
❖ News and Views From St. Paul's ❖

Vol. 10 Issue 12

December 2007



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Dec. 2: Sunday, I Advent
9 AM, Worship – Visit of Bishop Paul
Baptism, Confirmation, Reaffirmation
10:30 AM, Reception in Parish House
- Dec. 5: 5:30 PM, Wednesday Worship,
Clement of Alexandria
7 PM, Choir Rehearsal
- Dec. 7: Crafters Corner Store, 11 AM – 7:30 PM
- Dec. 8: Daughters of the King
- Dec. 9: Sunday, II Advent
9 AM, Worship
10:15 AM, Church School
- Dec. 12: 5:30 PM, Wednesday Worship
7 PM, Choir Rehearsal
- Dec. 13: 5:30 PM, Vestry Meeting
- Dec. 16: Sunday, Advent III
9 AM, Worship
10:15 AM, Daughters of the King
No Church School or Adult Forum
2 PM, Christmas at St. Matthew's
- Dec. 19: 5:30 PM, Healing Service, Ember Day
7 PM, Choir Rehearsal
- Dec. 23: Sunday, IV Advent
9 AM, Worship
10:30 AM, Greening of the Church
No Church School or Adult Forum
- Dec. 24: Christmas Eve
5 PM, Children's' Christmas Service
11 PM, Festive Eucharist of Christmas
- Dec. 27: 5:30 PM, Wednesday Worship, St.
Stephen
- Dec. 30: Sunday, I Christmas
9 AM, Worship
No Church School or Adult Forum

Looking Ahead:

- Jan. 4: Crafters Corner Store
Jan. 4 & 5: Vestry Retreat
Jan 27 Budget Brunch



BISHOP PAUL MARSHALL TO VISIT HISTORIC ST. PAUL'S December 2, 2007

The Rt. Rev. Paul V. Marshall, Bishop of the Diocese of Bethlehem, will visit Historic St. Paul's, Montrose, on Sunday, December 2, 2007 at 9:00 AM. Bishop Paul, as spiritual leader of the 68 congregations, which include some 18,000 baptized members in 14 counties of eastern and northeastern Pennsylvania, will preside at the worship service of baptism, confirmation, and reaffirmation of baptismal vows.

Prior to his election and consecration as Bishop of Bethlehem in 1995, Bishop Paul had been a professor at Yale University Divinity School and director of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. He has written extensively both for scholars and clergy and for the general reader. His scholarly works have been described as "readable" and his popular works as "learned."

Many residents of northeastern Pennsylvania know Bishop Paul through a monthly column he writes for the secular press. Newspapers that circulate to some 400,000 homes carry the column. In a recent publication, he wrote: "I believe that discipleship in Jesus Christ pleasantly surprises us with answers to who we are and why we're here. I believe that is one of the most exciting things about the Christian gospel for people in our society today. The church is my first love because the power of the gospel is the most real thing I know...."

The primary reason for the visit of the bishop in the Episcopal Church is to preside at baptisms and renewal of the Baptismal Covenant by the entire congregation. The bishop baptizes children and adults who intend to live a Christian life. "In the

(Continued on page 4)



December 2007

My dear Friends,

I find getting ready for Christmas a spiritual challenge.

The front page of this morning's newspaper is a collage of photos of people scrambling to snatch up toys and electronic gadgets for gifts. On cue, the radio has started the annual holiday music loop – Jingle Bells, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, White Christmas. The little cards of invitation are making their way to the post box for “Christmas Cheer” for every Saturday night in December. My neighbors already have their house outlined with a million colored lights, illuminated snowpersons along with Santa and his sleigh on the lawn. Oh, my gosh, when will I get those cards in the mail!

It is easy to arrive at the Feast of Christmas exhausted and drained.

How does one prepare spiritually for the solemnity of Christmas within such the frenetic social and secular pace? I do not find it very easy.

