

SIMPLE GIFTS

*"Now there are varieties of gifts
but the same Spirit"*

—1 Corinthians 12:4

DECEMBER 2009

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
TULSA, OKLAHOMA

From the Rector: "Reflections on Advent"

I remember when I was a boy my mother's annual protests that Thanksgiving was barely over and the stores in the nearby city of Wheeling were "already decorating for Christmas."

Looking back, I now realize that "them was the good ol' days"! Not all that many years later, Ann and I picked up where Mom left off and expressed our own dismay that we had no sooner removed the pumpkin from our porch when the stores were decorating in red and green garland, the Muzak-quality (elevator music) strains of "Silver Bells" (or Burl Ives' "Holly Jolly Christmas!") could be heard at the malls, and the department store Santa occupied his throne.

We used to joke about it, but not any longer. What at one time was comedy has devolved into reality. The commercial world seems bent on parodying its own efforts to shove Christmas straight into the fourth of July! And every year the pressure is on; the temptations to follow Madison Avenue's lead emerge in fresh and subtle ways.

During our first evening of Advent devotions this year, our family shared with one another those things we would like to see happen during this Advent season. There was a consensus among us that we would like to enjoy a more basic Advent, a season uncomplicated by busyness and those cultural trappings that, in the larger scheme of life, really don't matter.

Our hope for an uncomplicated preparation for His coming begged a reexamination of what this special season is about. And as I thought about it, it occurred to me that the message of Advent is itself a very simple one.

Right now, Advent looks something like this for me: while we may try hard to come across as "all grown up" and in control, you and I—all of us—are actually as helpless as little babies. Because of our sin, we alienated ourselves from God, and there was nothing we could do to remedy this cheerless situation. That is our helplessness.

Yet a God who loved us even when we were most unlovable came into our world, and entered our lives to accomplish for us that which it was impossible for

us to do for ourselves. He came into the world to save us and restore us to the right relationship He had intended for us as His children.

What makes His entrance into our world most remarkable is that He Himself came as a baby, turning His live over to a race that was as helpless as babies. God came to us as a helpless infant. I find it astonishing that while He knew in advance of our cruelty, that we would later reject Him and kill Him, God entrusted His only son to us as a vulnerable infant in need of our care.

Advent ushers us into a season of incredible mystery. But the message it bears is not especially complicated. When we were most vulnerable, subject to sin and an eternal death, God saved us. He began saving us by giving Himself to us in the most vulnerable possible way, as a baby.

The baby grew up and lived out His message of perfect love and forgiveness. And yes, in response to all He did for us, we killed Him. He died. He REALLY was dead. But then His Father REALLY raised Him from the grave. And He promised that He will return for us some day and gather us in His arms.

So that is the message of Advent I thought I would share with you this year. Amidst the inescapable clamor and marketable noise of this season, I would like to prepare to receive Him. I would like to prepare by contemplating the depth and breadth of God's love for us, a love that would allow us to receive God the Son as a baby. And I would like to prepare by considering how His message of compassion and grace informs my desire to honor Him when He returns for us, when He REALLY returns for us.

Father Briane K. Turley+





Children's Christmas Eve Program

Are you aware how quickly the Christmas season is approaching? This year, Teresa Gerow and Ann Turley are leading the Children's Christmas Eve program.

Please let us know if your child(ren) will be available and willing to participate. As of now, children are learning music on **Tuesday evening** (if they are old enough to be in our Children's Choir).

We invite all younger children to be apart of this program by attending our upcoming **Sunday rehearsals (immediately following church for 1 1/2 hours)**. We will begin these rehearsals the 2nd Sunday in Advent, December 6, and following on the 13th and 20th with an additional rehearsal the next Tuesday, **December 22**.

If we need any additional time, we will determine that at a later date. Please talk to Teresa or Ann ASAP so that we may begin planning for rehearsals and any materials needed for this program which will again be a part of the early Christmas Eve service.



Sharefaith

An Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols:
Sunday, December 13, 10:30 AM

Carol Singing/Christmas Eve Family Service:
December 24, 4:00 PM

Carol Singing/Christmas Eve Mass
December 24, 10:00 PM

Christmas Day Mass:
December 25, 8:00 AM



Advent—Latin: "to come"

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the church year and comprises the four weeks before Christmas. The church has observed a season of preparation before Christmas since the appearance of regulations on fasting issued by Bishop Perpetuus of Tours in 490 C.E.

Principal Themes

- hope
- darkness / light
- repentance
- watchfulness
- preparation
- expectation of the incarnation of Christ on
- Christmas

Color of the Season

- Blue, suggesting hope
- An older tradition uses purple, the royal color of the coming king

As Christians, we use symbols to express visually the basic tenets of our faith and as reminders of the pilgrimage of our life in Christ. Symbols can have heightened meaning for us when associated with particular seasons of that journey. One such symbol is the Advent wreath.

