



Faithful Centurion Anglican Orthodox Church

Christmas Eve Christmas Day First Sunday after Christmas

Sunday Report



Christmas Message

Bishop Jerry L. Ogles
Christmas Day 2012, Anno Domini

It may seem odd to you that a two-year-old lad could remember some event that occurred at that tender age, but I do remember the end of the Second World War. I was just 25 days short of two years of age when that momentous news was broadcast on our radio on the morning of 7 May 1945. My mother and older sister, Lynn, were most likely listening to Glenn Miller-style music (for I have always loved it from youth) when the NBC announcer interrupted the music with a special bulletin: "General Dwight D. Eisenhower reports that surrender documents between the Allied Forces Europe and the German High Command have been signed and finalized in Berlin this early morning." Following that announcement, the Star Spangled Banner was played followed by a day of martial music and other related news. In Europe, King George VI had made the same announcement to the people of London and all of England who had endured, courageously, so many years of war and devastation. Those remarks by King George VI were followed by the singing of God Save the King in perfect unison of a grateful people. I suppose the event was burned into my young mind by the irrational response of my mother and sister to the news. They began throwing magazines and newspapers up to the ceiling and dancing madly about proclaiming, "Daddy is coming home!" Psychologist would label that reaction that I had to the event as a "Significant Emotional Event." Such an event never escapes our memory.



On this wonderful Day of the observance of the most Significant emotional, historical, spiritual, and redeeming event that has ever happened in either Time or Eternity, let us remember with gratitude that surpasses any other conclusion of a state of war - the great Truce, Armistice, and surrender of all history - the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to an obscure and quiet little village outside Jerusalem, called Bethlehem! No longer would all of the hearts of men be at enmity with their Maker, but reconciled by grace and faith to God the Father through the Redemptive and Atoning life of Jesus Christ, His only Begotten Son.

In the hard dark days of the remote past of antiquity, no one arose from their beds on this Day with the warm glow of love and fellowship that Christmas engenders. All was darkness and mildew until the Light of Christ broke, brilliant as the morning

sunrise, upon a bewildered world. The penetrating beams of white light penetrated and dissipated the centuries, and even millennia, of encrusted hate and bitterness that had plagued a world ruled by the greed and selfishness of the heart of man. That darkness of the old world-that-was could not abide a single ray of the brilliance of the Light of Christ. The wicked world realized immediately that it could not continue in that new Light. So it attempted, and still attempts, to block that Light so that its wicked deeds and deceitfulness will be covered. Must I remind you that the effort is futile?

The amazing events of the first Christmas are all the more amazing for the manner in which the momentous event was revealed. There was no NBC radio news, or FOX satellite TV, in those days – only those poor and insignificant (in the eyes of the world) shepherds on the hills overlooking sleepy little Bethlehem. They were men of simple hearts and minds, and of very small expectations, yet, tonight news more wonderful than ever would be revealed to them that had been denied to rulers and kings in their opulent palaces. The Mind of God is so far from that of men that we can barely grasp even the stark realities of God. Even the Wise Men disregarded the brilliant Star as they drew near to Jerusalem thinking that the King of Kings would surely be born in the palace of the king in the capital at Jerusalem. But they were wrong. It wasn't until they left the man-made lights of the city that they once again saw the Star and were glad. *".....they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."* (Matt 2:9-10) Isn't it astounding how the ways of God so far outstrip the thinking of men – how those which we consider to be foolish and inferior vessels are often the very ones the Lord chooses through which to show forth His beauty and glory? *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* (1 Cor 1:20-21)

I am presently basking in the warmth of the wonderful atmosphere and spirit of our last evening on Christmas Eve of some of my finest and most beloved friends. They are teenagers and young college adults whom I have known from their early youth. I consider them very important to my soul, and to the heart of God. Though young and unproven in the eyes of the world, I can see the light of God in their precious hearts. They make my autumn days of glorious colors in gold, and scarlet, and pale green. As I see the evidence of Godly faith glow as a flame of fire in their hearts, I can say that I, of all men, am moist richly blessed to have had the privilege to be their minister over these past years.

Perhaps you are lonely and consider yourself too aged, too poor, too uneducated, or too unfortunate to attract the attention of God. If so, remember that special bulletin issued on the hills outside Jerusalem by mighty angels to poor and lonely shepherds. You may find that you, too, are looked upon as poor Hagar said in the wilderness at Beerlahairoi was looked upon by a loving God: *And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?* (Gen 16:13)

Just as our Beloved Lord looks upon, with high regard, the helpless and abused little girl of the Khyber Pass, so does He look with the eyes of love upon the poor, the aged, the downcast, and those that have sat in darkness – for He has sent a Great Light into the world at Christmas – even His only Begotten Son, Jesus!

Merry Christmas to you today, and every day of the rest of your earthly life!

Christmas Eve

As the song goes, *Oh the weather outside is frightful, But the fire is so delightful, And since we've no place to go, Let it snow! Let it snow!* Actually, while we have had snow this year already, none for today! The Outside Air Temperature was merely 46°F at Mount Olympus' 3,500' msl altitude, so no snow. Not a lot of sunbathing either with a light rain falling. We are thankful for the coming of our Lord and the freedom we have. Although the weather was not bright and sunny, the dispositions of the three people attending the service were!

By the way, each year we have a rosemary bush Christmas "tree" with a C-141 Starlifter for the Star in remembrance of Dru's service as a Flight Nurse.



Propers

Each Sunday there are Propers: special prayers and readings from the Bible. There is a Collect for the Day; that is a single thought prayer, most written either before the re-founding of the Church of England in the 1540s or written by Bishop Thomas Cranmer, the first Archbishop of Canterbury after the re-founding.

The Collect for the Day is to be read on Sunday and during Morning and Evening Prayer until the next Sunday. The Epistle is normally a reading from one of the various Epistles, or letters, in the New Testament. The Gospel is a reading from one of the Holy Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Collect is said by the minister as a prayer, the Epistle can be read by either a designated reader (as we do in our church) or by one of the ministers and the Holy Gospel, which during the service in our church is read by an ordained minister or our Deacon Striker.

The propers are the same each year, except if a Red Letter Feast, that is one with propers in the prayerbook, falls on a Sunday, then those propers are to be read instead, except in a White Season, where it is put off. Red Letter Feasts, so called because in the Altar Prayerbooks the titles are in red, are special days. Most of the Red Letter Feasts are dedicated to early saints instrumental in the development of the church, others to special events. Some days are particularly special and the Collect for that day is to be used for an octave (eight days) or an entire season, like Advent or Lent.

We used the propers for the first service of Christmas Day for our Christmas Eve service which are found on Page 96-98, with the Collect first:

The Collect.

O GOD, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thine only Son Jesus Christ; Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Dru Arnold read the Epistle, which came from Paul's letter to Titus beginning in the Eleventh Verse of the Second Chapter. Paul tells Titus that it is only God's grace that gives us salvation. If we are going to accept that grace, we need to live the life to which God has called us. Regardless of cost, we need to live the life God has purchased for us.



