

Father Allan's Reflections...

“Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.”

BCP p 213

The above prayer is the Collect for the 1st Sunday *After* Christmas and a personal favorite. I was fortunate to grow up in a household that truly celebrated *all* twelve days of Christmas. For me and my family, the Christmas tree and house decorations remained in their places, carols were sung daily, and feasting continued each evening well after Christmas Day. In fact, our celebration continued through the evening of January 5th – the eve of the Epiphany (the arrival of the 3 Magi) – also known as the “twelfth night.” For us, Christmas was *more* than a single day or even a week. After our family converted to a more evangelical denomination, our Episcopal celebration of the twelve days of Christmas remained an important part of our family life. And as my sisters and I aged and each of us sought our own spiritual path (mine brought me back to the Episcopal Church) one thing has remained constant: Christmas lasts for twelve days.

And yet, in many ways, while our tradition certainly stands in juxtaposition to the world’s view that Christmas ends on December 25th, our family got it *wrong!* Christmas is more than a day in history or even a Seasonal observance. It is intended to be a year-long, daily celebration of commitment and re-commitment to embrace and follow “the Word made flesh” who chose to dwell among us. Christmas should be born in the hearts of the faithful each and every day of the year.

That’s why that Collect above holds such special meaning for me and, I know, for many of you as well. We pray that God will “grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives” ... shine forth *every* day of our lives. For only then can (and will) the Christmas message of hope, redemption, forgiveness, mercy and grace truly make a difference in our lives and the lives of our neighbors.

And so, as this Calendar New Year begins, my prayer is that each one of us will come to know and *live* the joy and blessing of Christmas each and every day. Imagine what the world would be like if all people of faith did the same.

With best wishes for the coming New Year, I remain ...

Yours in service to the Gospel,

Allan +

January

Birthdays Anniversaries

2 Sharlie Siegmund

3 Julia Morton

4 Brennan Ford

4 Annie Hoskins

5 Gerry Persad

6 Patti Cribbins

8 Zeke Jordan

9 Steve Loflin

10 Joe Dyer

12 Stella Barbato

13 Rick LeVarge

13 Barbara Armstrong

14 Sandy Barber

17 Ernie Armstrong

18 Keith Martin

19 Seth Powell

19 Bryce Furr

21 Jackie Maness

22 Terry Jordan

25 John Persad

28 Jeff Williams

31 Catherine Morton

31 Jaidyn Toomey

31 Chris Gray

31 Cornelia Smithwick

January 2

Casey and Cathy Tester

January 6

Maria Lichtmann and Joe Harmon

January 18

Eileen and Bill Gaddy

January 25

Bev and Gene Sulzberger

January 29

Jennifer and Robert Henigin

January 31

Barbara and Walter Pitts



Prayer List

Please keep the following in your prayers this week:

For Healing: Our injured and disabled military personnel, our veterans, all civilians harmed in conflict, and for Jett T., Stuart T., Dayton C., Lindsay W., Keely S., Laura B., Wendell S., Ted N., Brianna M., Gretchen M., Noyes L., Marilyn W., Gerry P., Shirley N., Kathryn M., Rebecca M., Barbara L., Sam Y., Al & Susan T., Emily B., Bill B., Roberta T., Elizabeth B., Gail T., Tom & Jenise S., Elizabeth L., Julia M., Charlie S., Scott H., Branch A., Anna Jane R., Julia P., Bill G., Lenny H., Carla M., Walter B., Randy M., Sally H., Rachel M., John M., Brycial W., Dick J., Betty P., Paige M., Dawn A., Shane B., Terry S., Claire M., Katie H., Joe H., Seth Y.

For those in Harm's Way: All who serve with the armed forces at home & abroad, all who serve in the Peace Corps, for Ruslan and Galena, Brittany, and all health & relief workers throughout the world.

WORSHIP SERVICE TIME CHANGE

Sunday, January 7, 2024

The Feast of the Epiphany!

