

The Briefly

December 2011/
January 2012

The monthly newsletter for the community of
Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church
2331 E. Adams • Tucson, AZ 85719
520-327-6857 • www.gsptucson.org

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Rector's Letter

There are those who contend that the downfall of the Christian church began when the Emperor Constantine converted to the faith in the fourth century. Overnight, the church went from an anti-cultural movement, struggling to survive, to the official religion of the Roman Empire. They immediately went from having nothing to having everything.

How could this be a bad thing, you ask? Well, some contend that what the church did at this point was totally adapt itself to the culture, accepting the power and prestige of being in control, but in so doing losing its dissenting voice and with it, the true voice of Jesus. The contention is that instead of being the government's moral compass, the church became the government itself.

In today's world, I would suggest that the exact opposite phenomena has occurred. Christianity has played such a dominant role in American culture, that instead of religion adapting itself to society, society has adapted Christianity for its own use. Never is this more obvious than at this time of year. I guess there must have been a time when Christmas was a religious holiday. But the term has been so usurped by society, religious folk now only make believe they have any control over it.

Christmas has, in fact, been adapted so well by the culture, that it now represents the ultimate event to retailers across the nation. Black Friday has become more important for some than Thanksgiving. Estimates vary, but somewhere around 30% of the annual gross of American retailers comes from Christmas holiday sales.

The second obvious adaptation of Christmas to the culture is the absolute craziness that now is imbedded into this

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Christmas has been so usurped by society, religious folk now only make believe they have any control over it...



GSP kids "relished" eating lunch on the labyrinth before making their Advent wreaths. See the story on Page 7.

Rector's Letter

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time of year. The culture has placed so many expectations upon us during this season that all of us look like a football team down by seven points with 15 seconds to play. There we are, running plays without a huddle, frantically trying to accomplish it all before the final gun is fired.

Of course as we all know, both of these cultural adaptations are about as far removed from the religious significance of this season as possible. We are entering the season of Advent, a word that means "coming." The whole point of Advent is supposed to be to chill out. The season is supposed to exist as a time of contemplation and quiet, so that we may spiritually prepare ourselves for what I would argue is the most important event in our tradition.

If we can somehow dismiss the chaotic events surrounding us, the preparation time of Advent can allow us to see the full significance of the Christmas event. The realization that God is here with us in a real way can change all of us. Rather than a time of year when we are told that it is our patriotic duty to shop till we drop, Christmas actually offers the opposite message. God loves us so much that God became human. What else could any of us possibly need? Christmas should be the time of year that convinces us that we need not participate in the constant struggle to consume more and more so that we can make the gross national product even more gross. Incarnation should convince us that we have it all.

Perhaps I should be talking about what we must now do to take back our holiday, what we must do to wrestle Advent and Christmas back from the culture. This seems to be a popular topic these days. But I am wondering if maybe there is not some good news in all of this. Just think, we have now returned to the Christianity of the early church. Once again, we are the outcasts. Our understanding of Christmas is not the predominant one in the culture. That means we are once again in the counter-cultural position of the early church, a place where we have little power, a place where we are once again like Jesus, the one who lifted up the poor and dispossessed, though he had no power to do so. Beloved, we have them right where we want them.

A soothing Advent and incarnational Christmas to all of you,

Steve +

Editor's Note

We were a little late getting things in this month, which is understandable during the holidays. I'm sure everyone did their best with busy schedules, but you might want to start before Christmas on your contributions for the **February** issue. Send all articles, blurbs, and photo captions or text directly to me, Lynda Canfield, the "editor/gatekeeper" at real_canfield@yahoo.com. Wendy Pipentacos gets the calendar at wendypipe@yahoo.com, and John Banks receives all the photos, charts, and graphics emailed directly to him at jdbanks@gmail.com. The next deadline is **Monday, Jan. 16**, for the **February** issue. Questions or concerns? Email Lynda at the above address.

Blue Christmas

by Deacon Nancy Meister

The Blue Christmas Service at Grace St. Paul's on **Dec. 18 at 6 p.m.** is an important tradition, started in 2001 by the Rev. Gordon McBride. It is a beautiful service designed to comfort and lift the spirits of those who experience grief and loss at this time of year.