One way is to use the four Sundays of Advent, the season of preparation for Christmas, to focus attention on the coming celebration. Each of these Sundays has a theme of preparation in the scripture lessons and the music. For instance, we at St. Paul's will be singing verses of the “O Antiphons” (O Come, O come Emmanuel, Hymn 56) each Sunday as the Sequence Hymn – the hymn between the Epistle and Gospel. Each verse is an aspect of waiting for the Messiah. The First Sunday of Advent is December 2.

Another way is to read daily the short meditations in Forward Day by Day, which you will find on the table at the rear of the Church. Not only read them, but also take a few minutes to reflect on them.

My dear friend Barbara Crafton suggests that “You can pray the Daily Office with others without ever leaving your desk, if it comes to that: visit www.missionstclare.com, a wonderful site which lays it all out for you in a format that is very easy to follow. You can pray right from the screen. It's only weird for the first few minutes...” You click on “Today's Prayer Service,” and follow the order in the left hand column. In fact, if you wish, you could even sing along with the music provided! Oh, you do know that the Daily Office is found in the front of the Prayer Book. And, it is what it says: a worship service for each day.

How about making a prayer list for each week prior to Christmas? Week one could be that each day you would pray for someone you know who lives at a distance. Week two could be a prayer for peace for a troubled area of the world. You get the idea.

Stepping back in prayer and meditation from the feverish social and secular encrustations allows the thoughtful and prayerful person the peaceful time apart from the frenetic pace of the holiday season -- a rich gift of peace and understanding. Working at your spiritual preparation for Christmas could be easier and more rewarding than you think! It might bring a deeper understanding of the message of the heavenly host proclaiming “peace on earth.”

Charles A. Cesaretti



From Your Senior Warden

Dear friends of St. Paul's,

The Vestry had a very productive and engaging meeting on November 20th. During this meeting, we covered our normal business and took time to do some long range planning. At this time, we invite you to bring a brunch dish and come to a budget brunch on January 27th.

Yes, January 27th! We ask you to put this date on your calendar now for it will be an exciting time. The Vestry would like to unveil the following:

- Final figures and closed books for 2007
- The 2008 proposed budget
- The mission statement drafted by the strategic planning committee and accepted by the vestry (after soliciting input from each and every committee)
- The new search committee

The vestry will have their annual retreat on January 4th and 5th. It will provide an opportunity for us to strengthen our leadership skills, prepare for the upcoming search process, and pray and listen as we discern the mission for St. Paul's.

May the holiday season hold you close and open your hearts.

Rachel

Loyalty Sheets to be returned by Sunday, December 2

To prepare for the Budget Brunch on Sunday, December 9, it is requested that all commitment sheets, which were included in the Loyalty Sunday packet, should be returned by Sunday, December 2.

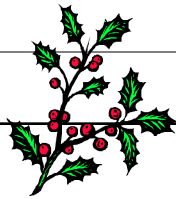
CRAFTERS CORNER STORE ~ DECEMBER 7

The December 7th Crafter's Corner Store will be in full holiday mode, offering one final opportunity for your holiday gift giving needs. Once again, the hours will be from 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and we continue to offer many new items for sale. In November we welcomed some new crafters to our group, thereby increasing the types of merchandise available. Crafters have also been busily expanding their selections to continually offer new and unique items for your shopping needs. This month our own Jerry Sock will join us with his wooden trains and trucks. Word is getting around that St. Paul's is the place to be on the first Friday of the month, and the December 7th store promises to be filled with holiday festivities and food.

This month we will have a special raffle of a Christmas basket filled with items from crafters and other holiday treasures. Proceeds from the raffle will go to the Jackie Vitteritto Scholarship Fund. Anyone interested in donating items for inclusion in the basket should contact Rita Leigh. Donations are not limited to craft type items— suggestions could include candles, candy, nuts, ornaments,---let your imagination soar. The drawing for the basket will take place at 7:00 p.m. You do not need to be present to win, but you surely will want to stop by to make sure your name is in the raffle.

