark channel began running their continuous Christmas theme movies at the beginning of November rather than waiting until Thanksgiving. It seems that Thanksgiving is getting lost in the shuffle. Recently, I tried several stores unsuccessfully to buy some Thanksgiving napkins. I was told that they weren't being stocked this year in favor of Christmas items. We see that merchants are competing to see who can open the earliest for the "black Friday" sales!

Carol and I decided to get all of our Christmas shopping done early --- before Thanksgiving. This actually has a practical spiritual advantage. This will allow us to use the Church's season of Advent as a time of spiritual preparation for the celebration of Christmas. Avoid the rush and shop early!

This year, the season of Advent in the Church begins on Thanksgiving weekend with November 27 as the First Sunday of Advent. These four Sundays leading up to our celebration of the Nativity of Christmas are days of spiritual preparation for us.

The themes of Advent include the Coming of Christ, watching, waiting, and joyful anticipation. The scripture readings begin on the First Sunday of Advent talking about the day of Jesus' return, and move on through the succeeding weeks to John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus. The Third Sunday is Rejoice Sunday (from the second reading) when we light the rose candle. The Fourth Sunday celebrates the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary to announce that she is to be the Son of the Most High!

Although we will be putting the greens up in the church on Saturday, December 3, they won't be decorated and lit until Christmas Eve. They will be waiting in anticipation! For me the essence of Advent is preparation in joyful anticipation!

Shop early! And, take time to enjoy a spiritual renewal as we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Frank H. Clardy

ANGEL TREE at ST. JOHN'S



Buying gifts for Angel Tree Kids and parents began on Sunday, November 29th. Parents are on red tags...kids are on green tags. Pick up 1 or 2 now and shop sales. Enjoy shopping for those who won't get gifts without us! Wrap gift, if possible, and attach the tag to gifts (together in a bag.) Get a white reminder sheet.

All gifts need to be returned by Monday, December 19th!!

Thanks for easing their pain. If questions, call Dan Basche 602-439-3594.

Mark your Calendars...

St. John's Annual Meeting

Sunday,
January 29, 2012
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
followed by Potluck Brunch
and Annual Meeting



Arrowhead Hospital is looking for people to volunteer at our guest relations desks in the evenings and on weekends, in particular. Qualifications include a willingness to be helpful to patients and visitors and the ability to walk long distances while engaging in conversation that assists your guest to relax and understand we are here to help – no matter what! If this sounds like something you would just love to do, please go to the website: www.arrowheadhospital.com and click on the "Volunteer at Arrowhead" button and follow the links to the application. Arrowhead Volunteers commit to one four-hour shift a week for a minimum of six months. Need more information? Just call the office at 623-561-7232. Arrowhead Hospital is located on 67th Avenue just north of Union Hills and We LOVE our volunteers!



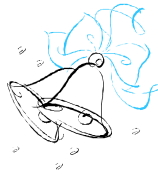
December Birthdays



12/1	Merton Houdek
12/2	Kurt Gruenberg
12/4	Keith Read
12/5	Tracy Hare
12/7	Chloe Goings,
12/8	Larry Weig, Vicki Smith
12/10	Karl Sundberg
12/13	Lisa Corwin
12/15	Chuck Milhoan, Mary Jane Santamaria
12/16	Jim Burch
12/21	Rosalie Lytle, Kristie Stressing
12/24	JeNiene Dimond
12/28	Rob Stressing
12/29	Dianna Last
12/30	Mike Young, Sue Oppenheim, Sarah Clinkenbeard
12/31	Patrice Hand, April Tudor

December Anniversaries

12/1	Bob and Shirley Thake
12/6	Mick and Patrice Hand
12/7	Jim and Debbie Luson
12/11	Karl and Sue Oppenheim
12/18	Tom and Pat Meeks
12/21	Rob and Kristie Stressing
12/26	Harry and Pat Way



Love, and love alone, is capable of giving thee a happier life.

--Ludwig van Beethoven



We are making a response to life every waking moment; our attitudes formulate the tenor of our responses. When the sun warms our bodies and the flowers tease our nostrils, it may be easy to love everyone and smile. When we have a negative attitude, we may snarl and all too quickly criticize innocent bystanders, as well as friends and family. All we need is to make a simple decision to look with love as far as our eyes can see.