People come from all over Tucson to seek a quiet and meditative service with others experiencing loss of a loved one, be it a child, a parent, a partner, spouse, friend or pet.

There is a candle-lighting ritual where we remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, and their voices. People may also be feeling the loss of health, loss of a job, or loss of a relationship.

People often feel out of sync with others who are joyful at Christmas. This is an opportunity for them to mourn their loved one by lighting candles, writing a message, listening to music or just sitting quietly. As we express our grief, we become reconciled to it, never getting over our loss, but seeing hope emerge. Pastoral care givers and Community of Hope volunteers will be present to listen, offer support and provide resources. Join us for hot cider and cookies after the service.



Advent & Christmas Services

by Rev. Steve Keplinger

As the community of Grace St. Paul's, we are not here to wall ourselves off from society, but to be active participants in it. However, we are also called to be prophets, to change things when the culture drifts away.

Advent is the time when we are called to be a corrective to society. While the world is running around in a frenzy, we are here to profess that it is Advent and time to be quiet and wait. When Dec. 25 does arrive, we will celebrate not just for one day, but all twelve days of Christmas, *beginning* on Dec. 25 and ending on Epiphany. Our services this month are designed to do just that.

You will notice a significant change in rhythm as we begin the season of Advent on Nov. 27. Our Sunday liturgies will be reflective and anticipatory. Advent is also the perfect time to try our **Evening Prayer** service every Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. Evening Prayer occurs in the Julian Chapel. Also on Tuesday evenings, the spirit of Advent is captured in our **Meditation** experience at 7 p.m. in the Julian Chapel.

On **Advent Two**, Dec. 4, we will be introducing a new style of intergenerational liturgy as we welcome St. Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra, to Grace St. Paul's. During our 10 a.m.

service, we will hear the story of St. Nicholas visiting the mall. Don't miss this service, specially designed for kids of all ages.

Grace St. Paul's is also well known for our annual **Blue Christmas** service. This service was created to respond to the deep need of those who find this season so emotionally difficult. This year it is Dec. 18 (Advent Four) at 6 p.m.

The **Winter Solstice** and the longest night of the year arrives this year on Dec. 22. That evening at 6 p.m., we will gather for a meditative service in the church, marking the turning point of the season and connecting us to God through this important night. That service will also include a night walk on the labyrinth.

On the **Eve of the Nativity**, we will have another intergenerational service, which will include something way beyond the tired old Christmas pageant. Come check it out at 6 p.m. Later that evening, we will have what many consider our most beautiful service of the year. Thirty minutes of Christmas carols will precede the candlelight service that you will not want to miss. It all begins at 10:30 p.m.

On **Christmas Day**, a more intimate service will be held at 10 a.m. The celebration continues on **Christmas One**, Jan. 1, with our regular 8 and 10 a.m. services.

But wait, there's more. It does not end until The Three Kings arrive on **Epiphany**. Because Christmas day falls on a Sunday this year, we will not have the opportunity to celebrate the feast of the Epiphany on a Sunday. We will celebrate it on Thursday, Jan. 5, at 6 p.m. This was a very popular service last year, so mark it on your calendars.



Notes from the Choir Stalls

By Christina Jarvis, Director of Music

We aren't allowed to talk about Christmas—it's Advent. But if I don't talk about Christmas, these notes will be very short, so I'll have to break the rule. I don't know about you, but I intend to cheat and put up a tree at the first opportunity, and I'll probably even, um, sing carols, but don't tell Fr. Steve.

For Advent this year, the choir will not sing *O antiphons* as intros. I think we all agree we don't need to make the service longer. We'll be doing them anyway as we all sing "O come, O come Emmanuel" during the liturgy. If you are wondering what an *O antiphon* is, have a look at last year's December *Briefly* for a full explanation.

Advent hymns are just special. I like them even better than Christmas carols. My favorite is Helmsley—"Lo, He comes with clouds descending." Its not that I like to deeply wail, I just think the tune is cool. You may have your favorites. I hope we sing them at some point during Advent; if not, let me know. There will be special offerings during the season this year. The Zombies are singing a version of "Jolly Old St. Nicholas" on Dec. 4 for our St. Nicholas Sunday service. It will be a great service—the youth are also doing a play.