Last month's homemade soups and desserts were a big hit with the shoppers. The chilly weather of late should make this months hot casseroles equally popular. Once again we are asking for assistance with the menu. Items needed include: baked macaroni and cheese, ziti, or any other type of hot casserole. We would also be appreciative of donations of gingerbread cake, Christmas cookies, 2 gallons of cider, mulled cider mix, and 4 oranges studded with cloves for the cider. Please contact Rita regarding any assistance you can provide with food. Your assis-

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CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY

(Continued from page 1)

early Church, new converts to the Christian faith were asked to 'confess the faith.' This was not a confession as we may usually think of it – as in confessing our sins – but was rather a positive statement of belief, as in confessing your love for someone," writes Canon Anne Kitch, author of the new book *Taking the Plunge: Baptism and Parenting*. Canon Kitch is on the staff of the Episcopal Cathedral in Bethlehem as Canon for Christian Formation. "To confess the faith is to say out loud what is in your heart: you love and desire God." In particular, new converts in the early church were asked to state publicly the basis of their belief," adds Kitch. That ancient public proclamation has become known as The Apostle's Creed.

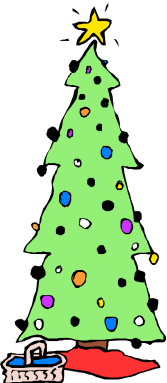
When Bishop Paul visits St. Paul's, not only will he baptize but he also he will hear the public proclamation of those who wish to declare their faith, and he will ask the entire congregation to reaffirm their Baptismal Covenant, which represents the bond between all baptized and God.

Ecology is a modern word for what medieval Franciscan scholars called "The Great Chain of Being," describing the interconnectedness of all: God, angels, humans, animals, plants, water, and the Earth itself. They predicted that if we stopped seeing God in any one link of the chain, the whole chain would fall apart. The medieval mystic, Meister Eckhardt, shows us how we stand in this scheme of things when he writes, "The seed of God is in us. ... God himself has sown this seed and inserted it and bourne it. Thus while this seed may be crowded, hidden away, and never cultivated, it will still never be obliterated. It glows and shines, gives off light, burns, and is unceasingly inclined toward God." We do not have far to go; our path is easy, our burden is light. As Socrates said, "All nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, so that when a man has recalled a single piece of knowledge—'learned' it, in ordinary language—there is no reason he should not find out all the rest, if he keeps a stout heart and does not grow weary of the search, for seeking and learning are in fact nothing but anamnesis (remembering). . . . There is no such thing as teaching, only anamnesis" (Meno, 81d).

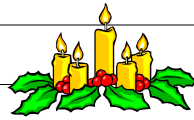
Submitted by David Plank

Susquehanna County Christmas & Coats for the Community

St. Paul's will participate in the Annual Christmas Program, which includes Toys for Tots, and Christmas Baskets. We have been asked to donate 250 boxes of hot chocolate. Donations are welcome to help with all the items included in the food basket. We thank Mary Zalewski who is St. Paul's contact person and liaison for the program. Sunday, December 16 is the deadline for all donations. Distribution will be on Dec. 20.



Along with the Christmas Program, St. Paul's will host the Coats for the Community Program on December 19 & 20 in the Parish House. The American Legion Post 154 in Montrose sponsors the program. We have many lightly used and new winter coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and some blankets. These coats are FREE to all who come. The hours will be from 10 AM to 2 PM. No questions no qualifications, just free coats to all in need. All donations of winter coats are welcome at the Post. All coats must be clean and in working condition. Volunteers are welcome to assist.



DEVELOPING A PRAYER LIFE

Most of us live our lives in the midst of jobs and families and responsibilities that prevent us from spending time with God. It is difficult to make that space for God in the midst of our hectic schedules, even for an hour on Sundays, and yet we are in need of times of solitude and silence, times of contemplation and reflection, times of prayer and meditation. We need those times just as Jesus needed them: for strength and guidance and compassion.

During the week that follows you are asked to choose one of the following exercises and practice it each day.

Three simple precautions: First, do not be afraid to fail. The spiritual life is not achieving goals; it is experiencing God. Even in failure we are learning and experiencing new and valuable things. Second, keep your emphasis on God, not the method. It is hard initially, but try not to think about what you are doing as much as why you are doing it. Third, feel free to modify the exercise to fit your needs. Alter the discipline to fit your present circumstances.