We need to trust in God and in this world live cleanly, conservatively, thoughtfully, looking towards God for our salvation. We need to encourage and exhort other Christians to do likewise.

To live in harmony with others.

To be, to the extent we are able, paragons of virtue. Serving as good examples, not bad. Paul tells Titus to do what is right, trust in God and worry not. Quoting a later author,

"Trust in God and Dread Naught."

THE grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Tonight's Gospel is the narrative of the Nativity from the Gospel according to Saint Luke, the Second Chapter, beginning at the First Verse.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about



them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Sermon – Reverend Deacon Jack Arnold - Time and Action

Today's sermon brought the Collect, Epistle and Gospel together and is partly contained in the forewords above.



Today we remember and celebrate the coming of our Lord, the first time; we look to the coming of our Lord, the second time. The Jews were looking to God to send the Messiah, the one who they determined would free them from the brutal yoke of the Romans and put them on top again. The veritable Top Dogs. They wanted a Champion to lead them to victory over the Romans and throw them off Israel. What God sent was a baby. Well, The Baby, but nonetheless a baby. Shepherds came to worship Him, but Herod was looking to kill Him. No good in having a Champion putting Herod out of the petty quisling dictator job.

What God sent the Jews was His Son. In point of fact, He sent Him to the Jews first, but not only. The "Wise Men" showed up to worship Him and regardless of who they might have been, they certainly were not Jews. This Son was to free the Jews from the Prince of Darkness and the finality of death. That really did not fit the Jews' plan.¹ They were still looking for Expulsor, he who would toss the Romans out on their heads.

"Grant as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge.", With sure confidence, if we receive him now as our Redeemer, we shall be filled with sure confidence of being received by Him when we are standing before his Judgement seat. If we do not joyfully receive him now, how can we expect him to be joyfully receiving us when we come to meet him.

In joyous rememberence of His Birth, we must keep in mind the end goal of his arrival here on Earth, which was to free us from the bondage of sin and death, by giving his life so that we might be free of this terrible oppression. We must Rejoice always and again I say Rejoice, in the fact that we are free from the wages of sin, by the fact that He gave his life for us, and was born that He might save us from a final death.

The key word is joyfully, meaning we must of our own free will receive Him into our

¹ By the way, it has been said if you really want to make God laugh, tell Him your plan. I don't take credit for the thought, but sadly I do not know where I first heard it.

hearts, and feel the joyousness of His Birth, for this holiday of His Birth is a happy time, to not only feel the joy of his physical arrival, but of what He came to do for us, that we might be free for all eternity. He shall be our confidence and our spiritual dwelling place, rather than place our hope in men, who shall always fall short, but God shall never lead us astray or fall short of our hopes and expectations, unlike Men.

Remembering His Birth each year, we must consider what the cost was for our freedom from death, which soon after he ascended to be with Our Father.

Some guy coming to save their souls, without the need for slaughtering the profitable sacrificial animals did not really fit their plan. They had The Law, what more did they need?

The Jews concentrated on their wants and ignored their needs. Need, Want – both four letter words, oft used interchangeably. Sadly, they don't mean the same thing.

So, that is where the Jews were on Christmas Eve; Christmas Day for that matter? God intended to fulfill their needs, they looked to have their wants fulfilled.

How about us on this Christmas Eve; or Christmas Day for that matter? Are we looking for someone to make us rich, thin or cool? Or are we looking for someone who will save our souls? Do what God asks, you will not only gain eternal life, but eternal happiness and as a plus you will be happy. You may think you can have more fun, but He guarantees you will be happy.

As we come upon this midnight clear, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ waits for us. Will we accept it? Follow Him, accept His Grace and all will be good forever.

He comes!

Be of God - Live of God - Act of God



Christmas Day

The weather for the Christmas Day service was very nice, 39°F and a high thin overcast with a lot of wind. End of church, end of wind! Very nice. The lovely weather brought 3 people to worship the Lord on the day of his birth.

Gathering Song

Because it is Christmas, Rev Deacon Jack Arnold chose to move out of our traditional gathering songs and picked *O little town of Bethlehem* for the gathering song, Hymn 21 in the Hymnal. It is a beautiful song and truly representative of the complete meaning of Christ's coming.

O little town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;
and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels
keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth!
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him,
still the dear Christ enters in.

Where children pure and happy
pray to the blessed Child,
where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the Mother mild;
where charity stands watching
and faith holds wide the door,
the dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
and Christmas comes once more.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel! *Amen*



Propers

The propers for today are found on Page 96-98, with the Collect first:

The Nativity of our Lord, or the Birthday of Christ, commonly called Christmas Day.

[December 25.]

The Collect.

ALmighty God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

¶ This Collect is to be said daily throughout the Octave.

Dru Arnold read the Epistle for Christmas Day, which came from the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, beginning at the First Verse of the First Chapter.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first-



begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

Hap Arnold read the Gospel for Christmas Day which came from the Gospel according to Saint John, the First Chapter, beginning at the First Verse. This particular Gospel is known as the Last Gospel as it comes from the last Gospel to be written, that of St. John, and it brings the final Word of Jesus to us.



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Sermon – Reverend Deacon Jack Arnold - Time and Action

Today's sermon is the message of Christmas. Jack had a different sermon written, but this is the one he gave.



“He came unto His own and they received Him not.” Christ came unto His own, the people he created, to show them the Word which He is the living embodiment of, the Living and True Scripture. They received Neither the written Word that his Apostles wrote, nor the spoken Word from His Mouth that He spake unto them. “But as many as received Him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God.” He has adopted us unto his family, through His Word, which he has spoken unto us, that we may fulfill it and live in harmony with others in this word.

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” This speaks to the living incarnate nature of the Word, (Christ) who dwelt among us 2,000 years ago, that he might understand our nature more, so that He could teach us with more understanding. If He lived in our conditions, it would be easier for Him to relate to us when He taught and spake the Word of His Father. “And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” In That Word, He spake both full of grace and of truth as John talked about in the last Gospel. Through His grace and truth that we accept, only can we do things for His Glory. Without the Word, we cannot do anything for Him, as imperfect creatures, now having been accounted and spoken for by Christ. With the Word, we are empowered to do things for Him. The birth of Christ would foreshadow his death, which would bring about the ultimate freedom, that from

sin and death.

Today we recall the birth of our Lord and Savior, the only means by which we, imperfect creatures with free will, might be accounted as perfect before God when our day of judgment comes. Born, not in a palace, but in a stable, He is all that we have been promised. Taking the substance of Man, all Man and all God, He knows our temptations, He knows our failures, He knows our failings, He knows our sorrow; He also knows our happiness, our small triumphs, our hopes and our dreams. He is the only one in this world who will never fail us in the slightest. He gives us His example to follow. If we will but follow Him, we will draw closer to God. He made the world, He knows the world. He defeated the Prince of this World, thus with His Help, so will we. This is a day of joy, foreshadowing a day of sorrow, leading to the greatest joy of all.

