



t-he e-pis-le

OF ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Advent & Christmas

Advent for us is a time of preparation and expectation but too often the meaning of Advent gets lost in our hustle and bustle to prepare for Christmas, we are anything but quiet and we lose much of the anticipation.

As we make our way to Bethlehem once more this year we are challenged by a weakened economy, job loss, and uncertainty. We are given an opportunity as people of faith to spend some time preparing ourselves and our souls for meeting Christ not in the commercialism of the season but in the act of preparing for the One in whom is our true hope.

May we be transformed by the coming of God's true Light in this time of despair and darkness. We are a people of hope and our hope rests in an unexpected child!

Fr. Deon+



How I got called to be a farmer...

By Joannée A. Debruhl

Have you ever seen the movie *Evan Almighty*? In the movie, God decides that a congressman, Evan, is supposed to build an Ark on the vacant lot next door to his suburban home. First Evan receives a large wooden crate full of tools. Next the lumber gets dropped off in Evan's driveway. And best of all the animals start showing up.

Lately I have been feeling like Evan. When my job was eliminated in February 2009, I asked God to send me a billboard (a "sign" might be too small). The G³ Garden project was an idea starting to form and I felt that was what I should be doing while I looked for a real job.

On three separate occasions I asked what God wanted me to do: If you want me to grow food for your people, don't offer me this job (I didn't get the job). If you want me to grow food, show me how to do it while working full time (2nd job opportunity fell through). If you want me to grow food, let me be one of the 15 students they accept at MSU (I got accepted).

OK, so now I know God wants me to feed his people. But did I let up with my conditional praying, no.

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The newsletter of St. Paul's Episcopal Church
200 W. St. Paul Street, Brighton MI 48116
www.saintpaulsbrighton.org

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CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS 2009

DECEMBER 20, 2009

AN ADVENT EVENING 5:30P.M.

Join the St. Paul's Adult and Children's Choirs for a musical evening of sounds and music for Advent.

**DECEMBER 24, 2009
CHRISTMAS EVE**

5:00P.M. FAMILY EUCHARIST

A service in Celebration of Christmas geared toward children and families of all kinds. Everyone is invited to attend.

10:40P.M. FESTIVE MUSIC

The Choir will provide a prelude of Christmas music in the spirit of the season. Come sing along.

11:00P.M. MIDNIGHT MASS

A traditional Eucharist in celebration of the Birth of Christ with candlelight singing. Bring the whole family to celebrate the reason for the season.

**DECEMBER 25, 2009
CHRISTMAS DAY**

10:00AM THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Celebrate the Day of Christ birth with a brief service of thanksgiving.

By Derek Spencer

On the Happening 2009 trip I had an amazing time with all my new friends. This is the one thing I will never forget in my entire life. At the beginning all we did was play games to get to know each other more on the first day. The next morning we did some really fun activities showing us all the different ways someone can understand the word of God.

That night we got a chance to be alone with our groups and tell our stories and talk about the reason why you need God the most as way of getting to know the real person and not the fake images we show.

Then the next morning after breakfast we did a healing ceremony. It was at first depressing because everyone was crying, But yet you could just look, see and feel that people really do care about you.

I met so many new friends that weekend and I'm really glad Fr. Deon signed me up to go to this. I am going to go again so I can meet new people and have a fun time and hang out with all my new friends from the weekend.

We ended up learning some pretty cool songs. The lyrics were really touching. It was done professionally instead of us singing them. It would make you cry. While we were singing everyone got real close and really

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Letters from Happening 2009

Three of our Youth spent three days in Midland, MI with other youth from around the state for a weekend of prayer, fun and reflection...here are their letters back...



By Brandi Spencer

Happening 2009 was something I will never forget. I met great people, and they all had wonderful personalities. Most were shy, even some of the leaders were. We all got used to each other after about an hour for some, and some took a day. We knew everyone by their names, and we enjoyed each other's presence.

Four people I won't ever forget, and who kept all the noise and the motion going throughout the weekend were, Trevor, Travis, Mac, and Ian.

Trevor was a nice, funny guy, at the same time, he was mature, and cared what we did. Travis was the first person I met face to face, he was so funny when I first met this kid, I knew we were going to be friends. Mac, and Ian seemed so close, like best friends. They were the first to say hello, and both made Danielle's, and my day, since I was terrified to go to Happening. By the first night Ian had lost his voice.