1. Set aside five to ten minutes for prayer.

Find a time in your schedule that is free of interruption. Use that time to turn your thoughts to God. You may want to read a Bible verse and meditate on it during that time, or you may want to spend that time lifting up your needs and concerns to God. The idea is to simply stop your busy activities (or not start them) and turn your attention to God.

2. Spend five to ten minutes in silence.

As mentioned above, carve out a time that is free of interruption. Use the time to be silent. Pray without words, letting the peace of silence wash over you. Two very close friends can communicate without words--try this with God. Simply enjoy his presence.

3. Read a selection from a devotional book.

Find a book you are interested in that deals with the spiritual life. It might be a classic, something newly published, or a devotional periodical like *Forward Day By Day*. However, instead of just reading it as a means to understanding it, read it "with God," knowing that God is in the room with you! Read it as a means of discovering God.

CHRISTMAS AT HISTORIC ST. PAUL'S 2007

Worship Services:



December 16: Advent III
2 PM: Christmas at St. Matthew's

December 23: Advent IV
9 AM: Holy Eucharist
10:15 AM: Greening of the Church

December 24: Christmas Eve
5 PM: Children's Christmas Service
11 PM: Festive Eucharist of Christmas

December 26: 5:30 PM, Wednesday
Feast of Stephen

4. Pray, using a verse of Scripture for ten minutes.

There is a tradition in the church, which is the practice of repeating a simple prayer over and over. The idea is to focus our thoughts on God so that God may descend into our heart. A verse from a psalm or from the liturgy is an excellent idea: "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Ps. 51) for example.

5. Write out a prayer.

Take time to sit down and write your prayer. Write it as if it were a "letter to God." Beginning with "Dear God," go on to tell God your hopes and dreams, tell him what you are worried about and what you need from him. You may even want to confess your sins and seek his pardon. Most importantly, use the exercise as a means of opening up the lines of communication with God. Do not write it as something that will one day be read by others. Like a personal diary, your prayer journal should be private in order to allow you the freedom to be honest.

-David Plank



**LOYALTY SUNDAY PRAYER
ST. PAUL'S, MONTROSE
2007**

(Continued from page 3)

Generous God,

I give thanks to you for the many gifts you have given me - my life, my family, my friends - time, talents, and material possessions.

All that I have comes from you.

Help me to remember this and rejoice in your goodness.

Walk with me, my God.

Help me on my spiritual journey, so that I may constantly renew and deepen my relationship with you, and with all the good people in my parish.

Renew in me your Spirit.

Give me the strength and courage to become a better follower of Jesus, to be a disciple.

Help me hear the call to "Come, follow me."

Bless St. Paul's parish.

Strengthen our faith and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship so that we may give generously of our time, talent and treasure to the spreading of your kingdom here in our church; in our local community, in the Northern Tier, and, throughout the world, especially Kajo Keji.

I give glory to you, my God, as I make stewardship a way of life.

Amen.

Adult Education Corner

Brenda has printed out some St. Paul's stickers and I will be placing them on the books we have to offer. We hope to find a way to divide the books into sections (with titles) so our favorites will be easier to find. Thank you Brenda. Many books are available for you to read in the Guild Room. Your friend in Christ, Rita



tance continues to be greatly appreciated by all, and plays a major role in St. Paul's once again bringing members of our community together.

The craft demonstrations started in November will continue this month, with Catherine Hynes doing a 1:00 p.m. demonstration on making bees wax candles. At 3:00 p.m. there will also be a craft demonstration by our "mystery" crafter.

The holiday spirit would not be complete without music, and we plan some surprise guest appearances to fill the parish house with your favorite Christmas tunes at 6:00 p.m. Could it be possible that a popular jolly fellow in a red suit will stop by to join in the musical festivities? Rumors are afloat that even the North Pole has heard about the Crafters' Corner Store at St. Paul's.