The adult choir is doing our usual mix of styles: Americana, Anglican (sort of contemporary rather than 16th c), and Spanish. We're having another run at "Die mit Tränen säen" (Ps. 126:5—"They that sow in tears will reap in joy") by Hermann Schein. That sucker is hard. Schein was one of those early German Baroque S guys, like Schütz and Scheidt—they were all friends. He directed music at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig about 100 years before J. S. Bach did. Aren't you glad you know that?

Christmas services this year will be different. Formerly, the Adult Choir sang anthems for the 6 p.m. Intergenerational

Service and the 10:30/11 p.m. Carols and Candlelight Service. Now, our children's choir and youth ensemble can provide their own music, so the Adult Choir won't sing anthems at 6 o'clock this year. Adult Choir volunteers will be on hand to support the singing of the hymns, so they'll still be in the chancel, unless they've all decided to hit the eggnog early.

They'd better not, though, because they're on the hook for the late service, and nobody likes it when the basses are loaded, except maybe Fr. Steve when the Orioles are playing. We won't have a brass quintet this year. With all ministries rolled into the general budget and the parish's other needs, it didn't seem appropriate to raise funds for Christmas brass. We have some terrific in-house musicians, and we'll make a joyful Christmas noise. Just wait until Rick Hanson fires up his tympani!

On Christmas Day we will have a really special celebration. In the past, a stunt choir made up of Adult Choir volunteers provided anthems. This year, the Sudanese Children's Choir, led by Abraham Deng Ater and Solomon Machar Kuch, will dance and sing. I know it isn't the tradition for GSP parishioner to attend both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, but this year you will want to do both! We are very lucky to have so much talent in our congregation and so many ways to express the love of God through music.

Mark your calendars for our *Alternative New Year's Eve Concert: A Celebration of Gospel Music*, with Rhonda Whatley, saxophone, and David Hensley, gospel piano. Don't stay up too long past midnight because on New Year's Day, Ann Stephens will provide solos for the 10 o'clock Sunday service.

God rest you merry, Christenfolk. It's all good.

Peace on earth,

Christina



Calling All Parish Organizations: Annual Report Deadline!

The Annual Meeting of Grace St. Paul's is coming: Sunday, Jan. 29, after the 10 a.m. Eucharist. And that means it's time for the Annual Report!

Let us know your group's people, accomplishments, milestones, dreams. We'd like to have reports from as many GSP organizations, covenant groups, and ministries as possible.

If you'd like to share photos of your group's activity, that would be wonderful! Either prints or digital photos are fine; if you're going to send digital photos, please send photos taken at the highest resolution your camera provides, without any editing or resizing, in TIFF or JPEG format.

Please e-mail your reports (in Word or WordPerfect format) to David Wachter, at annualreport@grace-stpauls.org, no later than Thursday, Jan. 12, 2012. Again, that address is annualreport@grace-stpauls.org.

Thank you!

Giving & Receiving: A New Approach for 2012

By Tom Pitello, Asst. Treasurer,
& Martha Whitaker, Senior Warden

As we prepare our budget for 2012, the wonderful changes that are part of who we are are behind us. Now we look forward to who we will become. We want each of you—Yes! Each of you!—to be part of the care and maintenance of Grace St. Paul's.

We are making a change in the way we will budget this year so that as a whole body we are supporting the programs and outreach of GSP. That means that we are collectively supporting all of our activities by your sharing the abundance God has given you to carry out Christ's work in our community, both inside and outside of these walls. For us to know what we can do in 2012 we need your response. All ministries this year will be supported based on the outcome of our giving and receiving responses.

Here are ways to make this goal a reality:

- If you have never pledged before, do it now! What we do as this community, as the world depends on YOU!
- If you can't offer financial support, please fill out our giving and receiving form to offer yourself to God by sharing your time and talents in some way. Full participation by all members from the children to the great-grandparents is our goal!

Here is what we hope to accomplish:

- Full support of all ministries: no more ministry envelopes in the bulletin. Fundraisers will be limited to special appeals.
- Staffing that will support the many activities and programs that are a part of who we are at GSP.
- Greater transparency in accounting for all income and expenses.



One GSP! One ministry program! Many pieces, many needs!