When our hearts are God-centered and filled with love and laughter, we'll find no experience too difficult to handle. No problem will evade its solution for long.

An attitude of love promises us gratitude in abundance. We'll never doubt that all is well when love is at our center.

Tips to Prevent Holiday Stress

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. One key to minimizing holiday stress is acknowledging that the holidays can trigger stress. Accept that things aren't always going to go as planned. Then take active steps to manage your stress during the holidays. Here are a few tips to help you:



- ❖ **Stick to a budget.** Before you go shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend on gifts and other items. Then be sure to stick to your budget.
- ❖ **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make one big food-shopping trip.
- ❖ **Learn to say no.** Believe it or not, people will understand if you can't do certain projects or activities. If you say yes only to what you really want to do, you'll avoid feeling resentful, bitter and overwhelmed.
- ❖ **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a dietary free-for-all. Some indulgence is OK, but overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.
- ❖ **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enabling you to enjoy your holidays guilt-free. www.mayoclinic.com



Youth Group News!



Even with visions of turkey dancing in our heads, our youth group is looking for ways to observe the season of Advent.

Though we traditionally think of Advent as the four weeks leading up to Christmas, the original observance was something altogether different. In the 4th and 5th centuries, Advent was known as a six week preparation for the season of Epiphany, not Christmas. During this time, much like Lent today, new converts prepared themselves for baptism and faithful believers examined their hearts. Though the focus of Advent is different for us today, the idea of Advent as a time of introspection remains.

With that in mind, we will be doing some activities designed to introduce youth to the notion of Advent as a season of contemplation, preparation, and expectation. In contrast to the rush towards Christmas in the culture around us, Advent offers a real opportunity to slow down and tune into those things that we might miss in our busy lives. If you would like more information please see our weekly activity handouts in the parish hall.

Since there is no youth group on November 27th, we will be meeting at 4 pm on December 4th to look at some spiritual practices that kids can use at home to go deeper with Christ. Then on December 11th, we will meet at 4 pm and go to Coronado Care Center to sing carols and spend time with the elderly patients.

On December 18th, we will meet at 4 pm and have our annual Christmas party! There will be a \$5 gift exchange and lots of fun and food! Finally- we will not have youth group on December 25th or January 1st. The lock-in has been cancelled so we will start again on January 8th. Hope to kick off the New Year with all of you!!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Operation Christmas Child amazing! Your boxes will make a difference to kids all around the world!

Help the Episcopal Habitat Coalition in its mission to raise funds and build houses for Habitat for Humanity



Thanks to Arizona tax law, taxpayers can get a dollar-for-dollar tax credit on their Arizona income tax return for charitable contributions made to a qualifying charitable organization. Single taxpayers can contribute up to \$200 and married couples can contribute up to \$400. An Arizona charitable tax credit contribution has the effect of reducing your Arizona tax liability dollar-for-dollar for every dollar up to \$400 that you contribute.

How Will These Funds Be Used by The Episcopal Habitat Coalition?

Your contribution will provide the land and materials for a house to be built by the Episcopal Habitat Coalition in support of our work for Habitat for Humanity. The Episcopal Habitat Coalition is a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt publicly supported charitable organization and is a qualifying charitable organization of the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.

What's The Difference Between a Charitable Tax Credit and a Charitable Deduction?

A charitable tax credit is much more favorable to you as a taxpayer. A charitable tax credit reduces your Arizona tax liability dollar-for-dollar (i.e., gives to your favorite charity what you would otherwise give to the State.) A charitable deduction on the other hand, is itemized and subtracted from gross income to determine the amount of the taxpayer's taxable income, thus reducing a taxpayer's tax liability by a limited percentage.

Additional information and the donation form are available in our Parish Hall.

**Newsletter articles for the January issue of The Preparer
must be submitted no later than 12 Noon Sunday, December 4!**

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE



**Family Service
6:30 p.m.**

**Festal Eucharist
10:00 p.m.**

CHRISTMAS DAY EUCHARIST

**9:00 a.m.
(one service)**