



## Our Mission

*In and through Christ, to  
restore people to unity  
with God and each other  
(2 Cor. 5:14-21)*

## Advent and Christmas Preparation

I have always been a fan of the Christmas season. The lights, the decorations, the bad radio music. Simply put, I enjoy the joy. Perhaps my guiltiest pleasure is blasting Garth Brooks *The Magic of Christmas* CD in my car wherever I go.

My inclination is that my enjoyment of such nostalgic things was nurtured in me at an early age. Growing up, my family – who always respected Turkeys – began decorating for Christmas the Friday after Thanksgiving. It was probably much done to the influence and inspiration of my mom. My mother had the power and presence to collect us all together for a few moments and gather us into a liturgy of decoration. This is where we in a sense could self-empty ourselves into the preparation of our own manger for the day of our Lord's birth.

We are now entering the season of Advent, and in Advent preparation is vital. Whether you prefer to decorate for Christmas early or wait until the week of Christmas is an argument of social acceptance that I like to leave up to a turkey and magical elf dressed in a red suit. Decorating is not a Christian matter. Preparation is a Christian matter.

John the Baptist, quoting the prophet Isaiah, told those who would listen about the coming of Jesus ministry to "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." In John's proclamation, we can sense his desire to have the people of his time repent and prepare themselves with better minds for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The season of Advent is such an occasion for us as Christians.

Hanging greens, placing Christmas trees, and lighting Advent wreaths have always been long-standing traditions in the church for preparing and making herself ready for the celebration of the Advent of God. Yet if we are honest, in our daily lives, the decorations, the anticipation of parties, and Garth Brooks' voice can distract us from the need we have to prepare for God's arrival in Christ Jesus.

In those distractions, we remove from ourselves the constant pursuit of Christ's companionship in all that we do, and in all that we are, forgetting to recognize our forgiveness in the divine love burst open by Christ's entering into the world. Therefore those distractions beg us to ask of ourselves, how do we make our pathways straight for Christ to enter into us?

I think back now on my childhood, and I come to realize that my mom was not so much decorating for Christmas. Instead, she was creating a splendor, and wonder, and joy in the children closest to her. She was busy decorating but dutifully preparing. She was walking the mountain of Advent with us, preparing us in excitement for the day we "Tell it from the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born."

But that is only my story of Advent. Advent and Christmas are joyous times of year. But for many it can be trying, painful, and a time for mourning, a season more descriptive as a time of waiting. Waiting to feel the same joy expressed that those around us are experiencing.

(cont. next page)

Nonetheless, Advent remains the time for preparation. Because as God in Christ makes himself manifest for the blessings of the world, so too does God in Christ make himself manifest for its suffering. And in the distractions that make themselves known this time of year, if we can make time for prayer and silence, we will find in silence, Christ entering our sufferings.

Thus we must prepare. So let us together, in all our occupations this Advent, take time, reflect, make silence, and pray to God on how it is we are supposed to allow God in Christ to enter into our hearts? This Advent, may we all consider more the ways we can allow Christ to enter into our lives, and how we travel in our own faith, in the face of the coming Lord?

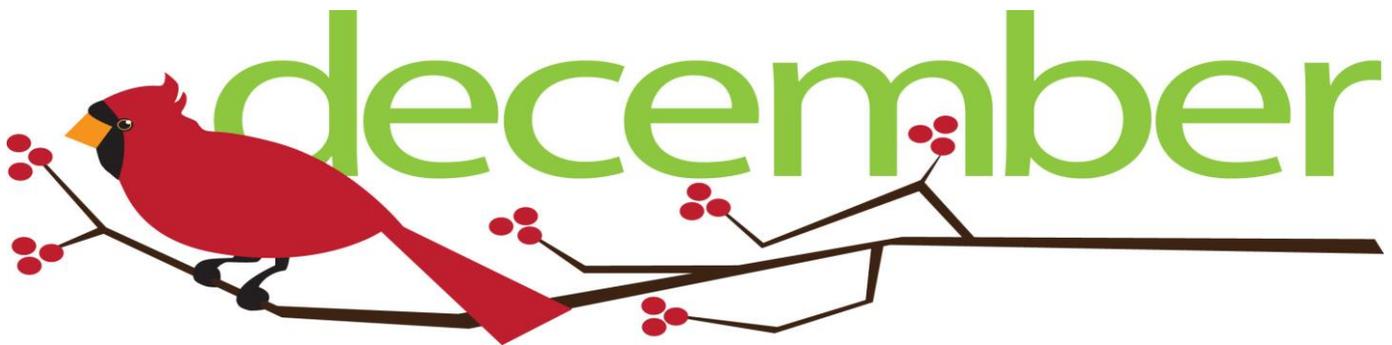
May God's peace be always with you,  
Fr. Stephen Shortess

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 06 Bob Bazet
- 09 Michael Raymond, Sr.
- 10 Dean White
- 15 Veeder Bell
- 16 Melynda Leleux
- 19 Owen Daniel Block
- 29 Virginia Claire Rink
- 29 Katherine Ross
- 30 Ava Grace Berry

### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 7 Kristyn and Matt Hughes