Please prayerfully consider how you can offer your support as we bring Christ into our world together.

Contact Martha Whitaker, Senior Warden, through the church office (327-6857) if you have questions or an offering.

The Feast of St. Nicholas

The first Sunday in December is a celebration of the Feast of St. Nicholas. Many of us leave our shoes by the door as we enter the sanctuary and are surprised to find gold coins and tangerines spilling from our footwear upon our return. Since our hands are now filled with the candy canes that have been given to us as we enter and blessed during the service, it is difficult to carry all of our Advent treats. Nevertheless, it's a small price to pay for our Feast of St. Nicholas fun!

The St. Nicholas service also provides the first opportunity for the new youth liturgical drama group to show their stuff in "St. Nicholas at the Mall." Jay Hornbacher, who wrote the script, plays St. Nicholas and directs the production, is a professional actor, director and playwright. Jay, the husband of The Rev. Gayle Bintliff, the newly installed Pastor at Tanque Verde Lutheran Church, is a lifelong Episcopalian and is thrilled by the progressive GSP community. Jay intends to continue writing and directing youth productions for GSP. We look forward to the wonderful artistic opportunities he will provide to our young people.

Las Posadas at GSP!

by Rosalind Garcia

One of the most popular Advent traditions in the southwestern United States, Mexico and Latin America is "Las Posadas", which is Spanish for "The Inns." The origins of "Las Posadas" date back to the 16th Century when Franciscan monks held reenactments of Bible stories as a way to convert people in the New World to Christianity.

"Las Posadas" tells the story of Mary and Joseph as they are called to Bethlehem to be counted in the census near the time of Jesus' birth. Since so many others are in Bethlehem for the census, Mary and Joseph have trouble finding a room at an inn.

Traditional "Las Posadas" are held for nine consecutive days starting on Dec. 16 and ending on Christmas Eve. Processions travel through neighborhoods to houses designated as "Inns" and participants are usually given candy or another treat when they are turned away. Grace St. Paul's "Las Posadas" will be done in one evening, Dec. 9, beginning at 5:30 p.m. on the labyrinth and will conclude with a simple meal in McBride Hall.

The timing is great, because it will allow families to take a break from the hustle and bustle of preparing for Christmas and allow us to reconnect with the reason we celebrate Christmas.

An email went out asking for help with various roles and with preparing dinner, costuming children, putting together gift bags for the children, and helping children with crafts after the Posada (we have two really easy crafts available for the kids). We've had a good response, but still we need help. Children and youth who are taking roles in Las Posadas need to be in the Weeks Room by 4:45 p.m. Here is what we have so far:

Sheep: We have Julia Becker and Everett Cable available for preschool and above. We



need at least 4.

Shepherds: We have Olivia Becker and Lilly Orlando available. We need at least 4.

Angels: Let's make it 2nd grade and above. We have Skylar Lipp, but we need 4.

For **Lantern Bearers**, 4th grade and up, we have Savannah Lipp, but we need 4.

For **Innkeepers**, 7th grade and up, we have Kelsea Cordero, Kayla Cordero, and Sarah Lipp, but we need 5.

For help preparing dinner, starting about 3 p.m. in the kitchen, we have Sue Pierce, Holly Shinn, and Jana Lingham.

Costuming Children, starting about 4:45 pm in the Weeks Room, we have Judith Becker. We still need help at the Craft Table about 6 p.m. in McBride, and putting together gift bags for the children, any time prior to Dec. 9.

Thank you all for your help.



Faith for the Family on the Labyrinth

By Rosalind Garcia, Director of Children & Youth, & Martha Whitaker, Senior Warden

On Sunday, Nov. 20, GSP families gathered on the labyrinth for the second Faith for the Family event. We shared a simple lunch and each family made an Advent wreath for their home.

Director of Children & Youth, Rosalind Garcia, distributed printed prayers to use with the wreaths, and explained the traditional way



to use them.

Children and their families had a great time visiting during lunch and adding bling to their Advent wreaths.

Everyone had fun decorating Advent wreaths with plenty of bling!

Kinship Corner

by Peggy Scott

As I think about this Season of Creation we are wrapping up, I can't help but be reminded that everything belongs to God. As Psalm 24 so succinctly informs us, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers."