Over the weekend, we all started to grow closer to God, and it was the most I think I have ever had God within my presence. I loved feeling welcome within a group of people I barely knew, and found out that I had some same interest with people, and some with which I didn't but still got along great.

One memory I can't forget is the healing event and being able to have everyone pray for one another. It felt wonderful. Everyone was crying, it was an emotional time, everyone letting out all their feelings.

This would be one weekend I will never forget, it made me regret thinking it was a stupid idea.

"My Experience at Happening 2009 was life changing..."

By Danielle Canfield

My experience at the Happening 2009 was life changing. When I got there I didn't feel comfortable at first because I didn't know anybody there. That changed after the first hour and everybody made me feel super welcomed.

It was something I will never forget the people I met there and I will always keep them in my heart.

"Happening was something I will never forget!"

We played lots of games and spent time getting to know each other and it was truly a spiritual

journey.

We were broken into table groups in which we discussed the aspects of each of our lives. We sang beautiful music, and the team who put it all together was wonderful.

I would recommend this for any youth, religious or not, and I can promise you it will change your life too.



Happening Continued

good to have someone hold you while you sing. Having that feeling makes anything better no matter how bad things get.

We also learned how to trust in Jesus just as much as you trust yourself. Every single one of us got a little closer to God, and many of us got a lot closer than we were when we started.

The team they had this year knew how to keep us all interested in whatever activity we were doing and keeping us pumped up.

During the healing ceremony I was very relieved because I realized I had people pray for me and I got to actually tell someone my problems and have them help me through them.

I am just so glad that people were there to pray for me and make me feel better. I would defiantly go again next time. It was a blast!

Happening gives young people the opportunity to gather for prayer, reflection and fun. It is a programs sponsored by the four Episcopal Dioceses in the State of Michigan was well as a triennial gathering of young people from across the Episcopal Church.

How I got called to be a farmer cont'd

OK God, you want me to go to MSU, but how will I pay for it? I stressed for a few days, and then decided to let God figure it out. The next day I got an opportunity to earn enough for the deposit for my tuition.

Then MSU called and said they would work with me on payments, rather than expecting it all up front. I wanted to expand the G³ Garden, but the expansion is temporarily on hold. So I asked God where was I going to have my farm?

Within a week a business owner heard my story about

the G³ Garden and offered me 10 acres, water and a tractor for free. Where would I get all the help I needed to plant, water, weed and harvest?

A couple weeks later a group in Detroit found the article about the G³ Garden. They have 150 men in their program who must do 5 hours of community service each week. This group has offered to help with the garden as much as I need them. God has provided the land, the labor and the opportunity for me to be trained as a farmer.

Every time I ask God how

will this happen? God provides the answer.

It's almost scary if I didn't feel like I have finally found my calling. This summer growing produce for Gleaners was by far the most fulfilling summer of my life.

My goal now is to create a financially sustainable non-profit farm by late 2010 that will grow produce for Gleaners all year long. I have no idea where the funding will come from to start the farm, but I have no doubt that somehow God will provide it.

Bishop's Visitation January 24, 2010



As part of his regular visit to Parishes in the Diocese, our Bishop The Rt. Rev. Wendell Gibbs, will be with us in January to celebrate the wonderful things happening here at St. Paul's. We will celebrate with families the Baptism, Confirmation and Reception of members of our parish community.

Mark your calendars and plan on being present for this special event.



Discerning, Changing, Life....being Called by God

By Jeanne Hansknecht

My spiritual director once told me that too often we mistake transition for the threshold we have just landed on when really transition is the storm or the chaos that blew you to that landing. Transformation is what occurs when you are bold enough to cross over the threshold. In other words, life isn't easy Jeanne, but with each unearthing of our sure footing we have the opportunity to free fall into the palm of God's hand. These are lovely words of wisdom and easy enough to grasp hold of when you are not the one travailing through life's many odysseys! But the more time I spend in reflection, the more I realize she is right. Transition need not be feared or over planned, but embraced as the journey which results in unimaginable and otherwise unobtainable transformation.

My life during these past nine years in the discernment and ordination process has been full of both transitions and transformations. It was not unusual to have a single event be the source of both chaos and creativity. Often the very things that made my life hectic and often crazy also provided me routine, deep friendships, and an amazing education. All of this is changing now and change is scary even when it promises some stability in the end. My classes at the seminary are finished and ordination is days away, a new ministry is about to be born. Does this indicate transition or transformation? Probably both, they go together.

