



From Behind the Altar

A couple of weeks ago I saw a bumper sticker that read, "Happy Birthday, Jesus." It caught my attention because as a priest I have never really thought of Christmas as Jesus' birthday. If the bumper sticker is taken literally, this year Jesus would be at least 2,000 plus years old. Now that is a heck of a birthday!

The Gospels tell us that Jesus was about 33-years old when he was crucified. He was raised from the dead three days after his death, and after a substantial period of time (40 days), when he appeared to his disciples (probably more than 500 of them), he was taken into heaven to reign at God's right

hand. Not only that, the Gospel of John tells us that Christ always was (there was never a time when he was not), and at Christmas became fully and completely human, in order to unite human life and God's life together forever. At the Ascension, Jesus returns to the Father, taking with him the fullness of human life in his own person. So to think of Christmas as only a celebration of Jesus' birth is a serious theological error.

If what I just wrote, which has been the teaching of the Church through the centuries, is true, why do we fall into the trap of celebrating Jesus' birthday at Christmas? I think the answer is simple: It is easier to understand the anniversary of the birth of an important person than it is to try to comprehend God's uniting himself with humankind in order to bring human beings into full communion with himself. Of course, that is really something to celebrate!

This morning at Morning Prayer, I decided to meditate on an advent hymn. The one I chose (hymn 55 in our hymnal) was written in the fourth

century by Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, who died in the year 397. Listen to verses two through five of that ancient hymn:

From human will you do not spring, but from the Spirit of our God; O Word of God, come; take our flesh and grow as child in Mary's womb.

You came forth from the eternal God, and you returned to that same source. You suffered death and harrowed hell, and reigned once more from God's high throne.

With God the Father you are one, and one with us in human flesh. Oh, fill our weak and dying frame with godly strength which never fails.

Your cradle shines with glory's light; its splendor pierces all our gloom. Our faith reflects those radiant beams; no night shall overcome it now.

May this holy season of Christ's coming indeed pierce whatever gloom is in your life, and may the reality of Christ's uniting himself to you forever be a

source of strength for all of the challenges you may face in the days and months ahead.

(The Rev'd) Jerry L. Miller

Priest-in-charge

Crosslines Ministry News

On October 29, Crosslines Ministry had their annual dinner, report, and program. Trinity had a very good turn out with Father Miller, Willetta and Richard Mount, Bonnie and Dave Daniels, Tracy and Larry Wright, and Peggy Graydon in attendance. The meal had a variety of pasta dishes, many salads and desserts.

Viola Blankenship, the new director of Crosslines, gave a report on the services rendered by Crosslines during the year. She recognized the wide variety of organizations, churches, and businesses within the Laclede County area that contribute to the Crosslines ministry.

The program had music provided by Jean Ellen and Larry Tapp. Conservation agent Walt Hutton spoke on the Share the Harvest program which contributes venison to Crosslines. This year the challenge in our area will be processors willing to process the deer. The cost of the

processing is paid for by the Conservation Federation of Missouri and the Turkey Federation of Missouri. State wide there are other contributors for that area.

Winter is a hard time for many residents of Laclede county so keep that in mind as you consider donating to Crosslines. Canned soup and soup ingredients are always needed.

The World's Most Religious Places

By Shelley Sperry

Not surprisingly, the only country with no atheists or nonreligious citizens at all is the Holy See, or Vatican City—home of the Roman Catholic Church—with about 800 true believers. Afghanistan is next in line, with a 99 percent Muslim population and a 99.99 percent religious-adherence rate. The U.S. State Department's 2006 human rights report on Afghanistan states, "The government requires all citizens to profess a religious affiliation and assumes all Afghans to be Muslim." Other countries with at least a 99.90 percent religious-adherence rate: Bhutan (Buddhism), Botswana (Christianity), Burundi (Christianity), Kenya (Christianity), Bangladesh

(Islam), Chad (Islam), Comoros (Islam), Maldives (Islam), Mali (Islam), Niger (Islam), Pakistan (Islam), and Somalia (Islam),

Contributed by Dave Daniels

Youth Happening No. 68

September 20-22 brought Happening number 68 to St. Paul's KC. 19 youth and 5 adults were first time participants in this weekend long retreat that focuses on developing personal faith and spirituality. It is led by youth in grades 9-12, though with some adult support. A huge thank you to everyone from Trinity who prayed for us while on retreat -- I know that helped make it a great success. This event happens each September and March so be looking forward to being involved again in the future!