Author Charles R. Lane in his book about stewardship asks us to recognize that this is a "radical claim." After all, when you give a gift to someone, you no longer own what you gave, right? The recipient is free to make of your gift whatever he or she desires.

Well, scripture tells us that God's ownership is all encompassing. Deuteronomy 8 instructs us even more specifically:

"When you have eaten your fill

and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, ... do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today."

Indeed, although I do not often think of myself as rich, I am incredibly rich. In fact, according to www.globalrichlist.com, I am in the top 0.78% of the richest people in the world! And that's only counting my salary from my jobs. There are so many things that God has given me—family, friends, abilities, a fire inside of me which drives me toward God—on the recent Thanksgiving

Day, I have more abundance than I can describe for which I gave thanks.

At press time, we are about halfway toward the goal that the rector and vestry have set for our annual Giving & Receiving Campaign, a goal which will allow us to continue to grow in God's work at GSP.

To those of you who have pledged your time, talent and money, my heartfelt thanks. I have no doubt this act of generosity will feed the fire inside of you to get closer to God.

To those of you who have yet to pledge, I encourage you to ask how you are called to use what God has entrusted to you. It is indeed a sacred trust that we have, and GSP offers an excellent place to respond to the trust which has been placed in us.

Thank you!

A Festive Evening of Dinner Theatre!

On Saturday, Dec. 10, at 6 p.m., just in time for the holiday season, the GSP Spirit Players are sponsoring a Welsh-themed fundraiser for GSP ministries in McBride Hall—an evening of theatre, food, and music.

The Players will perform a concert version of “A Child’s Christmas in Wales” by Dylan Thomas and will serve a dinner featuring traditional Welsh foods accompanied by live Welsh folk music. Rumor has it that there might also be Welsh rock music!

“A Child’s Christmas in Wales” is a one-act play originally written for a radio audience and one of Thomas’ most popular prose works. The story is an anecdotal retelling of a romanticized version of Christmases past, portraying a nostalgic and simpler time. It is suitable for children and adults of all ages.



Tom Thompson

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Tom Thompson. A memorial service was held Saturday, Nov. 19, with a reception following in McBride Hall,

We hold Tom in our prayers. May his soul be with the God of all creation.

Sheryll Watterson

Dec. 15, 1955-Oct. 29, 2011

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Sheryll Watterson. She is survived by her husband, Bill; son, Joshua; and daughter, Mikenna.

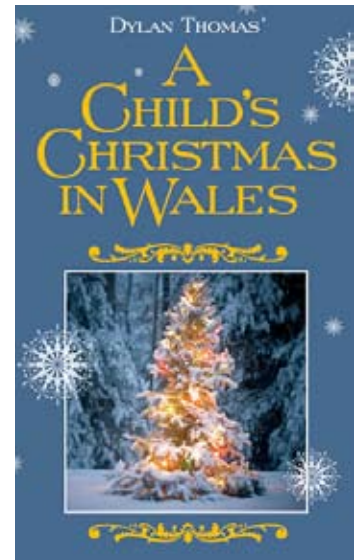
Sheryll was a retired 1st Class Petty Officer in the United States Navy. Sheryll and Bill joined Grace St. Paul’s in January of this year and quickly became attached to the community.

The memorial service is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 2, at 2 p.m., followed by a reception in McBride Hall.

We hold Sheryll, Bill, Joshua, and Mikenna in our prayers. May her soul be with the God of all creation.

There is already a good deal of interest in this event and a limited number of tickets are available, so purchase your tickets early! Tickets will be on sale during coffee hour after each Sunday service: \$7.50 per ticket or \$20 for families (regardless of number).

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact Nanalee Raphael or the Rev. Kate Baird.



Time to pass the torch!

Chris Ledyard and Chris LaBour have decided that it is time to encourage new leadership for the GSP Adult Education & Spiritual Formation Committee. They will continue with this ministry through the spring and will use that time to guide two new co-chairs through the necessary tasks.

This may be a leadership role for you! Please consider the following requirements and let Fr. Steve know if you are interested.