Let us joyfully receive Him into our hearts and homes, that we might do what He asks and spread the Joy of His Arrival on Earth that we might prepare for His Second Coming. If we do this and what he asks, which is a common theme that stays the same throughout the Christian Year, we shall be Blessed with good things, as a result of doing what He asks. On the Christmas Day, let us Rejoice in His Coming and begin our preparations for His Second Coming

Let this be a blessed and happy Christmas. He has come to us!

Be of God - Live of God - Act of God



First Sunday after Christmas Day

The weather for the First Sunday after Christmas Day service was beautiful. Sunrise temperature on Mount Olympus was 31°F, warming to 43°F by church time. The lovely weather brought 3 people to worship the Lord. By the way, we had to work most of the day after church, so by the time we got home, it was snowing like crazy. Welcome to sunny Southern California, land of fruits and nuts.

Gathering Song

Because it is Christmas, Jack Arnold chose to move out of our traditional gathering songs and picked *Humbly I adore Thee*, Hymn 204 in the Hymnal. It is a beautiful song with special meaning at the time of Christ's coming.

Humbly I adore thee, Verity unseen

Humbly I adore thee, Verity unseen,
who thy glory hiddest 'neath these shadows mean;
low, to thee surrendered, my whole heart is bowed,
tranced as it beholds thee, shrined within the cloud.

Taste and touch and vision to discern thee fail;
faith, that comes by hearing, pierces through the veil.

I believe whate're the Son of God hath told;
what the Truth hath spoken, that for truth I hold.

O memorial wondrous of the Lord's own death;
living Bread that givest all thy creatures breath,
grant my spirit ever by thy life may live,
to my taste thy sweetness neverfailing give.

Jesus, whom now hidden, I by faith behold,
what my soul doth long for, that thy word foretold:
face to face thy splendor, I at last shall see,
in the glorious vision, blessed Lord, of thee.



This gathering song is a truly wonderful work. Read it carefully and think the meaning through.

Propers

The propers for today are found on Page 104-105, with the Collect first:

The First Sunday after Christmas Day.

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Dru Arnold read the Epistle for today, which came from Paul's letter to the people of



Galatia, starting at the First Verse of the Fourth Chapter. Paul reminds us, as well as those long gone in Galatia, we are to do God's will, but through our Lord, we are not servants, but children of God, for "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit

of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Gospel for today came from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the First Chapter, beginning at the Eighteenth Verse.

The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.



Sermon – Reverend Deacon Jack Arnold - Time and Action

At this Christmastide, it is not surprising to find “To take our nature upon him”, is a



key phrase of the Collect, preceding “To be born of a pure virgin”, meaning He could not have been born from anyone else but Mary, who was at the time a pure virgin (this is before the birth of James, Jesus’ biological half-brother. But the more important part of the phrases is “to take our nature upon him.” When He came into this world, He took our nature upon himself, that is to say in simpler terms He became like us.

He felt our emotions we feel, the pain, the joy, the suffering and more material emotions like that of hunger, of wants and of needs. This he took upon Himself, so that He might come to understand His creation more. And also, to sacrifice Himself for our sakes, He needed to be within our bodies, so that He could be accounted as a “human” sacrifice, taking upon all of our sins upon Himself, that we might be

accounted as perfect before God to enter into heaven

As Paul says in his letter to the Galatians, we are not to be servants or slaves of God, but we are His own children, we are more precious to Him than if we were servants or slaves. That is a key difference between Christianity and Islam. Islam views its followers as a means to an end, but Christianity views the followers as part of God’s Holy Family in Heaven.

We are different than the world for this very reason. The world lacks the compassion, the love Christ has given us, and it is the reason why it is and has been filled with so much trouble and sin over the thousands of years of our existence.

We have to realize that God took upon our nature and our infirmities for us, that His love is infinite as He is infinite. He is the past, the future and the present, He is the Master of Time.

When we pray, we must refer to God as Father, as He is our spiritual Father and in a sense, physical Father too, for without him, our fathers would not have been created and our lives would not have sprung forth upon this Earth. We are in a state of eternal debt to God for bringing us in and saving us from the trouble of our human nature. If we are to repay it, we must follow Jesus on the path to perfection, which we will never get to, but we will certainly never get to it if we never try.

As we came upon this midnight clear, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is here for us. Will we accept it? Follow Him, accept His Grace and all will be good forever.

He comes!

Be of God - Live of God - Act of God

Bishop Ogles' Sermon

We are off fortunate to get copies of Bishop Jerry's sermon notes. Today is one of those Sundays. Today's sermon starts off with the collect, and like always, it will give you a lot to consider in your heart.

Sermon Notes

First Sunday after Christmas Day
30 December 2012, Anno Domini

The First Sunday after Christmas Day. *The Collect.*

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*



1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. Luke 2:1-20

Today we shall observe three occasions in the Church Calendar – the continuing Christmastide, the Holy Innocents, and the coming New Year on Tuesday.

If we read the Bible as a strictly edifying historical work, we will miss the entire message of the Gospel, for the Bible is a Living Text that bears the same application to

our lives today as to those of whom it has given account between its inspired and infallible covers.

During this Christmastide, we celebrate the coming of Light and Wonder into a dark world, and we do so both figuratively and formally; however, it would be wrong to believe that the Coming of Christ ended on Christmas morning. Christ is forever coming into our hearts if we have hearts that are open to His knocking. You will not find Him in churches that are not faithful to the Gospel, for He "*stands at the door* (without) *and knocks.*" If the door to your heart has grown callous with rusty from years of hard living, and is not open to Christ, you will not even find Him in a Church strong in its Gospel message. But no thing is beyond the arm of the Lord to traverse, and He may haply force open the corroded and barred door of the most egregious sinner in His time, and cause a joyful welcome to be proclaimed from lips that only spoke vulgarity in times past. If you wake up on the morning of July 4th with a prayer for Christ to live in your heart that day, even July 4th becomes Christmas to you. Do you get it? Is there some cruel irony in singing "O Come all ye Faithful" in summer? Not at all. We grow too rigid in our hymn-singing at times. Christ seldom observed a strict formality, but behaved in ways that set the teeth of the Jewish rulers on edge. Naturally, we must be reverent and orderly in worship, but not so staid that we condemn even Christ for healing of the Sabbath Day!

God is all powerful and able to work in the hearts of even evil men to accomplish His purpose. Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, yet the prophecies proclaim that Christ should be born there. (see Micah 5:2) The foreshadowing of Bethlehem as the place of Christ birth is even alluded to in 1 Samuel 16:1 - *And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.* Jesse is the father of David and, so, Bethlehem is called the City of David.

These opening passages of Luke 2 are magically wonderful to my ears, for they were first repeated to me by my mother and, even then, they carried a charm and mystery to my young mind. I wonder how many young children in America today have been blessed by that experience? How nonchalantly does Luke refer to the occasion of Christ's birth: "*And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*" And so it was? Yes, it certainly was so, and could have been no otherwise! God brought the power of Caesar into play to bring about this Holy event. To all the world Jesus came as a Stranger and left as Redeemer. He was a Stranger to the woman at Jacob's Well at the noonday hour, but that woman left having found a Friend that loves her beyond all human measure. Have you met that Stranger of Galilee?