ONE SERVICE AT 10:00 AM (ONLY)

The Season of the Epiphany celebrates the light of Christ being revealed to the wider world and is symbolized by the visit to the manger by the Three Kings, also known as the Three Wise Men or Magi. According to the Gospel of Matthew, they followed the star of Bethlehem to find Jesus and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

For the first time in many years, the **Feast Day of the Epiphany** occurs on a weekend and *that* is cause for a unique celebration at Holy Cross. All are urged to gather at **10:00 am** for a special celebration of The Holy Eucharist complimented by the ***Procession of the Three Kings*** in all their regal splendor!

The service will be followed by yet another unique celebration: ***"The burning of the Greens!"*** Weather permitting and with the approval of the Fire Marshall, the greenery used to decorate our buildings for the Christmas season having served their purpose, will be carried down to the lower parking area and put to the torch. Burning the greens celebrates the light and warmth of Christ coming into the world on one of the darkest (and often one of the coldest) nights of the year. *Yes, we know this event is scheduled to occur in the daytime, but the symbolism is the same.*

After the fire, all are invited to return to Skiles Hall, where the celebration continues with additional refreshments and fellowship. See you there!



Contemplative Worship Service

January 9, 2024

Holy Cross Chancel

The January contemplative Service will be held January 9 at 6pm in the Chancel. A time for sitting in God's presence, sharing prayer, music and silence as we enter the new year and a time for listening and discerning God's call to each of us. Please join us in the chancel and invite a friend. For those joining the service by Zoom, please click on parish news site: <https://holycrossvallecrucis.net/parish-news>.

Due to the uncertainty of inclement weather in January, please check your email for any changes on the day of the service.



Adult Christian Education Series (ACE)

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 am

January 14, 21, and 28, 2024

This month's ***ACE*** program offers a wonderful 3-part series of ongoing Christian Formation for adults ***and*** youth alike as Ron McInnes presents an in-depth Bible study of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Here is a description of the series in Ron's own words:

"The Book of Ecclesiastes is rarely on anyone's list of top 5 favorite books of the Bible to read. After all, it starts off with, and then liberally repeats the phrase, "Vanity of Vanities" throughout the book. This is hardly the "hook" that most readers are looking for to motivate them to keep on reading. But when you do keep on reading you discover the writer's message about the human condition as he sees it. He is honest and blunt. The writer is very clear about his feelings that God is remote and uncommunicative. I, too, have often struggled with those same feelings and frustrations. What about you?

But the writer's conclusion moves the reader to take an honest self-assessment, discover what truly matters in life, and to simply recognize and rejoice in our true gifts from God.

This will be a 3-part series. As usual, I will begin Part 1 (January 14) with an overview of Ecclesiastes. We will review its History, Authorship, Time period, etc. Then in Parts 2 and 3 (January 21 & 28) we will take a deeper dive into the message and conclusion. Ecclesiastes is only 12 chapters long, so go ahead and read ahead and jot down your reflections and questions. See you in 2024!

Classes are held on Sunday mornings at 9:45 am in **Upper Skiles Hall**.

Persons of all ages are welcome!

Coffee's On January 20th 10am by Zoom

For over three years, Coffee's On has been offered by Zoom to welcome folks from several states for a time of sharing our life journey's, anxieties, joys, and experiences of God's loving presence. Join us January 20th. Dress is casual and the hour speeds by. See you then. Link at :
<https://holycrossvallecrucis.net/parish-news>.





Lost and Not yet found.

At times one may borrow something from the church and have “meant” to return it, but it’s still sitting on a counter waiting to come back to Holy Cross. Have you, or someone you might know, borrowed our money counter for an event and not yet returned the counter? When it was time for the Valle Country Fair this year, the counter was nowhere to be found which slowed the final count. Please help us return the counter and “anything” else that might need to return to the church.

Thanks in advance.