The leaders of Adult Education & Spiritual Formation:

- Provide leadership, direction, supervision and mentorship of Adult Education programs and facilitators;
- Work with people within the congregation and community to develop classes;

- Evaluate class suggestions;
- Provide information to the Sunday Bulletin, *The Briefly*, newspapers/ internet calendars;
- Must work well with people, each other, and Fr. Steve;
- Are familiar with Progressive Christianity;
- Are aware of and interested in general discussions currently occurring in the religious world;
- Are well organized and flexible;
- Agree to the GSP background check requirement.

If you have questions or want to discuss the ministry, please contact Chris Ledyard at mach8350@hotmail.com, Chris LaBour at celabour@aol.com, or Fr. Steve at rector@grace-stpauls.org.



Above, GSP's banner brought cheers, applause, and even some tearful expressions of gratitude as we carried it through the procession.

Right, Michi Yamasaki carries a sign that reads "No Mas Muertes" (no more deaths) and a luminaria made from a used water jug from Humane Borders. Clergy and parishioners from St. Andrew's Episcopal Church joined us, as did members of the Restoration Project, Borderlinks, and other humanitarian groups.



GSP Marches with All Souls

by Eric Carr

GSP joined with Casa Mariposa and the Restoration Project to march in this year's All Souls Procession, honoring both GSP members who have passed this year and immigrants who have died crossing the border.

It was our first year processing as a group, and we were jubilantly received by the community. It is estimated that between twenty and forty thousand people attended

the procession. We were very visible, with a wonderful banner designed by Craig Garver, and carried by Kitt Cordero and Eric Carr, who wore black cassocks in keeping with the theme of the procession.

Dozens of people started with us, and our numbers continued to swell as people joined the group along the route. It was a great success and a powerful experience. We hope to do it again next year.



News from the Welcome Table

by Lil Donovan & Colleen Filippone, co-chairs

It was a successful year! Why? Well... because we welcomed 114 new individuals to Grace St. Paul's, and 2011 hasn't even ended yet!

Name tags and informational gift bags about our church were provided to each newcomer. Networking, as always, was an important factor in helping spread the word about us, so keep on chatting us up to potential

newcomers everywhere. We also gave a few Church School Tours and handed out the best ever grocery totes!

Remember that we are in McBride Hall from 9 a.m. to noon every Sunday, so try to assist any stranger you see in finding their way over to us.

Many thanks to Lynda Canfield, Alysha Collins and Ann Dean for helping out at the table, and we can't forget our name tag guys, Craig Garver and Don Donovan.

Remember, no one is a stranger. Come visit us.

Give Me a Sign

by Martha Whitaker, Senior Warden

In case you haven't yet noticed Grace St. Paul's new signs, take a look. Craig Garver designed the new blue sign in front of GSP: it's very visible, and includes the GSP web URL and phone number. Thank you, Craig!

In addition, a GSP sign has been installed on the northwest corner of Tucson Blvd. and Adams St. with the permission of our neighbors at Medical Square.

Now, when you tell your friends and neighbors how to get to GSP, there are clear signs to guide them.

Winter Clothing Ministry

by Toni Sue Brooks

It is that time of year when evenings chill and the cold permeates our very being.

As the temperatures begin to plummet, my ministry to homeless women takes on new urgency. I seek out women who for a variety of reasons end up homeless, and take them clothing as well as prayers for their well being and safety.

The women desperately need blankets, jackets, sweaters and hoodies, along with anything else that protects them from the cold. Please go through your closet, see what you don't need and bring it to McBride Hall. I will happily distribute it!

Many thanks and blessings to you.



Adult Education & Spiritual Formation for Dec. 2011 and Jan. 2012

December can be a hectic and stressful time for many. Join us for classes and activities to quiet the mind and refresh the soul as we journey through Advent.

Spirit Players - A Play Reading Experience

1st Fridays, Dec. 2 & Jan. 6
6:30-8 p.m., Bloom Education Center

The theme for these readings is "Touching the Untouchable." The December play will be "The Shadow Box" and January will be "Dracula." Everyone is invited to attend and participate in "cold" readings of each play. No theater or public speaking experience is necessary, and parts will be randomly assigned to anyone who shows up. Non-readers are welcome as well and can participate as an "audience". All plays are appropriate for all ages. Facilitated by Eric Rau and Nanalee Raphael, Grace St. Paul's Spirit Players, who like to play with others and are avid theater practitioners.