We often place our clergy on a pedestal and believe that they somehow stand in greater grace than we. A minister is simply a fellow who, hopefully, by the grace of God has been called and responded to the call of God to preach. A minister can be, and often is, fallible just as you or I can be fallible – and often are! You will note that The Holy Angels did not proclaim the great news of Christ's birth in the halls of government in Jerusalem, or even to "men of the cloth." He proclaimed this wonderful news to men whose ears were open to hear it – common shepherds of the field. These men had no other distraction than to gaze upon the endless beauties of God's star-studded heavens night after night. They understood, unlike most theologians, that there can exist mysteries in the Word of God which no competent theologian can define. They knew nothing of the conflicting teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees, or the subjects

taught in the rabbinical schools by men such as Gamaliel, but they did know that God sat upon the heavens and created every bright point of light visible to them in that purple dawn canopy above them. So God chose the least among men to honor MOST with His Gospel News!

Perhaps, if you have not met God, it may be because you are too lifted up in pride and arrogance., If so, God can lower you until you arrive at a level at which you can be taught of Him. There could be no greater blessing for such a one.

The coming of Christ into your life does not signal an end to trial and hardship. *Au contraire*, it may be just the beginning. It was the beginning of sorrows for many mothers in Bethlehem. It was the beginning of sorrows for Mary, the mother of Jesus. She failed, seemingly, to profit from His teaching until after the resurrection, but a sword pierced her heart at the foot of that crude cross at Calvary.

The recent tragic events at a school in Connecticut are heart-breaking, as well. What can be more tragic? There is something that is far more tragic! It would be that so many lives went into the darkness of eternity without the Light of Christ. What happened in Newtown is not related to the right to bear arms – every man has the right of self-protection. The tragedy of Newtown is the moral depravity into which America has sunk over the last several decades. When the Supreme Court made a law against school prayer, in contravention of the First amendment to the US Constitution, and continued to trample the religious liberty rights of the American people by outlawing Bibles in schools, Nativity scenes in public places, and legalized (immorally) the murder of millions and millions of little children – an event that dwarfs Herod's action against the children of Bethlehem – our religious leaders were eerily silent. When Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore (a 1967 West Point graduate) had the courage to display the Ten Commandments in the Supreme Court building (much like that of the US Supreme court), his greatest opponents were the Southern Baptist Conference of Alabama. America rejected God, and in so doing, reject His Providential protection of our country. He may give us over to delusion and reprobacy. We have come to calling that which God calls `good,' evil; and that which God has called `evil,' good. Majority opinions do not matter with God. God has only truth – NOT opinion!

So we see, on the Day of Holy Innocents, the intentional murder of small children by the sword. At least, their murder was most likely more abrupt than the burning death of little babies in their mother's womb by a "process of murder" we call abortion.

*18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. Gen 35:18 (KJV) (Son of my Sorrow) Rachel died that her child should live. 19 *And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. Gen 35:19 (KJV) The City of David where Christ was born also. A sword would also pierce Mary's heart. 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Luke 2:35 (KJV) 18 *In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. Matt 2:18 (KJV) 15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Jer 31:15 (KJV)***

Do we not hear those mother's voices still crying out in the streets of Newtown. When evil rules the land, even the innocent suffer. As we embark on a so-called NEW YEAR, let us be mindful that swords, guns, and bombs have no conscience. They can neither be righteous or wicked. It is the heart of the man holding the weapon that is guilty of sins

committed by any device of killing. Were we to remove every knife, every sword, every gun from the hands of man, do you believe we would have seen the end of mass murder? Historically, how have states behaved who have wielded the only means of force and violence? How did Hitler's Germany behave, or Caesar's Rome?

New Years Day is not a Christian holiday, but a secular one. The only New Year we can truly enjoy is that New Day, New Year, and New Life in Christ. Heed, America, the counsel of Isaiah if you wish for the comfort and peace of a Holy people: *When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. 20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. 21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever. Isaiah 59:19-21 (KJV)*

Men, called of God: Have you lifted up the Standard? Have you received the Word of God – not of man – into your mouth to proclaim? Have we taught our seed to know and follow that Light which came at Christmas 2000 years ago? If not, then Stand To, and do your duty now as a good soldier of the Cross.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN.

Bishop Dennis Campbell's Sermon

Bishop Dennis is a brilliant speaker. He is able to take biblical precepts and make them perfectly understandable, even to me. Oft he provides the text of his sermons and I take the utmost pleasure in passing them on:



A Saviour Born

Psalm 145, Isaiah 9:2-7, Luke 2:1-20
First Sunday after Christmas
December 30, 2012

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The world seemed to be falling apart that night in Bethlehem. A declining Rome controlled the Mediterranean world, and the decay was sensed throughout the Empire. Law and justice were being replaced by corruption and graft. Art was being replaced by gladiators. Morality was being replaced by relativism, and human life, meaning the lives of people other than those in power, had little value. In short, the world was much as it is today. How comforting to be reminded at Christmas, 2012, that God has not forgotten us, nor left us to the ravages of an evil and ignorant world, or even to the evil and ignorance of our own sins. How comforting to be reminded that unto us is born a Saviour "which is Christ the Lord."

When we hear the word, "Saviour," most of us think of the forgiveness of sins; of being saved from the penalty of our sins and being allowed into Heaven when we die. We are right to think of these things, because a major reason the Saviour came into the world was to accomplish our forgiveness and allow us into Heaven. We are all sinners, but Christ receives sinners. He came into this world to save sinners. He went to the cross to die for our sins. He took our sins upon Himself and suffered for them on the cross. He dresses us in the robe of His absolute righteousness, and now God regards us

not in our sin, but in the righteousness of Christ given to us by grace. "All have sinned," the Bible tells us in Romans 3:23. The wages of sin is death, it continues in Romans 6:23. But, thanks be to God, that is not the end of the story. The same verse that tells us the wages of sin is death immediately says, "but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "There is," as the Bible says in ----, "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

When we hear the word, "Saviour," we should also think of being saved from the destructive life of sin, which includes both our attitudes and our actions. I am talking about being delivered from what the Bible often calls the bondage, or slavery to sin. It means sin is like a power that enslaves us and forces us to do its bidding. It binds our souls with hate, greed, despair, lust, grief, anger, conceit and self-doubt, fear and foolhardiness. When these attitudes control us, we commit sinful actions. In other words, when we have an attitude of hate, we hate. Or, we could say a hateful attitude leads us to do hateful things.