The November store was a constant flow of visitors, including many repeat shoppers, which signifies the success of this endeavor to generate excitement and interest in the community. Many crafters are reporting they are extremely pleased with the reaction they are receiving to their products, some of whom have stated the Crafters' Corner Store is their first real endeavor to market their crafts. It was extremely exciting to see visitors from Christ Church in Susquehanna at the November store, who heard about our endeavor at the Under One Roof gathering and are now considering starting a similar endeavor. It appears that the Crafters' Corner Store is living up to its intended purpose and we are already making notes for how we can make it even better next year. Thanks to all of you who have made this happen through your help, your donations and your support.

SEE YOU AT THE DECEMBER 7TH CRAFTERS' CORNER STORE.





CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA

An envelope is attached to this issue of the Newsletter for Christmas Poinsettia. Each year we decorate the altar with special flowers for the Christmas Season. Parishioners give these flowers in memory of loved ones, or in thanksgiving. Please use this envelope to indicate the names of those you wish to remember this Christmas. The deadline for contributions is Wednesday, December 19. The envelopes may be placed in the Sunday offering plate, or sent to the Parish Office.



Mary vs. Martha; Better vs. Best

Remember in Luke's gospel about the story of Mary and Martha in Bethany where Martha asked Jesus to instruct Mary to help her in the kitchen? And Jesus replies that Mary has chosen the best/better part. (There are several knowledgeable authors that are using "better" instead of the traditional "best.") I've wondered about that.

First of all, I have long recognized that I am a son of Martha. The described issue that Luke reports highlights the perennial battle between actives and contemplatives. As a graduate engineer I was trained to DO things. My eighth grade graduation motto was "Find a way or make one." I worked for a group in Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company whose motto was "It can be done." I come by my affinity to Martha honestly.

Now come the wordsmiths. Better vs. Best. And smugly. English adjectives are either: positive, comparative, superlative. Good, better, best. Far, farther, farthest. Sing, sang, sung. (No, that's something else. Forget that.) Remember, we are talking about ENGLISH here. Didn't Jesus speak in Aramaic? Does Aramaic have the positive, comparative and superlative? My source says no. Aramaic uses a different way to express the same thing...some type of clause or something.

Perhaps someone out there actually knows Aramaic. Maybe there is even an Aramaic

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The Gift Of The Magi

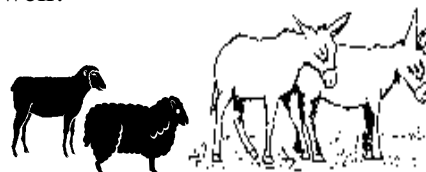


According to tradition the Magi were 'wise men' from the East who came to pay homage to the Christ Child. They believed that he would grow up to change the world as they knew it. They are sometimes credited with beginning the custom of giving gifts at Christmas, but their gifts were not given at 'Christmas', nor were they given out of love, but probably from a tradition existing even today, of lobbying for political favor.

Nineteen centuries later William Sidney Porter (O. Henry) used the titles of the wise men in a short story entitled 'The Gift Of The Magi'. The story tells of a young married couple without any money to purchase Christmas gifts. Each had coveted items seen in a store window: He, a beautiful chain for the gold watch inherited from his grandfather; she, a set of jeweled combs for her luxurious hair.

Della sells her hair to buy the chain; Jim pawns his watch to buy the combs and on Christmas, they find the true meaning of love, and the fundamental meaning of Christmas:

The objects involved are not the real gift, but the love and self-sacrifice demonstrated in their purchase. On this Christmas each gained one beautiful – and useless – gift, and another gift, priceless and irreplaceable. The Magi should have done so well!