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Music for the Season...

By Nancy Flanagan

Music is the perfect accompaniment on the journey toward the coming of our Savior--and an integral part of the celebration following his birth. We have many rich opportunities at St. Paul's for young and old to raise their voices in song this season:

The St. Paul's Choir will be singing Advent anthems each of the four Sundays in Advent, incorporating parish instrumentalists (Patrick Hannah, Laura Zizka-Wright and Nancy Flanagan), and joining the 9:30 family service to sing with parish children and their parents on Sunday, December 6th.

On the last Sunday of Advent, December 20, all parishioners are invited to attend an "Advent Evening," at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary--and anyone who would like to sing with the choir for this event may attend one of two rehearsals (7:30 p.m. on December 17 or the 3:00 p.m. dress rehearsal on the 20th) and join their voices with the St. Paul's singers. See Nancy Flanagan for copies of the music and a rehearsal CD.

The Children's Choir will also be singing on the 20th, and a reception for everyone will follow in the Parish Hall. The Advent Evening is informal and designed to involve all parish members, as the time of preparation gives way to rejoicing.

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What is a Deacon?

Deacons are members of one of three distinct orders of ordained ministry (with bishops and presbyters). In the Episcopal Church a deacon exercises "a special ministry of servanthood" directly under the deacon's bishop, serving all people and especially those in need (BCP, p. 543).

This definition reflects the practice of the early church, in which deacons were ordained "not to the priesthood but to the servanthood [diakonia, "ministry"] of the bishop" (Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition). In the ancient Greek-speaking world the term diakonos meant an intermediary who acted or spoke for a superior.

Christian deacons were agents of the bishop, often with oversight of charity. Since ancient times the liturgical functions of deacons have suggested the activity of angels. As they proclaim the gospel, lead intercessions, wait at the Eucharistic table, and direct the order of the assembly, deacons act as sacred messengers, agents, and attendants. The revival of the order of deacons in the twentieth century has emphasized social care and service. Many bishops in the Episcopal Church expect their deacons to promote care of the needy outside the church.

In addition to those ordained deacon as a permanent vocation, there are also "transitional deacons" who are ordained deacon as a preliminary step toward ordination as a priest. This practice is required by the canons of the Episcopal Church, but its theology and usefulness has been questioned by those who favor direct ordination to the order for which one is chosen.

Helping Your Child Stay on Santa's 'Nice' List

By Angelle Batten, M.A., H.H.C.



Santa's checking his list. Twice. And, your little one (or not so little one) is probably wondering if the word 'Naughty' or 'Nice' will be next to his or her name.

While children have to learn to be responsible for their behavior, sometimes the adults who care most about them (and have to respond to their behavior) set them up for failure without realizing it.

What we feed (or don't feed) our children each day has an impact on their health, happiness and their behavior. During the holiday season, children are often bombarded with sugar and lots of 'fake' foods. The cookies, candy canes, hot chocolate, crackers, pop, juice and cupcakes (just to name a few) are everywhere. These treats are usually offered with lots of love and joy.

There is plenty of research regarding the negative impact sugar has on the body. (1) For children, one of the immediate consequences of filling up on sugary or otherwise 'empty' treats is that they are then often not hungry for the nutritious foods their bodies need to be healthy and happy. This in turn impacts their blood sugar, which goes on a roller-coaster ride, and can have an affect on how they feel and act.

As a parent, a grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, minister, or any other adult who interacts with children this holiday season, there are decisions you can make and actions you can take that will increase the odds your little ones will stay on Santa's 'Good' List.

One: Plan Ahead. Plan out nourishing meals and snacks each day, especially on days you know your child will be offered lots of sugary treats. If you can feed him some protein and healthy fats along with the 'party' foods, the sugar will have a slower impact on his blood sugar. Pack some string cheese, homemade whole-grain muffins, apples with nut butter or trail-mix in your purse or car so you have some nutritious 'fast food' when you need it.

Two: Offer Healthy and Fun Treats. Healthy food and fun food are not exclusive of each other. When you are hosting a holiday gathering offer foods that are both. Let even your youngest of guests create their own mini-pizzas on whole-grain bagels, top their own tacos at a taco bar or spread whole-grain muffins with cream cheese frosting. Within children's reach, offer a plate of colorful vegetables, fruits, cheese and dips like guacamole, humus and homemade ranch dip. Have a plate of strawberries dipped in real dark chocolate. Skip the pop and juices and offer some fruit smoothies or a pitcher of water with sliced oranges, lemons, strawberries or cucumbers to add flavor.