Anyone who cares to take an honest look at sin will see that it has devastating consequences for us in this life. It destroys lives, homes, families, nations, and empires. It kills the soul. These are the natural consequences of sin, as we reap what we have sown. But Christ lived and died and lives again to save us from all of that. We no longer have to live in hate or greed or sorrow or anger. I don't mean we won't experience these things, we will; and sometimes they trouble us for long and dark times in our lives. But they will pass, and we don't have to live in them as attitudes or habits. We don't have to dwell in them. They don't have to frame our thoughts or control our actions. We don't have to be slaves to them any longer; we have been saved from them. We are free to love, forgive, hope, and rejoice. We are free to fill our souls with truth, honour, justice, purity, beauty, goodness, virtue, and praise. "Think on these things," wrote St. Paul in Philippians 4:8 and 9, and "Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and received in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

So the Saviour came to forgive our sins, and to save us from the destructive power of sin in our lives. He came to give us love and peace and joy and hope, not as empty words or slogans, but as real attitudes and as the frame of our hearts and lives. The person who is truly saved is delivered from the penalty of sin, and the power of sin. You are receiving the forgiveness of your sins, and receiving deliverance from the old habits and attitudes and life-styles of sin, and receiving a new way of life lived in communion with God. This new life yields conformity with His will as naturally as springtime yields flowers, all as the free gift of God through Christ our Saviour.

I need to make it clear that I am not saying we are saved to a condition of sinlessness in this life. We are not. We continue to struggle with the world the flesh and the devil, and we sometimes lose the fight. I also need to make it clear that I am not saying we don't have a personal responsibility to do right and seek the kind of life that leads us into the peace of God. We do, and we are accountable to God for our actions and choices, and they will affect our lives, and the lives of others, both in this world and for eternity. God have mercy upon us. I am saying God wants to give us new life, peace, joy, love, and all the good things the Bible calls the fruit of the Spirit, and He will if we let Him. Please let Him.

How does God impart the new way of life to us? The means of grace. You knew I was

going to say that, didn't you? God imparts the new life to you through the Scriptures, prayer, the Church, and the Sacraments. Devote yourself to these things, and you will find yourself growing in Christ. Ignore them and you will find yourself languishing in the faith, if you even continue in it at all.

One more point, and I will make it brief; when we think of the Saviour we should think in global and cosmic terms. One of the primary messages of the Bible is that Jesus Christ is going to Return, and when He does, He will set things right again. He has not abandoned us. The universe will be gathered together in Him. His enemies will be vanquished, and His people will dwell with Him in unbroken peace, forever.

I can identify with the ancient Judeans. It sometimes seems to me that the world is falling apart. I seem to see the same departure from justice, beauty, and morality. Like them, I am comforted by the angel's words, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

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+Dennis Campbell

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Rev Bryan Dabney of Saint John's Sunday Sermon

We are fortunate to have Bryan's Sunday Sermon. If you want people to come to The Truth, you have to speak the truth, expouse the truth and live the truth. This is really a good piece and I commend it to your careful reading.



Sermon for the First Sunday after Christmas

In our gospel lesson (St. Matthew 1:23), we were told of the birth and naming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We were also given the words of the prophet Isaiah who was inspired of the Holy Ghost to write (Isaiah 7:14b): Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. The name Emmanuel or Immanuel means God with us and is instructive for it makes known the intention of God to come himself into our world and to be with us where we are so that we might have the opportunity to be with him in his coming glorious kingdom of righteousness.

Sadly, a growing number of people in this Christmas season will miss the truth of what was uttered by the prophet and restated by the gospel writers concerning our gospel lesson. He came into our world to redeem mankind but to accomplish that redemption, he first had to clothe himself as a man in the flesh and become one of us. While even a fair number of unbelievers know the story of Jesus, they miss this important point principally because they cannot accept him as the only begotten Son of God. Some will claim that he was and remains a mythical personality, a figment of someone's imagination. Others may even accept him as a so-to-speak good man and idealist teacher.

And so, Christmas has become for them just another day off from work. They have missed the essence of Christ. They are missing the real reason for this season. Oh, they'll exchange presents and may even sing a Christmas carol or two. Perhaps they will attend church with family and begrudgingly listen to a sermon concerning the Christ-child. But it will be all to no effect. They will come away as unconvinced as ever, particularly if they happen to attend some roadshowesque auditorium worship service where reverence for God has been set aside for entertainment and the cult of personality. Or, they may attend a church that has become so ritualized and emptied of the Holy Spirit that the best the minister can do is read from a child's story book concerning Christmas rather than read from the Scriptures and exposit to the congregation about the necessity for Christmas ever coming about in the first place. So what are these folk really missing? They are missing heaven! Without the acceptance of the person of Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son: who was made sin for us and who took our place on Calvary's cross, they will never obtain God's saving grace. These will continue to live without Christ thus assuring themselves of a death without Christ. And that, dear friends, is the surest ticket to Hell one can get.

It is incumbent on each of us as Christians to be ambassadors for our Lord. We are to proclaim and make disciples. We are to have an answer for the faith that is within us should we be questioned about such. God sent his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved. Not the world system, but the inhabitants thereof (St. John 3:16-21).

Christmas is indeed a time of giving and receiving, but we need to understand the truth behind the season: that God gave to us a gift of inestimable value and we are expected to accept it and then use it throughout our life. St. Paul put the matter this way in his epistle to the Ephesians (2:5-10), Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

You and I have been saved with a mighty salvation because our God loved us and sent his own Son, the second person of the Trinity to make such possible. Without his first coming as that babe in Bethlehem, we would still be in our sins and trespasses with no hope of ever being freed from this body of sin and death. Only by means of his coming in the flesh, born of a pure virgin would the promise of our redemption be made manifest. As we continue on through this season of Christmas, let us remember and give thanks to God for his gift to us and remember Jesus Christ is truly God with us.

Let us pray,

FATHER we thank you for your gift to us of the Christ-child who grew to become our Saviour. We also ask for a wise and understanding heart that we might seek the truth of thy word written concerning our Lord, and to so witness of him to those who are as yet in the valley and the shadow of death: that they too might turn unto him and be saved. All this we ask in the name of him whom the Scriptures call Emmanuel, even Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Have a blessed week,
Bryan+

New Nametags

We had no new nametags today.

After Church Hospitality

Sadly, no after church snacks. The same story every week, is it not? The fact is that we are supposed to be on a low carb diet and there really aren't any low carb snacks that appeal to us. So, with no fatted dog nut in sight, we were out of luck! Please someone, between now and next Sunday invent some no-carb dog nuts.

After church goodies providers as currently signed up:

Date	Name
6 January 2013	Opportunity Available – Epiphany
13 January 2013	Opportunity Available – First Sunday after the Epiphany
20 January 2013	Opportunity Available – Second Sunday after Epiphany
27 January 2013	Opportunity Available – Septuagesima

People in our Prayers - <http://faithfulcenturionprayerteam.blogspot.com/>

Why? Prayer is an extremely important activity.

It is not that God knows not our needs, for He surely does. Yet, Jesus commanded us to ask God for those same needs. In addition to the obvious of asking God for help, offering thanksgiving and the like, prayer helps us focus our thoughts on how we might do God's work.

The Prayer Team of the Church of the Faithful Centurion was established to help our members and fellow Christians pray for those in need and to give thanks as well for the blessings we have been granted.

Who can be on the list? Do I have to be a member of the Church of the Faithful Centurion to be prayed for?

No! The only qualification to be on the list is that you want our prayer team to pray for you. We are Christians and are happy to pray for you, no matter who you are. If you want help from God, you are our kind of people.

What is the commitment from the prayer team?

Each member of the team will pray for the desired outcome at least once per day.