Youth Page

New Hope Youth Announcement

Bishop Paul began the New Hope Campaign to improve the quality of life in our companion diocese, Kajo-Keji. Much of the money raised in the campaign will fund primary schools, and the youth of our diocese have decided to aid our fellow youth in the Sudan. We plan to raise \$7,000 by June of 2008. All of the money that we raise will fund educational programs and schools that directly benefit the youth of Sudan. To meet this goal, many of us will have to make personal sacrifices, and we ask that each youth in our diocese strive toward a \$50 donation. Half of our goal will come from donations, and the remaining part will come from funds raised at Christophany, a youth retreat for 6-12 graders in the spring. Our small sacrifice will have a large impact on the lives of our fellow youth in the Sudan. Youth may pledge today by talking to the New Hope Youth representative after the service, or by visiting the diocesan youth website, www.lifeistasty.org, for more information. For more information, please talk with Matthew and/or Ryan Ochse, who serve on the Diocesan Youth Council. Matthew and Ryan plan to raise their contribution by helping at the Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. However, they invite parishioners to help them meet their \$50 goal.

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Remember to bring in canned goods and other household supplies on the first Sunday of each month. The winter months can be hard on families. It is such a simple way to help those less fortunate.

Remember the Women's Resource Center. There is a separate basket for them in the back of Church.

Church School Update

Our fantastic scholars have worked hard this fall to master the two songs they presented in recent weeks. Many thanks to Mrs. Washo and Mrs. Dewitt for all the hard work and training they have put into these performances. Many, many thanks to our scholars and their parents for making church school a priority on Sunday mornings!

The children will perform several times in December (12/2, 12/16, and 12/24). We are looking forward to Bishop Paul's visit on December 2nd. Lessons and carols at St. Matthew's in Stevensville will be on December 16th at 2 pm and we are already making special plans for the early Christmas Eve service.

In the coming weeks, we will focus on the stories and message of advent. The children will be working hard to make 75 scarves to be given to the Seniors at the Christmas Day Luncheon. And they will continue to practice new music for the Christmas season.

Two full bags of kid friendly food were donated to the local food bank in November. The children brainstormed ideas and have been bringing in mac and cheese, soup, peanut butter and other children's favorites to be shared with families in need.

Submitted by Rachel Bartron

The Montrose Community Chorale will present a program of sacred and secular Christmas music on Sunday, December 9th, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. at the Montrose Area High School. Richard VanAuken is the coordinator, assisted by David Andre. There will be a freewill offering at the door to benefit local charities. Light refreshments will be served in the cafeteria.



HYMN STORY: Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (HYMN 66)

(Continued from page 7)

Charles Wesley wrote seventy-five hundred hymns (Encyclopedia Britannica) -- roughly a hymn every other day for fifty years. That's amazing! It would be amazing if he had written one verse every other day, but most of his hymns have several verses. I can scarcely imagine how he managed to do anything else -- but he was a great preacher as well as a great writer of hymns.

The hymn, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," looks forward to Jesus' Second Coming. It begins, "Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free." Wesley looked forward to the time when Jesus would come again to set us free from fear and sin.

Wesley knew what it meant for people not to be free. When he was about thirty years old, he traveled to America on a mission, where he saw slavery in its rawest form. He recorded in his journal that he had seen parents give their child a slave to torment. Wesley was so shaken by the evil of slavery that he nearly had a nervous breakdown. It wasn't long before he returned to England.

Some would criticize Wesley for not remaining in America to join the fight against slavery, but Wesley's weapons were his sermons and his hymns. For the next several decades, his sermons and hymns lent their power to the efforts to make people free -- free from slavery -- free from fear -- free from sin. He was blessed to live long enough to see England put an end to slavery.

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version of the Mary/Martha story. That would be novel ... use the original source. Translations have always caused problems. Take the phrase "Out of sight; out of mind." That was translated into a foreign language and then retranslated back into English by a different translator. The original phrase came back as "Blind idiot."

For the adventuresome of you, google "Kipling Sons Martha". (If you don't know what google is, you don't have a computer so check with your librarian.) It gives Mary and Martha a fresh perspective even if you can't stand Kipling. And lastly, the English major asked the engineer if he liked Kipling. The engineer replied, "I don't know. I've never kiplied."

[Check the bulletin board in the guild room in the BoSA area for "Sons of Martha".](#)

Submitted by Al Leigh

Daughters of the King

On Sunday Nov. 18th, Sandy Schwab was welcomed into the Daughters of the King. Well done Sandy!