The Advent wreath has its roots in the pre-Christian practices of northern Europe. People sought the return of the sun in the dark time of the year (at the winter solstice) by lighting candles and fires. As early as the Middle Ages, Christians used fire and light to represent Christ's coming into the world. Using this same symbolism, the Advent wreath developed a few centuries ago in Germany as a

sign of the waiting and hopeful expectation of the return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wreath, a circle, came to represent the eternal victory over death through Jesus Christ. The evergreens were a sign of the faithfulness of God to God's people, even in death, and the lighted candles were a reminder of the light of Christ brought into the world.

This symbolism can be just as strong for us today. As is the case with all symbols, they speak most loudly to remind us of God's promises of life when they are drawn directly out of our daily experience and environment. One should consider using only natural materials from God's creation when making an Advent wreath. Evergreens come in many varieties and may be treated with a flame retardant substance. Branches of holly, laurel, and other green shrubs, which retain their freshness longer than pine, may also be used. The circular shape, a symbol of eternal life, is most important. Using an alternative shape, such as a log, would diminish the meaning of the symbol, which is no longer a circle.

Liturgical renewal in the last decades of this century has shifted the focus of these four weeks to one of hope and expectation of the coming of the Christ. This hope looks forward not only to celebrating the child in the manger, but even more to Christ's coming in glory at the end of time—a continuation of the eschatological emphasis of the last Sundays after Pentecost. Candles in rich royal blue are symbolic of this hope. Coincidentally, these two colors, purple and blue, have long been associated with the same ideas: the symbolic colors of royal blood and of longing; the natural colors of the dawn before the sun rises and the deep shades of midnight.

(from <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith>)

Daughters of the Holy Cross

The Anglican Sisters in Christ group here at CHS has been disbanded. There is a new national Anglican order, named Daughters of the Holy Cross. This replaces the old Daughters of the King. Any former or current member of DOK may transfer to the new DHC without a training period. Current members of ASC will be refunded their dues, and may join the new DHC if they feel called. We welcome anyone who wants to know more about joining us - we are a group of women who pray daily for our church, clergy, the Order, and others in need. We meet once a month at the church - not a social group but of course we enjoy getting together, for spiritual refreshment, and to catch up on prayer needs.

For more information, call Marilyn Roach at 299-4517, or Nancy Diley at 298-1671.

KOEO (Karios Outside Eastern Oklahoma) will be having a *"Gift Wrap for Kairos"* starting the weekend before Christmas (Fri, Sat & Sun) at the Barnes & Nobles by Woodland Hills Mall. All donations go to help bring the love and grace of Christ to woman who have been incarcerated, have loved ones who are incarcerated, or are in some kind of prison of their own (drugs, abusive relationship, lack of spiritual direction, etc). We would be so blessed to have members and friends of Church of the Holy Spirit come and purchase gifts and allow us to wrap them for a donation of their choosing (checks will be accepted but cash is preferred). Please contact Betsey Seymour with any questions (or if you would like to volunteer some time to help us with this endeavor) 210-387-3991 or 918-298-1671! God's blessings to all, Betsey

Blue Star Mothers

Please continue bringing items to for the Blue Star Mothers to ship to our soldiers. There is a list of needed items in the Narthex. —Margaret :Young

Women's Bible Study

Our last Bible Study for 2009 will be on **December 10th** as we watch our last series in the Book of Esther and we will either be getting together for lunch or having pot luck.

We will begin again in January on the 14th when we will have our usual breakfast kick-off and I will have three possible Bible Studies to chose from so these are my dates.

This has just been a great study and coincidentally finishes on the last day! I think God had something to do with that!

- Sue Hill

Bread Ministry Schedule

Date	Preparers	Deliverers
12/6	Susanne Mavers	Beverly Woodard
12/13	Nancy Diley	Fr. Briane & Ann Turley
12/20	Marjean Gibson	Art & Londa Hershberger
12/27	Jane Monteiro	Graydon & Teresa Gerow

Brotherhood of St. Andrew Chapter at Church of the Holy Spirit!

Pete West, with assistance from his father, Glenn, has agreed to organize a Brotherhood of St. Andrew Chapter at Church of the Holy Spirit!

Our organizational prayer breakfast will gather at the church office on Saturday, December 5 at 7am.

All of our men and their boys are encouraged to attend. The men will be praying not only for the formation of our order at CHS but for all prayer requests submitted to them each week. For more information, please phone Fr Turley at the office or Pete West at 636-3647.



CHS youth are selling 2010 calendars that feature CHS church pictures and birthdays of church members, as well as the major Feast Days of the Christian year. The cost is \$15, and the profit goes toward our return mission trip next summer to the Navajo Reservation in Alamo, NM.

Samples and ordering information are available in the narthex.