How do I get myself or someone else on the prayer list?

You can email one of the prayer team leaders: Jack - jack@faithfulcenturion.org or Dru - dru@faithfulcenturion.org, or call the church office at (619) 659-3608 or fill out a prayer card at church.

What should I ask for?

Depends on what you want. Some people merely want God to be asked to heal their ills and be mentioned by their first name, others want a specific outcome and / or have more of their personal information known to the team. Ask for what you want. It is your desire and need for prayer the team is attempting to meet. For typical examples, see the list below.

Updating the Team

If you are on our prayer list, or if you have submitted a person that you have asked us

to pray for, please update one of the team members or Hap in person, by telephone or email. It helps to be able to pray specifically for these individuals including their specific needs; plus if they get better, it is nice to give thanks!

Please note that on the yellow (maybe green or orange if you get an old one) cards at church, you can ask that those to be prayed for have their names disseminated to the prayer team. Those names will be said in church and appear here. Or, you can ask that their names and purpose be kept confidential, then only Hap will know to pray for them.

Prayer List Notice – If you have someone on the prayer list and their needs have changed, please let us know. We'd like to update our prayers to reflect the need and most important to give thanks!

Travel

No reported travel this week. We do note many will be traveling to be with their families over the Christmas holiday.

Move

Ryan Hopkins has moved to Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, to study Dressage Riding through June 2013. Please pray for God's guidance in his life as he works and studies.

The Thomas Family is on a short tour assignment in Guam through August 2013. Please pray for the assignment to continue to go well for Kurt and for Mary and the kids to make new friends. In particular pray that Kristyna and Mitchell will develop good friends and school mates there so as to further their development as both Christians and citizens. Things seem to be going well where the sun rises on the United States, so keep praying! Give thanks and ask for continued good developments.

Birthday

Hap Arnold celebrated his 63rd birthday 27 December 2012.

William Arnold celebrated his 31st birthday 22 December 2012.

Betsy Lane celebrated her 86th birthday 16 December 2012.

Marriage

Elizabeth and *Gunnar* were married on 17 November 2012. They ask that you pray for God's guidance in their lives as they move from being two individuals to a single unit and help them to form their new family.

Departed

Phyllis Martha Hillger, 84, passed away on 22 December 2012. Please give thanks for her life here on earth and pray for her family who remain behind.

Mr. Jairaj, a fine Christian gentleman is now with our Lord. Please pray for his wife, sons, and daughter. Pray that they will cast their grief for their loss onto the Lord and He shall sustain them.

Suz passed away the week of 18 November 2012. Please pray for family members who remain behind.

Don passed away on 1 December 2012 after a hard battle with cancer. Please pray for family members who remain behind and help them to come closer to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Joy passed away on 1 December 2012 after leaving hospice to return home to spend her final days with her family. Please pray for family members who remain behind and help them to come closer to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Homebound or Infirm

Frank has been coping with various ailments from older age. He is in his 90s and it has been a difficult year. Pray he will find comfort in God, that those who provide care to him will pay attention to him, do their best and give him the love we all desire. Pray that the coming year will provide relief to him.

Norma, Sara's mother is in a state of deteriorating health, both physically and mentally, with both onset dementia and Alzheimer's. She is slowly drifting away, though she still recognizes Sara. Please pray for both Sara and her mother to put their cares and worries on God's shoulders so they can deal with the many problems involved.

In need of a miracle or understanding of God's Plan

Larry Howes suffered a fairly severe stroke. 4 December 2012, doctors replaced a valve in a shunt that had been put in about two weeks ago, and Larry responded very well. He was able to go home. He is now back in Mass General hospital. Please pray for the medical team treating him to pay attention and do their very best; pray also for confidence in our Lord for Larry and his family. Larry needs a miracle, pray for one. Please.

Colleen has been battling pancreatic cancer over the last year and it has now spread to one of her lungs. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

Christine has cancer of the colon, which spread to her liver; she is receiving chemotherapy and is having difficulty eating. Please pray for the medical team treating her to pay attention and do their very best; pray also for confidence in our Lord for Christine and her family.

Todd and Kenny have both been fighting osteocarcinoma for over five years and have been told their time here on earth is nearing its end, absent a miracle from God. Both are ready to go home and leave the pain, but would like to stay. Please pray for them and their families.

Colonel Bud Day's cancer has returned. The outlook is not favorable. Bud has been an inspiration to all of us for years, this changes nothing. He is well at peace with our Lord and we all hope he stays with us for a while longer.

Treatment

Brian has had lung problems for a while. Recent tests found small cell cancer in the upper lung and bronchial area. It appears not to have spread. Brian began radiation and chemotherapy on 26 December 2012; that seems to be going pretty well. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in God for Brian so he can rest and gain strength; pray for the medical team treating him that they pay close attention and do their very best; pray also that he can quit smoking.

Surgery

Traci had just discovered she has colon cancer and must have her whole colon removed; the surgery was 27 December 2012. As you can imagine, she is in need of prayer. Please pray for her faith in God, for Him to enter her heart and comfort her; for the medical team treating her, that they might pay close attention and do their

best; for her family as they worry, that they might not worry but support her. Pray for a good result.

Thanksgiving and Continued Healing

Ernest had a successful angiography and stent emplacement on Saturday 15 December 2012. He is now home and resting peacefully. Please give thanks for the successful surgery, the medical team doing a great job and also pray for his continued recovery.

Lou an elderly woman in the hospital with pneumonia, is improving and will be moving to an Assisted Living Home on 28 December 2012. Please pray a prayer of thanksgiving and for continued recovery.

Liz Strauch had surgery for a pineal cyst on 4 December 2012. The surgery was very successful, she was having nausea and pain from the surgery, which has now subsided. Please pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the successful surgery and the cessation of the nausea and for continued recovery.

Bob Smouse had shoulder surgery on 28 November 2012. He would appreciate your thanksgiving prayers. While the surgery apparently went well, he is still in pain and would also appreciate prayers for continued healing and the pain to subside. He promises to work very hard on recovery therapy.

Tore, of Oslo, Norway recently had a kidney transplant. Unfortunately his body rejected the kidney, infection had set in. Without God's healing touch he would soon die. According to his wife Inga, shortly after the prayer request, he began a prompt recovery and is now home. *Tore* and *Inga* give thanks for God's Grace and your prayer.

Carol Stone, the sweet wife of *Mike Stone*, longtime friend and colleague of *Sara Simmons* as well as *Hap*, was helicoptered to hospital with an ultimate diagnosis of severe bleeding on the left side of her brain. She remains hospitalized, but seems to be making some progress.

Please pray for peace of mind and trust in God for *Mike*, guidance for the medical team treating *Carol* and strength for *Carol* as well as faith and trust. No one can ever understand the why of these things here on earth. *Sara* who passed this request on asks that you pray in both faith and hope.

Muriel Pappin broke her hip in a fall and had surgery on 21 November 2012. *Muriel* was home, but has had complications and is back in the hospital. Please pray for a recovery and return home to finish her recovery.