Three: Be the Responsible Adult. Children need boundaries in all areas of their lives. It's okay and in fact responsible to say no to party foods sometimes. Our children do not fully understand how all the processed food affects their health and behavior. It's unfair to set them up for failure. We would not do this in any other area of their life, so why do we do it when it comes to food? Talk to your child ahead of time about limits - drinking water instead of pop or juice, having one or two small treats or one bigger one after eating the 'real' food that is offered. Let your child know that people have to make choices that support good health and behavior. Then, stick to the boundaries you set up despite any pouting, tantruming or bugging. And, be a good role model. Children who see you fully enjoying a favorite holiday treat but not overdoing it will be learning eating habits that will serve them for a lifetime.

So, even with all of the hustle-bustle of the holiday season, the lack of sleep and too much sugar, remember that with a little planning, modeling and communication, the children in your life can rest assured that Santa will be leaving them more than a lump of coal this Christmas.

"Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent...If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time."

-Edward Hays

Discerning, Changing, Life...being Called by God

Advent seems an appropriate time for this kind change. As much as it saddens me to leave here, there is hope and expectation in the days to come. I have been called to be the curate (assistant priest) at St. Andrew's Ann Arbor.

I do not know all of the details of my ministry there yet. It is my understanding that my primary responsibility will be to serve as chaplain to the children and families of the parish. I will also be working with the outreach team. I think this will be a good fit for me. The size and scope of St. Andrew's is just enough out of my comfort zone that there will be much for me to learn from them and I look forward to those challenges as well. It turns out that after years of playing it safe and obsessively making calculated plans, I am a bit of risk taker after all—go figure.

I will begin my new adventure the end of January. In the meantime, I will be taking some much needed down-time. During that time, I will reconnect with my loving family and refuel spiritually. You will remain in my prayers. You have both informed and formed my ministry—strengthening my love affair with Jesus and my passion for social justice. Some day if I get arrested for standing firm in my faith, I hope you will remember me too and bring bail money!

One of the things that I love about the Bible is that the individual books do not really close; they build upon one another. Father Deon was right in wanting to rip the covers off of the Bible because God is still acting in the *kosmos* and interacting with humanity.

This Good News changes everything! My time as a seminary intern at St. Paul's may be ending. Our story together as faithful witnesses in the world is not. God be with you 'til we meet again, my beloved.

In Peace, Jeanne

The Ordination of
Jeanne Hansknecht
to the Sacred Order of Deacons
will take place
Saturday, December 12, 2009
11:00 a.m.
The Cathedral Church of St. Paul
4800 Woodward Ave,
Detroit MI

The Rt. Rev. Wendell N. Gibbs
Tenth Bishop of Michigan, Presiding

Advent!

*I am. I was. I will be.
I am not coming soon I am here.*

*I was born on a cold night in a cold place
Unnoticed, unheralded by cold people
Who turned my mother away.*

*On that night were you listening?
On that night the "least of your brothers" was me.
Now do you see, do you hear and do you care?
I am not coming soon I am here.*

*In your life do you see me
In the ragged men and women
Who search the cold street
Looking for my reflection in your heart?
Do you hear my voice in
Their muttered plea or in their tear?
I am not coming soon I am here.*

*Do you hear me when your friend turns to you
To ask forgiveness and trust?
Do I not forgive you always?
Do I not give you a merciful ear?
I am not coming soon I am here.*

*In this season I was born unto you
Fulfilling the promise of God's care.
Look for me, listen to me...*

I am not coming soon I am here.

by W. H. Smaw

Music for the season... continued

Children will again be singing at the 5:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve service, and the adult choir will sing at the 11:00 p.m. service--and parish musicians will provide festive music for the season from 10:40 p.m. until the Christmas Eve service begins. *The Children's Choir will have a single rehearsal for all their holiday performances, at 6:30 on Thursday, December 17--but all children are warmly invited to participate whenever the children are singing.*

The service of Christmas Lessons and Carols will be Sunday, January 3, at the 10:30 service, and will feature all parish musicians, adults and children, in a wonderful celebration of Christmas music. Beginning with the time-honored Anglican procession of "Once in Royal David's City," and following the liturgy of nine readings and accompanying music, Lessons and Carols is a rich tradition in our church.