Vestry Meeting Highlights - October 20, 2009, by Sue Hill



Hi, my name is Susan Hill and I am on your Vestry. It is, and always will be, a privilege to serve each and every one of you. We had our Vestry Meeting last Tuesday which started at 6:00 pm with a meal (prepared by Fr. Turley & Ann) and we sat, just like any family, and discussed some personal things as we got to know one another in a Stand in the Gap format. After our Vestry Retreat we decided that the only way to get to know one another is to be like family and, with one or more gathered in His name, the Lord is always ever present and we come as we are, not perfect.

We started our meeting at 7 pm and discussed the regular business of the church and had a guest that night, Suzanne Sandoval, and she was given the opportunity to raise some concerns she and Jesse had about our church. Just so you all know any one of you can come and sit in on a Vestry Meeting which is always held the third Tuesday of each month so you can learn firsthand what is going on.

One of the things Suzanne brought up was about money and the other was about our Youth. She said that we needed to "take our masks off" (not in a hostile manner of any kind) but just to let all of the people know where we are, so all can pray for God to provide us with the necessary funds we need each month. She needed us to be real and to let us know that when we are hurting as a Vestry then we can ask for help. Suzanne took the time to address this with us.

We do let you know in our Bulletin what monies are collected from the week before and sometimes it can be a huge amount and other times it is down. This is due to the economy, people catching up on their tithes, people being able to do something one week but not another – a myriad of reasons. We do not hide from this but know that you are all with us praying for our Church to be debt free so we can concentrate on what is important for our church as being a family of God. The Youth now have viable programs which are bible

based and this is one area of growth we would like to see increase and improve. We were all very attentive to what Suzanne brought to us and it was nice to see that she had concerns.

Each of you have a Vestry person and at any time you can call your vestry person, or ask anyone on the Vestry, if you have any concerns, questions, programs you need to ask about, then we can help or if we don't know at least find out. If you feel you can help in any way – time, talent, gift, etc. we are always willing to listen. We all work together and love one another.

CHSA has come a long way and now we have reached "the promised land". I have been with CHSA from when we were on Yale and that is about 20 year's total. I love this church and the people in it. I see new faces every week and my heart jumps for joy. I see the faces of the people who come to this church and I am so happy to be a part of this very large family. We all work as a team. I facilitate Women's Bible Study, help with the Food Pantry, I greet, Usher, and generally am involved with our "family". God has a hand on this Church and its people and I would like you all to be involved in some form of ministry to this church because that is how you can claim it as your home. We look after each other, if you need help, ask . . . even God told us to "ask and it shall be given." If you want to participate in any ministry and have not been asked believe me it is not because you are not needed but we do not know unless you tell us and your help would be appreciated. Any ideas for ministry, etc.

I have never been able to express myself without being very wordy, for those who know me they know why, I love to talk, but in a nutshell this is my home, you are my family and God is with us always. He loves us, He is faithful we are very blessed to have a family such as this. Fr. Turley, Fr. Miller, Fr. Cliff, Fr. Mike and their families, Bishop Cox what love, devotion and God's Word we are "full", my cup overfloweth!

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Head of the Church
Jesus Christ

Archbishop
The Most Rev. Robert Duncan

Bishop
The Rt. Rev. Jack Iker

Bishop in Residence
The Rt. Rev. William J. Cox

Rector
The Rev. Briane Turley, Ph.D.

Assistant Rector
The Rev. Jason Miller

Adjunct Clergy
The Rev. Cliff Horvath, D.Min.

Director of Music Ministries
Charles Mather

Chancel Choir Director
Diane Kunkel

Senior Warden
Harold Wandke

Junior Warden
Joe Phillips

Administrative Assistant
Dolores Fennell

BIRTHDAYS

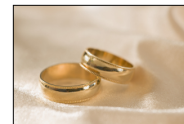
12/ 02 Nellie Bewley
12/03 Janice Woodring
12/03 Tammie Streets
12/07 Timmy Troxell
1207 Ruby Mayrath
12/08 Kay Whitson
12/11 Hannah Gerow
12/12 Charlene Carter
12/13 Dan Smith
12/13 Alexander Dupre
12/16 Ralph Smith
12/17 Rachel Wimp
12/18 Fred Berckefeldt
12/18 Chelsea Streets
12/20 Lisa Mansfield
12/21 Art Hershberger
12/24 David Woodard



12/28 Bobbie Lowry
12/30 Catherine West
12/31 Ann Turley

ANNIVERSARIES

12/01 Stephen & Susanne Mavers
12/16 Fr. Briane & Ann Turley
12/18 John & Charlene Alderman
12/19 John & Marilyn Calhoun
12/21 Fred & Diane Kunkel



Is your birthday or anniversary not included?
Please call us at the church office so we can
update our records (622-7979). THANK YOU!