The last regular meeting for 2007 will be held on December 16th following the Church Service. We will be reading Matthew and Luke and comparing their telling of the Christmas story and how they talk about Mary. Bring your Bible and join us for a little Bible Study. Your friend in Christ, Rita

2008 D.O.K. Meeting Date Schedule
Second Sunday of each month after the 9 AM service----- Fourth Thursday of each month at 6 pm in the Guild Room.

Buddy Spencer Band's Christmas Program will be held at the Presbyterian Church on December 2 at 3 pm.

A big thank you to everyone who helped make the Fall Bazaar a huge success!



On The Golden Compass

[In a recent issue of Sightings, noted Lutheran author Martin E. Marty shares his perspective on the new film The Golden Compass. As he foretells there is no doubt that there will be a great deal of conversation about the movie. Below, I share Marty's commentary with you. Yes, I have read the book (and the entire series), and highly recommend it for teens. As my 13-year-old niece would say: "Give me a break!"
~Charles]

How can *Sightings* fail to sight a feature in the December *Atlantic*, by Hanna Rosin, which bears headlines and subheads like these: "How Hollywood Saved God," "It took five years, two screenwriters, and \$180 million to turn a best-selling anti-religious children's book into a star-studded epic—just in time for Christmas." More: "With \$180 million at stake, the studio opted to kidnap the book's body and leave behind its soul." Rosin tells how author Philip Pullman, sometimes described as Great Britain's "Christopher Hitchens for kids," which means would-be God-killer and religion-destroyer, succumbed to fiscal lures and the wiles of Hollywood script-writers and producers to turn an anti-God children's book, one of several that wildly popular Pullman has written, into a theologically nondescript but otherwise highly "descript" film.

Get ready for controversy over it. Predictably, Bill Donohue's Catholic League rose to the bait and is publicizing exposes and responses, directed more to the book and the author than to the sanitized but not dull film version. "Golden Compass: Agenda Unmasked" is the League's blast: "It's a backdoor way of selling atheism. Unsuspecting parents will take little Johnny to see the movie. Johnny likes the movie. Johnny gets the trilogy [which is anti-God] for Christmas." An Old West-sounding message to Donohue or Pullman: "Let you and him fight." As for the quality of the film, we'll leave that to the critics a couple of weeks from now. To the point of our mission in *Sightings* are Rosin's final paragraphs, revelatory of the American religious situation, well-stated.

Actors and agents for the film were instructed to "play stupid" when religion comes up in interviews. Rosin: "This could be Paris Hilton reading her Bible in prison. Or Madonna preaching about Kabbalah. You can almost see [author] Pullman cringing at the standard Tinseltown crypto-Buddhist babble. Be Spiritual. Praise the Divine. Offend No One. Then say Ommmm.." In that command she captures the pop-culture "spiritual creed" of more than only Hollywoodites. She also knows how market strategy works out in a society that from some angles is hyper-secular and from others hyper-religious.

The executives at New Line Films, says Rosin, evidently thought they were doing Pullman no great disservice by "stripping out his theology and replacing it with some vague derivative of the Force." Preaching slightly, she continues by recalling what used to be associated with religion: "Values such as obedience, religious devotion, and chastity are so rare in Hollywood's culture that they probably seem archaic and quaint—courtly rules that no one lives by anyway. Certainly not something to get exercised over."

This film is not an offender of some Christian sensibilities in the way that *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Dogma*, or *The Da Vinci Code* were. New Line could afford to be edgy with *The Lord of the Rings*, and may have planned to take some risks again. "If so, a more nervous mood has since prevailed." In efforts to be neither offensive nor inoffensive, neither pro-God nor anti-God, but simply non-God, it may have matched the sensibility of many Americans today.

[*Sightings* comes from the Martin Marty Center at the University of Chicago Divinity School.]