Healing

Rachel has Mitochondrial Myopathy. This is a hereditary disease of the muscles and they do not have a cure for it. Part of her pain is her family does not believe she is indeed ill, as she appears to be just fine. Please pray her family will learn the truth and be supportive of her; pray also the medical people treating her will find the right measures to minimize the disease. Most particularly pray for *Rachel's* trust in God.

Donald went into ICU the night of 22 December 2012, for unknown reasons.

Mrs. Tucker has had recent surgery as a result of bleeding on the brain. Please pray for trust in God and a full and rapid recovery.

Jesse a 27 year old man from Nebraska has had emergency brain surgery for bleeding in

the brain. Please pray for trust in God and a full and rapid recovery.

Zoie a little 10 year old girl is having problems with one of her kidneys. Please pray that she will be comfortable soon.

Nicolas is in the hospital with serious symptoms of a heart disorder. Please pray for peace of mind for him and guidance for the medical team looking for the cause and cure.

Mrs. Baek an elderly women fell and injured her spine. Doctors cannot repair the spinal injury due to her age. She fell again the morning of 12 December 2012, breaking her collar bone which is also untreatable. Mrs. Baek is in severe pain and will appreciate your prayers.

Gil Garcia is hospitalized with a slow healing skin injury at the Long Beach Veteran's Spinal Cord Injury Center. Please give thanks for Gil's incredible attitude, as well that of his wife Mary and their family. Pray for the rapid healing of the skin injury so Gil can go home soon.

Juanita is a young girl who was in a coma because of a blood disease. She has not come out and is gaining strength. They are awaiting results from blood samples. Her family thanks you for your prayers and asks that you continue.

Barbara had a accident while cooking and the pressure cooker blew up in her face, causing second and third degree burns over her face and upper body. Because of this she has incurred kidney problems and may need a transplant.

George had foot surgery. Please give thanks for the surgery and pray for a full and rapid recovery.

Nellie is in the emergency room of a hospital in a great deal of pain. Please pray for peace of mind for her and guidance for the medical team looking for the cause and cure.

Lauralee Meade underwent a lumpectomy on Friday after Thanksgiving. A further anomaly has been discovered and she had additional preventative radiation treatment. Please pray for a complete remission of the cancer. Pray also Lauralee will maintain her great attitude and trust in God.

Kevin Gerhart discovered cancer on his neck. He underwent radiation and chemotherapy. Please pray for the medical team treating Kevin that they might pay attention, do their very best and find the source; that the treatment might be successful and he might live a long and healthy life to His honor and glory. Pray also for trust in God and peace of mind for Kevin, his wife and family.

Bill, Sara's husband, had a third abdominal surgery on 22 November 2011, to remove a tumor. Bill is doing better keeping the doctor's instructions, for which we are all grateful, including taking chemotherapy once a day for two more years. He has radically decreased the consumption of alcohol and eating at least mostly properly. Please pray for help for him to continue do all this. Please pray also that Bill might turn his heart outward to help those around him, as well as live a long and healthy life to the honor and glory of God. Pray also for peace of mind for Bill and his wife Sara.

Kay Denton (Mrs. Kay) hip has deteriorated to the point walking is a slow and painful process, but she manages. Please pray for continued peace of mind for Mrs. Kay

and her family. Give thanks for her trust in the Lord and her positive attitude.

James L. Cavanah had surgery the afternoon of 10 February 2012, to remove two small but cancerous tumors. James is a minister with the AOC in Savannah, Georgia. Please pray for his recovery and remission from the cancer. Give thanks for the surgery and pray for both him and his family to allow God to carry their worries while he recovers.

Steve Sundberg had a heart attack after Easter 2011. After some time, the medical team treating him decided he was not a candidate for stents and a five-way heart bypass was performed the week of 6 June 2011. Please pray for his complete recovery and for his three children and family who are very worried about him, pray also for his trust in our Lord and for both him and his family to let God carry their worries while he recovers.

Matt Alcantara, age 15, has Osteosarcoma (bone cancer), a very rare and often lethal form of cancer with limited treatment options. This is a disease that is about 90 percent fatal in a couple of years. He has no hip joint on one side, but he walks and swims! Courage? Guts? You bet! Matt and his mom just came back from Houston at the Cancer Center for what was hoped to be a routine every four month bone scan. The scans were done on schedule, but a couple of new spots showed up. After Matt's San Diego doctors conferred with the Houston doctors to figure out what these spots mean, it turned out they are new and old injuries with no bad meaning. In effect they are CLEAN SCANS. Matt and his family ask you to give thanks for the super results. Please also give thanks for the great faith of Matt and his entire family. Their faith and trust is a wonderful example for each and every one of us. But, now is not the time to stop praying. Actually, it never is the time to stop praying!

Judith Clingwall, is afflicted with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). She is currently in Laurel Place, an extended care facility in Surrey, British Columbia. Judith's condition has worsened recently. She is no longer able to stand, in fact she has a lot of trouble sitting upright. Judith is depressed and wants to go home to watch her birds, which given everything seems unlikely at present. Please pray for her to take an active part in her own life, for her strength, peace of mind, trust in God and remission of the disease so she might return home to her family. Pray also for strength for her husband Martin as he deals with all the problems and stress of Judith's situation.

Becky Madden is paralyzed from the neck down as the result of a tragic shooting accident. Her husband is doing his best to take care of her; it is hard and he is learning the best he can. Please pray for further recovery for Becky, as well as strength and guidance for her husband.

Vince (age 15), reoccurrence of Osteosarcoma, recent testing found a nickel sized tumor in his lungs. The doctors are consulting with a specialist in Houston. Please pray for guidance for the medical team and for peace of mind for Vince and his family.

Obra Gray continues to take day by day. Please continue to keep Obra in your prayers, and give him the strength of knowing the Lord is with him and will never forsake him. Obra needs security of what lies ahead of him, and only the Lord can grant the solace to answer his prayer.

Employment

Sarah is concerned about the future with her company. She would appreciate prayers for her continued employment and that her firm might find more and better ways to use her help.

Financial Guidance and Healing

David and Lorna are having financial problems. They are trying to find a smaller home which may be more affordable. *Lorna* has had an ongoing battle with brain cancer, her trips back and forth to the hospital have drained their finances to the point they sometimes struggle to have enough food in the house. Please pray for *Lorna's* healing and guidance on how they might handle the financial difficulties in which they have found themselves.

Guidance

Daniel and Danielle are experiencing family strife as a result of custodial issues with a daughter. Please pray they and those they strive with might look to the child's best interests in their time of difficulty and disagreement; to work for her best interests and not use her as a weapon amongst themselves.

Abigail is a teenager who has behavior problems. She feels she is in an area of mental darkness. Please pray that she might look to God for help and not within herself.

Sara asks that you pray for guidance for her as she deals with the stresses of her family and life. Pray that she can separate those things which she can affect from those things which she cannot and give her grace to accept that she cannot do everything and can only change those things within her control.

Jacquie to open her heart to God and accept His Love and Grace.

Hap and *Ryan* both ask you to pray they might be able to trust God will help them make the right decisions at the right time and not to worry uselessly, to change those things they can change, accept those things they cannot change, sleep well to be able to do the correct things with a clear head and that they will open their hearts to the Holy Ghost.