Gospel of Mark: Conversation with Scripture

Sundays, Dec. 4 & 11
9-9:45 a.m., Bloom Education Center

Based on the book of the same title by Marcus Borg, this is a very basic study of Mark with an emphasis on new ways of reading and understanding this Gospel. As noted in Amazon.com, "Borg reminds us that the gift of Mark's Gospel comes from the revelation of its meaning rather than from the literal translation of its text. *Conversations with Scripture: The Gospel of Mark* is a must-read for those who long to understand more fully the Kingdom of God and the person of Jesus as Son of God."—John Bryson Chane, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C. The book, available at the Rector's Bookshelf, is highly recommended but not a prerequisite for attending the class. Conducted by Roger Pierce, an ordained minister and member of Grace St. Paul's.

A Child's Christmas in Wales

Saturday, Dec. 10
6 p.m., McBride Hall

It's a Spirit Players fundraising and fun theater dinner party for Grace St. Paul's ministries! Preceded by a Welsh dinner, the play, according to WikiLit, is "a memory of Christmas celebrations long ago in Wales. The narrator relates them to a small boy who peppers him with questions and directs the telling to the subjects, such as The Useless Presents, which interest him most, as well as memories of presents, relatives, neighbors, minor adventures, walks with friends, meals, postmen, and more." Watch the Sunday bulletin for more details on this wonderful pre-Christmas fun

time. Families are invited! Coordinated by Nanalee Raphael and Eric Rau, of the Grace St. Paul's Spirit Players.

Film Festival and Fellowship

3rd Fridays, Dec. 16 & Jan. 20
6-9:30 p.m., Bloom Education Center

You're invited to come enjoy a film viewing and discussion at Grace St. Paul's. The movie for December is "Tokyo Godfathers," Satoshi Kon's animated masterpiece about a group of homeless heroes in Tokyo as they learn about identity, family, kindness, community, spirituality and belonging over Christmas. The evening begins with a potluck meal at 6 p.m. A lively discussion follows the film. Coordinated by Eric Carr, and Kitt Cordero.

An Advent Practice: Poems of the Incarnation

Sunday, Dec. 18
9-9:45 a.m., Bloom Education Center

Bring your favorite poems, prose, or short stories reflecting the Incarnation. Based on the book, *A Widening Light: Poems of the Incarnation*, by Luci Shaw, editor. We will reflect on how a focus on poetry and/or prose will enhance and enlighten your Advent spiritual practice. Although not required, this book will be available at the Rector's Bookshelf. Facilitated by Chris LaBour and Chris Ledyard, seekers of spiritual paths toward Incarnation.

Listening as Spiritual Hospitality

Sundays, Jan. 8 & 15
9-9:45 a.m., Bloom Education Center

"To listen (to another) is very hard because it asks of us so much interior stability before we are free to receive, to welcome, to accept." (Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*). We will consider the "interior stability" that enables listening as alert caregiving, as opportunity for mutual growth and healing, and ultimately as sacred encounter. We will reflect on Nouwen's claim that listening is essentially spiritual hospitality, a grace whereby the lives of both parties, i.e. the one who gives and the one who receives, are blessed. Facilitated by Heather Pentland, MDiv., whose ministry as chaplain and spiritual director is deeply enriched by "listening others into speech."



Grace St. Paul's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Grace St. Paul's: A Progressive Community—Loving God, Serving Others, Journeying Together