Through my work on the Diocesan Youth Ministry Commission, I often am able to spend time working at events like Happening. Sometimes I wonder about my personal sanity when I look back a weekend like this one that leads me straight from my classroom to a weekend full of teenagers. And yet, it's weekends like this one that restore my faith. Here are modern, millennial youth who are taking time away from their over-scheduled lives to grow their relationships with God and each other. I am inspired by their zeal, impressed with

their passion, and jealous of their energy. I look forward to how Trinity can continue to grow in our involvement with youth ministry here in Lebanon and across the Diocese.

Amanda Pershall

Altar Guild News

The Altar Guild is preparing for the Christmas season. Poinsettias for the altar and wreaths for the doors have been ordered from the Flower Basket. They do all our flowers for the altar and do such a nice job for us. The owners of the Flower Basket gives the church a discount rate. However during the Christmas season we are in need of extra donations to help with the cost of the special flowers that are used to make the altar beautiful for Christmas. Any amount you can give will be very appreciated. The donation should be made to the church. You can put your check in the collection plate or mail to the church.

Continuing the subject of flowers; a 2014 Flower Chart has been posted on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall to contribute to the regular Sunday service flower needs. Please sign up to donate. Space on the chart is provided if you want to donate flowers in memory of a loved one or for a special birthday or anniversary. The members of the Altar Guild try to use the flowers for more than one

service to save on the flower cost to the church. All donations to the flower fund are gratefully accepted and can be made to the church in the amount of \$30.00 for each Sunday you sign up for.

The Altar Guild members find that our ministry is a group effort of helping each other as we prepare the altar for each service. If you are interested in being a member of Altar Guild and thought it might be too much work or you are unsure if you could learn how to set up the altar. Be assured this group of Trinity members will be there to make your duties light and learning easy. This is time we are considering our gifts of talent to the church. Altar Guild would be a great choice to consider as you fill out your Pledge Sheets.

Wishing all of you a thoughtful Advent and Blessed Christmas.

Karen Miller

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Address update for Lenora Wiley
500 Avenue L NW
Apt 507
Winter Haven, FL 33881
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Dates to Remember:

Saturday, December 21

Open House at the Millers from noon to 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 22

Decorate Church after the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist

Tuesday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

Holy Eucharist at 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 31 (Eve of Holy Name)

Holy Eucharist at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 8 (Feast of the Epiphany – transferred)

Holy Eucharist at 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 26

Annual Meeting following the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist. Bring a dish to share. Meat and beverages will be provided.

Youth Invasion

The first weekend of January, the Diocesan Youth Ministry Commission will be invading Trinity. This group of 19 youth and 8 adults meets four times a year to fulfill the youth ministry vision to Inspire, Educate, and Empower. We'll spend time planning upcoming events, participating in leadership training, praying, and having fun. We'll finish our weekend by joining Trinity for the Eucharist Sunday morning. YMC members will participate that Sunday with us and I know we'll welcome them with open arms.

Amanda Pershall

An Advent Invitation for You

Feelin' stressed?

Well, head West!

You are cordially invited to

Follow your GPS

(or better yet, our directions)

To our holiday nest,

Located at 4258 East Whitehall Drive

Springfield, MO 65809

To be our guest...

To wine, dine, and rest.

We will feel blest with your presence

From 12:00 noon to 3:00PM

On December 21st

This is no jest...

We sincerely hope you will come.

Please RSVP so we can prepare the best

(with zeal and zest)

Lunch, dessert, and beverages of choice.

What a fest!

Sincerely...Fr. Miller & Betty