ECW News:

Almost 20 women joined us for our December meeting and potluck! We also collected over 20 bags full of donations for OASIS Women’s Shelter. God bless all the Episcopal Church Women!



We will be taking January off so no meeting next month.
















Be on the lookout for a new meeting time and day beginning in February!



MOC has a new coordinator. Radie Armstrong will be replacing Judy Bondi. We are also welcoming new members: Niki Craig, Beth Johnston and Beth Loflin.



January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>(From Jan. 14: Sandy Barber's b-day)</i> <i>(From Jan. 21: Jackie Maness' b-day)</i> From Jan. 28: Jeff Williams' b-day</p>	<p>1  8:00pm "Online Compline" Offices Closed</p>	<p>2 Sharlie Siegmund's birthday Casey & Catherine Tester's anniversary</p>	<p>3 Julia Morton's birthday</p>	<p>4  8:00pm "Online Compline" Brennan Ford and Annie Hoskins' birthday</p>	<p>5 Gerri Persad's birthday</p>	<p>6 Patti Cribbin's birthday Maria Lichtmann & Joe Harmon's anniversary</p>
<p>7 Feast of the Epiphany 10am Holy Eucharist, Rite II & Procession of the Magi 11:30am "Burning of the Greens"</p>	<p>8  8:00pm "Online Compline" Zeke Jordan's birthday</p>	<p>9 6pm  Contemplative Worship Service at Holy Cross Steve Loflin's birthday</p>	<p>10 5:30pm  Holy Eucharist & Healing Service</p>	<p>11  8:00pm "Online Compline"</p>	<p>12 Stella Barbato's birthday</p>	<p>13 Rick LeVarge & Barbara Armstrong's birthday</p>
<p>14 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany 8:30 & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II 9:45am ACE Holy Ecclesiastes Part I</p>	<p>15  8:00pm "Online Compline" Offices Closed</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 5:30pm  Holy Eucharist & Healing Service Ernie Armstrong's birthday</p>	<p>18  8:00pm "Online Compline" Keith Martin's birthday Eileen & Bill Gaddy's anniversary</p>	<p>19 Seth Powell and Bryce Furr's birthday</p>	<p>20 10 am Coffee's  On via Zoom</p>
<p>21 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany 8:30 & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II 9:45am ACE Holy Ecclesiastes Part 2</p>	<p>22  8:00pm "Online Compline" Terry Jordan's birthday</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 5:30pm  Holy Eucharist & Healing Service</p>	<p>25  8:00pm "Online Compline" John Persad's birthday and Bev & Gene Sulzberger's anniversary</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28 4th Sunday after the Epiphany 8:30 & 11:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II 9:45am ACE Holy Ecclesiastes Part 3</p>	<p>29  8:00pm "Online Compline" Jennifer and Robert Henigin's anniversary</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 5:30pm  Holy Eucharist & Healing Service</p>	<p><i>(From Jan. 31: Catherine Morton, Jaidyn Toomey, Chris Gray and Cornelia Smithwick's birthday)</i></p>	<p><i>(From Jan. 31: Walter & Barbara Pitt's anniversary)</i></p>	

Thank You!

I think it is safe to say – and certainly appropriate to say – that this year’s Christmas décor and services seemed to surpass anything like it in our recent history. If I could sum up this year’s season in one word it would be this: JOY!