What's Happening at GSP in December

3rd	7:30 a.m., J2A Rummage Sale 5:30 p.m., GSP 20's & 30's		11 a.m., Prayer Shawl Ministry 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Spirit Now	31st	7 p.m., Alternative New Year's Eve: A Celebration of Gospel Music	10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m., Youth Groups 7 p.m., Candlelight Compline	
4th	Second Sunday in Advent 8 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., Child Care 9 a.m., An Alternative Christmas 9 a.m., <i>The Gospel of Mark: Conversations with Scripture</i> 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m., Youth Groups 11:30 a.m., An Alternative Christmas 7:00 p.m., Candlelight Compline	16th	9 a.m., Qigong Class 6:30 p.m., Film Festival & Fellowship	1st	New Year's Day Office & Joseph's Pantry Closed	7 p.m., Candlelight Compline 7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 10 a.m., Ongoing NLP Group 6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group	
5th	7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic	18th	Fourth Sunday in Advent 8 a.m., Coffee & Conversation 8 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., Child Care 9 a.m., <i>An Advent Practice—Poems of the Incarnation</i> 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m., Youth Groups 2 p.m., Consecration 6 p.m., Blue Christmas Service 7 p.m., Candlelight Compline	2nd	7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic	17th	6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group
6th	10 a.m., Ongoing NLP Group 6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group	19th	7 a.m., Blue Christmas Service 7 p.m., Candlelight Compline	3rd	10 a.m., Ongoing NLP Group 6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group	18th	7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry
7th	7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry	20th	6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group	4th	7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry	19th	9 a.m., Conversational French Class 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Spirit Now
8th	9 a.m., Conversational French Class 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Spirit Now	21st	7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry	5th	9 a.m., Conversational French Class 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Epiphany Service 9 a.m., Qigong Class	20th	9 a.m., Qigong Class 6:30 p.m., Film Festival & Fellowship
9th	9 a.m., Qigong Class 5:30 p.m., Las Posadas	22nd	9 a.m., Conversational French Class 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Winter Solstice Service 9 a.m., Qigong Class	6th	6:30 p.m., Spirit Players—A Play Reading Experience	22nd	Food Ministries Sunday 8 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9:45 a.m., Child Care 9 a.m., <i>Meet the Junior Warden & Vestry Nominees</i> 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m., Youth Groups 11:45 a.m., <i>Meet the Junior Warden & Vestry Nominees</i>
10th	6 p.m., <i>A Child's Christmas in Wales</i> Dinner Theatre	23rd	9 a.m., Qigong Class	7th	5:30 p.m., GSP 20's & 30's	23rd	7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic
11th	Third Sunday in Advent 8 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., Child Care 9 a.m., <i>The Gospel of Mark: Conversations with Scripture</i> 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m., Youth Groups	24th	Christmas Eve 6 p.m., Pageant & Eucharist 7:30 p.m., Christmas Eve Reception 10:30 p.m., Christmas Eve Music 11 p.m., Christmas Eve Eucharist	8th	8 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9:45 a.m., Child Care 9 a.m., <i>Listening as Spiritual Hospitality</i> 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour 11:30 a.m., Youth Groups	24th	6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group 7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry
12th	7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic	25th	Christmas Day Food Ministries Sunday 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour	9th	7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic	25th	9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry
13th	10 a.m., Ongoing NLP Group 6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group	26th	7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic	10th	6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group	26th	9 a.m., Conversational French Class 11 a.m., Prayer Shawl Ministry 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Spirit Now
14th	7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 6:30 p.m., <i>Soul Feast—An Invitation To Spirit</i> 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry	27th	6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist 7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group	11th	7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry	27th	9 a.m., Qigong Class
15th	9 a.m., Conversational French Class	28th	7 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9 a.m., E/M—Education for Ministry 10 a.m., Quilting Ministry 7 p.m., E/M—Education for Ministry	12th	9 a.m., Conversational French Class 11 a.m., Prayer Shawl Ministry 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Spirit Now	28th	8 a.m., Coffee & Conversation 8 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9:45 a.m., Child Care 10 a.m., Holy Eucharist 10 a.m., Children's Eucharistic Worship Service 11:15 a.m., Coffee Hour
		29th	9 a.m., Conversational French Class 11 a.m., Prayer Shawl Ministry 3 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic 6 p.m., Spirit Now	13th	9 a.m., Qigong Class	29th	11:30 a.m., Annual Parish Meeting 7:30 p.m., Healing Touch Clinic
		30th	9 a.m., Qigong Class	14th	8 a.m., Holy Eucharist 9:45 a.m., Child Care 9 a.m., <i>Listening as Spiritual Hospitality</i>	30th	6 p.m., Evening Prayer & Eucharist
				15th	9 a.m., <i>Listening as Spiritual Hospitality</i>	31st	7 p.m., Interfaith Meditation Group