Guidance for Ministers

Ken Howes has been invited to St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada to preach. There is a possibility of a call to that church, a 600-member church with weekly services in German and English. His ability to speak German was what prompted their interest in Ken; he preached in both languages last Sunday. Please pray for Ken, my family and St. Peter's. Pray also for Ken to not worry about his brother Larry.

Rev LTC Al Ryan has been appointed Deacon-In-Charge of the mission parish of St. Augustine of Canterbury Anglican Church, Anglican Church in America (ACA) parish in Old Orchard Beach, Maine. It is a small but growing mission, which has been plagued by clergy change. Al, the diocesan pilot, has been appointed for one year, during which time he is to help them identify what their needs are for a vicar. He has done this before and asks you to pray for God's help one more time; not only for himself, but for the parish.

Armed Forces & Contractors

Airman Donny Patton (Kadena AB, Japan), *Jordan* (USMC – Fleet Marine Force - Pacific), *Trevor* (USAF - KC-10 Boom Operator), *Trevor* (USN – Whidbey Island, EF-18 Pilot), *Kurt Thomas* (USN – Guam)

Persecuted

Around the world, Christians are under attack, not only in the Muslim world, but from Hindus and others in India. Also, they are under continual attack in the name of “Separation of Church and State” in the western world, as it becomes actively atheist or pro-devil buddy. Please pray for God’s guidance and protection for all persecuted Christians and those around them.

Thanksgiving

Hap Arnold gives thanks for safe travel the past week.

Various Special Requests

We ask that you pray, please ask God that the Holy Ghost might give you insight into how you might make the lives of your friends and family better. Remember helping others is not just those who you don’t know!

Please join us in praying that the *Free Teen Guitar Class* will be continue to be an opportunity for God to work in the lives of the kids and their families. Please ask God to guide the class to new opportunities to make Him known to others. Help us to let the love of our Lord shine through us into their lives, putting Him first, so that He might enter in to their hearts and lives.

Question that only you can ask

What would you like to know about our history, what we believe, what we do or how we operate? *Hap* is looking for material for the continuing education class and *Thought for the Day* material. Help us help you. Please send your question to *Hap* so we all can get an answer. Just because you don’t know the answer to your question doesn’t mean you are the only one who doesn’t know. But, if you don’t ask, no one will know.

I’d like to get a different point across or announce something

If you have a different point of view, I would be happy to give you room to get your point across. While this publication is my perspective on events, I recognize not everyone may agree and that some people would like to express their own opinion. If you want to write something, please forward your item to *Hap* (with a note as to whether or not you would like editing help) to: hap@faithfulcenturion.org.

Christmas Greetings

The Anglican Orthodox Church, while headquartered here in the United States, is worldwide and a true family. Please take the time to accept the Christmas greetings from our family around the world! We changed the type size to 12, but the rest of the formatting is as sent:

From the Islands of the Philippines (Luzon):

Me and my family would like to extend our wishes to you all a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a FRUITFUL NEW YEAR. May the essence of Christmas fill your family and hearts. Bishop Pangsiw

From The Church in India:

Dear ALL,

**Wish You
A Happy and
Blessed
Christmas**

**yours fraternally in Christ,
The Most Rev.Dr.John SDR Nakka,**

The Primate :

India Christian Mission Church(1897)-at-large,
Bishop : Diocese of Krishna Godavary,
Bishop's House, Railway Station Road,
ELURU-534005, A.P., South India.

From Atlanta:

**BLESSED BE 2013 FOR ALL TO WHOM THESE WORDS COME AND ALL OTHERS OF GOOD
WILL CUM BEHAVIOR !**

J & J

Professor John and Joan Maher, Professor Emeritus, Dickinson School of Law

From Canada:

Dear Bishop and Mrs Jerry and family

May God richly bless you and your loved ones this Christmas.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. 2 Cor 9:15

Bishop and Mrs. Joshua Raj

From Liberia:

As we celebrate another birth anniversary of our dear Lord and savior Jesus Christ, it is with much happiness and joy, that we all are alive. May his birth anniversary bring us peace, joy, happiness and togetherness among us and all our churches around the world. Long live the Anglican orthodox Church and its people. merry Christmas to you all and our churches around the world, and a happy prosperous and blessed new year. House of Prayer Anglican Orthodox Church Of Liberia.

From the church in Pakistan:

Dear Bishop Ogles and A.O.C family:

Greetings in the blessed name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

This is my first e-mail after recovery from angioplasty. God is great who stood side by side throughout my heart-illness. I just want to thank all my dear brothers & sisters who had been praying for me.

Christmas is coming near so I thought I better send greetings to all. Christmas reminds us God's love for all mankind. Titus 2:11. God's love was typified by Abraham. God's love is a life-giving love. May we experience the same love when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

On behalf of faculty and students of Faith Theological Seminary Pakistan and members of the Anglican Orthodox Church of Pakistan I wish you all a very blessed Christmas and New Year.

With regards & much prayers,

+Ernest Jacob
Bishop of A.O.C. & Principal F.T.S. Pakistan

Beloved Family and Friends,

We cannot fully comprehend how God can be Three yet One. Nor can we comprehend how He can be in Heaven as the Great I AM, and on earth as the Son of Man. But thanks be to God, He is able. May our remembrance of His Incarnation be filled with joy, and may it increase our faith and comfort in Him who came that we may have eternal life.

Merry Christmas

†Dennis Campbell, Bishop, Anglican Orthodox Church Diocese of Virginia
Rector, Holy Trinity Anglican Orthodox Church
Powhatan, Virginia

Celebrating the Day when our KING came, and now waiting for KING's Return.

Merry Christmas to The Anglican Orthodox Church, Bishop Jerry L Ogles, Cinder Carroll and all the workers, members and well wishers.

Sincerely

Kamil Nasir.

**Administration, Faith Theological Seminary, Gujranwala, Pakistan
Coordinator, Synod of The United Presbyterian Church of Pakistan**

Epistleers

We post the list of Epistle Readers in the Sunday Report each week so you can either plan your attendance or your pre-reading as the spirit so moves you.

Date	Reader
1 January 2013	Dru Arnold – Circumcision of Christ
6 January 2013	Dru Arnold – Epiphany Day
13 January 2013	Dru Arnold – First Sunday after Epiphany
20 January 2013	Dru Arnold – Second Sunday after Epiphany
27 January 2013	Dru Arnold – Septuagesima

The near future, as well as Next Sunday

1 January 2013 – Circumcision of Christ – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

6 January 2013 – Epiphany Day – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

13 January 2013 – First Sunday after Epiphany – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

20 January 2013 – Second Sunday after Epiphany – Holy Communion - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

27 January 2013 – Septuagesima – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

Under the tree, waiting for Him



Certain rodents live under our tree waiting for Rat Claus to appear. With a small diameter chimney pipe, Santa Claus never gets through. Rat Claus makes it year after year. **Jesus Christ** brings Christmas, Rat Claus the presents. We know the difference.