So many visitors and friends and parishioners who attended worship services here on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and visitors throughout the week afterwards have commented on the beauty of our surroundings and the reverent depths of our worship together. I can never thank everyone enough for their labor of love so wondrously demonstrated throughout this Christmas season. Yet, at the risk of overlooking someone, I still offer my heartiest thanks to: Dedy Traver and the Altar Guild; Catherine Morton and the Flower Guild; Brenda Binning, John Goodrich, Terry Fulton, Jim & Marilee Reed, Joe Upchurch, Randy & Andrea McDonough, Catherine Pfaff and *all* who helped orchestrate not just the “Hanging of the Greens,” but complete both Parts 1 *and* 2 of that immense undertaking. Thanks also to every musician and singer who offered songs of praise to lift our hearts and enhance our worship services especially, Elaine Kallestad and the Vocal and Handbell Choirs; Marie Kallestad (Violin) and Dr. Eric Koontz (Viola), And then there are our host of Ushers and Greeters – an important ministry coordinated by Darby Logan; and our Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers – an equally important ministry coordinated by Karla Prudhomme; and our thanks to our ECW who set up (*and cleaned up!*) all those wonderful receptions and gatherings.

My thanks also to all those who gave of their time, talent and treasure via the Angel Tree, Memorials or helping hands whenever needed and, thereby, brought the beauty of Christmas to life throughout our buildings and grounds, and to the community. Lastly, my thanks to Ahren Koenig, Parish Administrator, for his tenacity in producing leaflets and flyers and memorial cards and envelopes, and *always* with efficiency and engaging smile.


Thank you! God has blessed us in and through you and so many others here in this holy place. May this coming year bring to all good health, peace, and grace.

Yours,
Allan +



MEN'S NIGHT OUT

MEN'S NIGHT OUT, as is our custom, will go on hiatus for the winter months of January and February, but will resume for an eighth year with great enthusiasm on the third Tuesday of every month in 2024 beginning March 19. Keep an eye on the monthly e-newsletter and weekly service leaflet for more info, and [HAPPY NEW YEAR from MNO!](#)



Notes from the Attic – Dedy Traver

This month's Notes are excerpts from a letter written by Judith Parker Corson. Ms. Corson was a teacher at the Valle Crucis Mission School from 1936 to 1939. When we were working on our 150th celebration in 1992 Ms. Corson was asked to write down some of her memories of Valle Crucis.

"The three years that I spent at Valle Crucis were among the most precious of my life. I loved the school. It was not rich in money, but possessed boundless wealth in the greater realities of life. Mrs. Emily Toll Hopkins was the principal. She had in mind to establish a school for girls patterned after the Kent System, which might have been done except for the fact that World War II was having a profound effect on Europe and this country and times were rapidly changing. Mrs. Hopkins was charming, very intelligent, well read and intellectual, and one of the most compassionate women whom I have ever known.

Bishop Gribbin was our bishop and Mr. Butt was our priest. He and Mrs. Butt lived 'down the mountain'. Their first child was born during these years. At the time I was there Miss Virginia Bouldin, Miss Julia Guerry, Miss Adelaide Smith, Mrs. James Wall, Miss Mary Pattee, Mr. & Mrs. Glovier, Miss Florence Briscoe, Mr. & Mrs. Earl Tester (Casey Teaster's uncle!) and I were members of the school staff. Almost all of us were members of the Episcopal Church. All were gentle people who reflected the religious beliefs and cultural outlook of their Church. The children came from many different states and from the locality. I think there were about 20 or 30 students.

Living at Valle Crucis was like living in a poem. In the springtime we looked out on a million apple blossoms. We attended a beautiful little native stone church which someone said had been built to look like the churches of Wales. We looked out upon a wide vale through which ran streams. These streams made a sort of St. Andrew's cross and I heard them say that that was why Bishop Ives named the place Valle Crucis. I am eighty now (this was 1992), and still an event or incident or a spoken phrase comes back to me. Once Mr. Butts' dog came into the church during the homily and settled at the foot of the pulpit. As his master's voice rose and fell so did the tail of the dog. He thumped his tail against the floor as if to emphasize what was being said. One cold winter's day Mrs. Wall and I found a little bird asleep in the church. Mrs. Wall looked at it and quoted the verse from the psalm, "Yes, the sparrow hath found a house, ----even thine altars, O Lord of hosts". We both looked at this as a sermon straight from God.