I Wonder...as I wonder

By Michelle Rosinski

As a parent and teacher I am always excited to witness the "light going on" in a child. My five-year-old connecting sounds with letters and sounding out words, my daughter mastering her subtraction facts, and the endless why questions from my three year old. This year we have started a new program called Godly Play. The children don't just hear the story, they are asked wondering questions to get deeper into the story. I wonder what part of the story is the most important? I wonder if there is part of the story that we can keep out and still have the whole story? They are challenged to make connections to their life. I wonder where you are in the story? I wonder what part of the story is about you?

After this time of wondering the children are given time to respond how they'd like. It is interesting to see who chooses what. There are watercolors, tempura paints, play-doh, journals, and books to choose from. They also have the opportunity to play with the materials throughout the room. The desert box is a favorite, they love to retell the stories and move God's people around the desert. There is a miniature alter set up for the children to "light" candles and share "communion."

One Sunday a child brought their parent

back to the room to give him Jesus bread because he missed it during the service.

Connections are being made; children are beginning to understand that the stories they hear relate to them. I have heard my own children wondering about the story days later and are even writing about it in school. To keep the excitement going we want to offer special materials for them to use during the response time. Here is a list of ideas if you can help in any way.

Art Materials

- ✧ Modeling beeswax
- ✧ Mosaic gel gems
- ✧ Oil-based crayons
- ✧ Oven baked clay
- ✧ Calligraphy sets
- ✧ Copper foil paper
- ✧ Tiles & Mosaics
- ✧ Wood pieces (with wood glue)
- ✧ Scrapbook paper
- ✧ Gold inkpads and intricate stamps
- ✧ Charcoal pencils

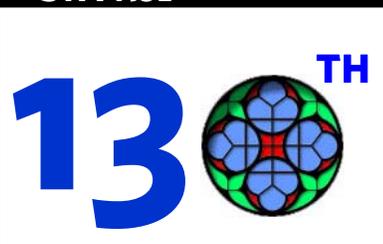
For Meditation

- ✧ Buddha Board www.buddhboard.com
- ✧ Finger Labyrinths www.tlslabyrinthmarket.co.uk/finger.html

1880 – 2010 CELEBRATING 130 YEARS OF MINISTRY

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF

ST. PAUL



FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS WE ARE CALLED

On June 18, 1880 The Rev. William Clark and a small group of faithful Episcopalians gathered together to dedicate the cornerstone of their new building. From nothing more than the dream of an Episcopal congregation in Ore Creek (original name of Brighton) and the dedication of Clark, his family and dedicated men and women who shared the dream the Mission of St. Paul was founded.

Over the years St. Paul's went on to become a full fledged parish in the Diocese of Michigan and has undergone several changes throughout the years. For a period of time St. Paul's ceased to exist, but with the persistence, vision and dedication of a few the small congregation found new life and new meaning. "We are dedicated to be a place of welcome" was the rally cry which has echoed down through the ages. St. Paul's for 130 years has been and continues to be a place of hope, inclusion and spiritual journeying. Join us in 2010 for a year of thanksgiving and celebration as we vision for another hundred and thirty years!

Making Christmas count!

Around later October many stores had caught the scent of Christmas. I walked in to a local store the day before Halloween and was assaulted by glaring Christmas music and twinkling decorations. Since October we have been charting a course towards Christmas. It seems as though Christmas comes earlier and earlier each year. But one of the things we have to ask ourselves as people of faith is; how do we make Christmas meaningful in our lives and in our world.

It would be easy to simply "go with the flow" and jingle bell all the way from Halloween to December 25th. If we're not careful we run the risk of having Christmas lose its meaning. All the tinsel, eggnog and brightly colored boxes can quickly lose their luster if we forget the reason for our celebration. God's gift to us in the form of a helpless child comes in the most unexpected places and times and we have an opportunity to seek after God's presence in our lives and in the world around us.

So as we turn our gaze towards Christmas and all that this season brings we have the opportunity to really make it count. We have a chance to make Christmas more than just another day on the calendar, we have a chance to prepare not only our homes but our hearts for God to do something different with us and with our lives.

May you be blessed the Christmas season with all of God's many blessings as you seek to make this Christmas count.

Blessings,
Fr. Deon+



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