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Season of Advent

Christmas Carols greet shoppers at Price Chopper and most any store we enter now, I love the familiar tunes. But wait, Advent is here. In St. Paul's and in other Episcopal Churches, we sing Advent Hymns until Christmas Eve. Some are reflective, some stirring and all beautiful. Take a short browse through the Hymnal, from #53 through #76, fewer than 25 hymns. There we find, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," #56; Hark a thrilling voice is sounding; "Christ is nigh," it seems to say' #59 and also, Come Thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; #66. What a wonderful month December will be, singing the Advent hymns together.

Submitted by: Esther Welden



NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR ST. PAUL'S

The mailing address for St. Paul's has changed to: 60 Church St., Montrose, PA 18801-1231. We no longer have a PO Box. Remember this when you need to send mail to the church.

FROM FORWARD DAY BY DAY

TUESDAY, November 27

Psalm 120. *Deliver me, O LORD, from lying lips and from the deceitful tongue. What shall be done to you, and what more besides, O you deceitful tongue?*

I have heard many victims of domestic abuse say that they recovered from the physical abuse, but the pain of verbal abuse was devastating and long-lasting. The Letter of James speaks of the power of the tongue and likens it to fire. Speaking untruths, lying, and spreading lies have terrible consequences. Sometimes it can lead to death. Ask a survivor of the Holocaust or anyone who has suffered as a result of prejudice.

There is an old Jewish wisdom tale of a man who told many lies about his rabbi. Later he repented and sought forgiveness. The rabbi gave him a pillow and told him to tear the pillow and release all the feathers in the wind. He did so and returned. The rabbi then said, "Now, go and collect all the feathers." This is how widespread and intractable a lie can be. Words once spoken are like the feathers--impossible to call back.

Those with the right perspective will not give ear to every tale they hear, for they understand that human beings are weak, that they tend to evil and are prone to slip in words.

--Thomas à Kempis (d. 1471)

PRAY for the Diocese of West Buganda (Uganda)

Ps [120], 121, 122, 123 * 124, 125, 126, [127]; Nahum 1:1-13; 1 Peter 1:13-25; Matthew 19:13-22

**December 2007 Lay
Ministry Schedule**

Altar Guild

- 2: Alice Wood
- 9: Bernie Zalewski
- 16: Mary Zalewski
- 23: Margie Baker
- 24: 5 pm Ellie McKeage
- 11 pm Ellie McKeage
- 30: Else Brunner

Ushers

- 2: Jerry Sock
- 9: Al Leigh
- 16: John Finlon
- 23: Volunteer
- 24: 5 pm Jerry Sock
- 11 pm Ed Ochse
- 30: Jerry Sock

Camera and Closing

Ron Chandler

Lectors

- 2: Margie Baker
- 9: Scott Finlon
- 16: Margie Baker
- 23: Jerry Sock
- 24: 5 pm Mary Jane Syle
- 11 pm Vickie Calby
- 30: Richard Marker

Eucharist Ministers

- 2: Robert Arnold and Esther Welden
- 9: Alma Shingler and Jane Chandler
- 16: Margie Baker and David Calby
- 23: Bernie Zalewski and Robert Arnold
- 24: 5 pm Jennie Bowen and Janet Kuhn
- 11 pm Margie Baker and David Calby
- 30: Robert Arnold and Bernie Zalewski

Coffee Hour

- 2: Brenda Syle
- 9: Betty Smith
- 16: Judy Ochse
- 23: Janet Kuhn
- 30: Mary Zalewski

Counters

- 2: Sandy Schwab and Vickie Calby
- 9: Jane Chandler and Bernie Zalewski
- 16: Ed Ochse and Warren Morgan
- 23: Ed Stark and David Calby
- 30: Sandy Schwab and Vickie Calby

Greeters

- 2: Ellie McKeage
- 9: Jennie Bowen
- 16: Maggie Sock
- 23: Fraser Moffat
- 24: 5 pm Margaret Burgh
- 11 pm Else Brunner
- 30: Nancy Finlon

St.Paul's Episcopal Church

60 Church Street

Montrose, PA 18801

(570) 278-2954



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Montrose, PA 18801