Mrs. Hopkins was a marvelous director of plays. Once the school gave "Iphigenia in Tauris". This was a big undertaking for high school students. Margaret Perry had the leading role in this. She did it well. Miss Bouldin had charge of the business of the school and Miss Smith was our splendid mathematics teacher. In the dining room our French teacher, Miss Guerry, had a table. They spoke only French. Mrs. Hopkins, Miss Pattee and I sometimes said the Angelus together – the lovely Angelus! This was a turning point of my life. I am sending you some snapshots taken at Valle Crucis. They are old and not especially good, but I have loved them because they were taken at the school. I am now in my sunset years and too frail to come (to the 150th celebration), but I want you to know that Valle Crucis has given me something that has blessed my life and for which I thank God."



“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.” (Isaiah 60:1)
 Joyful January greetings! The New Year is here, and off we go into Epiphany! As we celebrate the arrival of the Three Kings at Bethlehem, and hear the Gospel stories of “fishers of men”, we encounter a diversity of musical styles this month.

January 7 brings a very special Epiphany presentation, featuring our very own Three Magi! With costumes, procession, and the singing of *We Three Kings of Orient Are*, we experience the majesty of the moment. Many thanks go to choristers Dan Shepherd, Keith Martin, and John Goodrich for bringing this pageant to life!

The Offertory anthem this day is a festive piece by Martin Shaw, *Kings in Glory*. The story of the Epiphany is sung in alternating phrases between full Choir and selected soloists. Just as there are three Wisemen in the morning’s opening procession, the choral anthem will feature three Wisewomen! Gracious thanks are given to soloists Andrea McDonough, Dawn Harris, and Margaret Love for leading us through this fun and interesting arrangement!

The anthem on January 14 highlights our psalm for this day as we sing Bernadette Farrell’s setting of Psalm 139, *O God, You Search Me*. With its contemporary melody and harmonies, the music reaches the listener in a simple yet powerful way. A longtime favorite of both the Choir and congregation, it is a joy to match this reflective anthem to the appointed text.

The Offertory on January 21 features a Russian Orthodox setting of Psalm 103, *Bless the Lord, O My Soul*. Composer Mikhail Ippolitof-Ivanof brilliantly captures the tight harmonies, rhythms, and musical movements of this historic style of church music. The choral text also replicates the scripture lesson on this day, for in the Old Testament reading from Jonah, God is merciful to Nineveh. The anthem phrase, “He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger forever,” certainly mirrors the biblical story of God’s redeeming love.

On Sunday, January 28, we travel back to the German Classical period with Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach’s *The Goodness of God*. Our student intern, Macy Crumley, offers this vibrant solo which points praise and thanks to God. With bouncy leaps in the melody, emphasizing higher notes, the music looks upward to our gracious Lord, who bestows so many gifts upon us.

Finally, the New Year would not be complete without mentioning profound “Thanks” to all the singers, ringers, and instrumentalists who helped make our Christmas season so very festive! To all the members of the Handbell Choir, the Vocal Choir and Interns, Dr. Eric Koontz, Marie, Adam, and Scott Kallestad: We thank you for blessing us with beautiful music!

“The Lord hath not forgotten us, and we should not forget this love.” (*The Goodness of God*)

-----Elaine Kallestad



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Diocese of Western North Carolina

The Rt. Rev. José Antonio McLoughlin, Bishop

Clergy and Staff

The Rev. R. Allan McCaslin, Rector

The Rev. Jim Reed, Associate Priest

Elaine Kallestad, Choir Director/Organist

Ahren Koenig, Parish Administrator

Vestry

Andrea McDonough (2024), Senior Warden

Jeff Williams (2023), Junior Warden

Robin Byerly (2023), Ann Gerber (2023), Walter Browning (2024), Patty Dilley (2024),

Craig Adams (2025), Tav Gauss (2025), Darby Logan (2025)

Officers

Jan Skopecek, Treasurer

Dedy Traver, Clerk

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January Newsletter