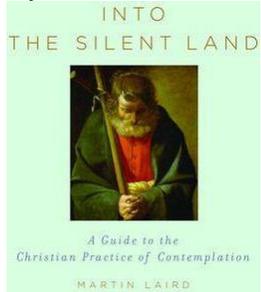


**Poinsettias** for the Christmas altar are \$25 each. Sign up sheet is on the table in the narthex.

From the Rector's Library:

**Into the Silent Land:** A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation

By: Martin Laird



I find Martin Laird's *Into the Silent Land* a good resource to have during Advent. Because in Advent a common complaint is that secular Christmas season intrudes on time of penitence and prayer. Prayer is what the human soul needs. Yet how many of us sit down to pray and whether we get bored or distracted halfway through our prayer we find ourselves not praying, but thinking about the things we need to ready for the family Christmas party, or worse how the officials cheated LSU out of a victory over Texas A&M? Laird's book provides a guide to prayer and contemplation to challenge those distractions. Simplifying prayer by use of a prayer "focus" word, stillness, and breathing techniques, Laird seeks to help one "let go and let be, and live in the depth of the present moment." (61) For it is the depths of our lives that are settled in underneath the distractions. And it is there we can meet the tragedies and the wounds of our lives that we despise and allow them to become pathways to healing.

#### **Liturgical Announcement: A Public Service of Healing**

Going forward into the new church year on the **fourth Sunday** of each month at both St. John's and Trinity we celebrate a **Public Service of Healing**. You will not notice any structural change to the Eucharistic celebration except that the priest will offer the "Laying on of Hands and Anointing." This will take place after the confession and once all who come forward to have their specific needs prayed for and anointing the service will continue with the peace.

**Christmas Cookies:** like last year, please bring cookies wrapped on disposable plates to be given to those who are working on Christmas Eve. We will distribute them following the 6:00 pm Eucharist on Christmas Eve.



## PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Ellen, Nancy, Astrid, Cathy and Barry, Jeanette, Kay and Mike, Jane and David, Robi and Doug, Roy, Norma, Elizabeth and Irving, Lonnie, George, Trinity, Melvin, Ed, Joe, Aaron, our partner in ministry St. John's, for all Christians who are persecuted around the world, for all First Responders in our area, those serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America, our partners in mission at the Deaneries of Copan and Maya in Honduras and our sister parish Cristo Salvador; and our prayer partners in the Anglican Diocese of Tohoku, Japan; and the Anglican Diocese of Lango, Uganda.



# December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:30 Eucharist Fr. Travers Pot Luck	3	4 Choir Practice 5 pm	5 Fr. Shortess 9-3:30 8 pm AA	6 Fr. Shortess 9-3:30 M Prayer 9:30	7 6 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	8
9 9:30 Eucharist Fr. Shortess Vestry Meeting	10 Fr. Shortess 9-3:30	11 Fr. Shortess 9-3:30, M Prayer 9:30, Choir Practice 5 pm, Christian Ed 6:30	12 8 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	13	14 6 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	15
16 9:30 Eucharist Fr. Travers	17	18 Choir Practice 5 pm	19 Fr. Shortess 9-3:30 8 pm AA	20 Fr. Shortess 9-3:30 M Prayer 9:30	21 6 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	22
23 9:30 Eucharist Fr. Shortess	24 6 pm Eucharist Fr. Travers	25 	26 8 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	27	28 6 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	29
30 9:30 Eucharist Fr. Travers	31					

## MINISTRY SCHEDULE December 2018

	December 2	December 9	December 16	December 23	December 24	December 30	January 6
<b>Celebrant/ Officiant</b>	Fr. Travers	Fr. Stephen	Fr. Travers	Fr. Stephen	Fr. Travers	Fr. Travers	Fr. Stephen
<b>Preacher</b>	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
<b>Server</b>	Joshua J	Sean D	Austin B	Sean D	Tim C	Austin B	Joshua J
<b>Chalice</b>	Mary H	Tammy C	Lisa P	Tim C	Mary H Tim C	Judy W	Mary H
<b>Lector</b>	Elizabeth B	Mary H	Charles P	Jane W	Tammy C	Mary H	Judy W
<b>Intercessor</b>	Elizabeth B	Mary H	Lisa P	Jane W	Tammy C	Mary H	Judy W
<b>Greeters</b>	Peggy C	Drew M Ben M	Peggy C	Drew M Ben M	Drew M Ben M	Peggy C	Drew M Ben M
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Mary H	Cathy B	Judy W Jennie R	Jane W			Mary H
<b>Vestry on Duty</b>	Mary H	Doyle D	Sam J	Drew M	Judy W	David W	Mary H

## Trinity Episcopal Church

302 Greenwood Street  
P.O. Box 1776  
Morgan City, LA 70381

PHONE:  
(985) 384-7629

Sunday Services  
9:30 AM

Fr. Stephen Shortess

### Our Vision

*Recognizing that we are all one in Christ, Trinity Episcopal Church is an embracing family, growing spiritually, and joyfully serving the community; a home that comforts the spirit; a place where people's gifts for ministry are identified, nourished, and shared; and place of learning where disciples are formed.*

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.trinitymcla.org](http://www.trinitymcla.org)

[www.facebook.com/trinitymcla](https://www.facebook.com/trinitymcla)



**REJOICE  
IN THE  
LORD  
ALWAYS.  
I WILL SAY  
IT AGAIN:  
REJOICE!**

**PHILIPPIANS 4:4 NIV**