

Christ Church Chronicle

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An Epiphany Makes Truth Seem So Obvious

Fr. Bruce McNab

“*The Epiphany*” is a feast day in the church year, bringing the season of Christmas to an end. Episcopalians celebrate it as the day when the Messiah of Israel was manifested to the gentiles—represented to us by the wise men. We will celebrate this Epiphany on Monday, Jan. 6. But there are other sorts of epiphanies.

An *epiphany* is a sudden leap of understanding, when we for the first time see something in a clear way. This can come through an ordinary but profoundly striking event, and it can also come as a special, mystical revelation from God. You’ve probably had an *epiphany*. Maybe you’ve had several. I don’t think there’s a limit to how many epiphanies one person can have, how many “*aha!*” moments, when something that had always seemed obscure suddenly becomes clear, or when you discover a new depth of meaning in something you used to take for granted. Having an epiphany is like finding the last piece of a jigsaw puzzle, so that now you can see the whole picture.

Back in December of 2007 I had a wonderful dream. It wasn’t like my usual dreams—which are rarely memorable. The dream I had then was different. After I woke up, all I could remember from the dream was that I had been right beside Jesus. I couldn’t “see” Jesus straight-on in the dream, but only in peripheral vision. That means I couldn’t describe his physical appearance, whether he looked anything like the traditional stained glass window pictures we all know. But I was vividly aware of his *physical presence*, “right there” beside me. And all of a sudden I was

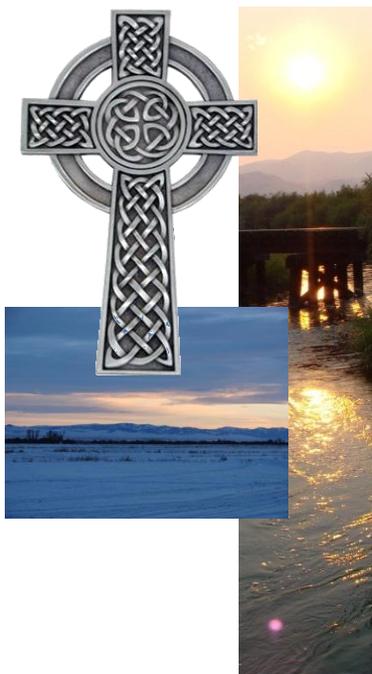
overwhelmed with a feeling of incredible love, total acceptance, and transcendent peace being poured upon me by Jesus, a sense of being loved that went beyond anything I had ever felt.

This was so powerful that it woke me up, though I wanted to stay asleep and stay with the dream. When I awakened, I realized: “I’ve had an epiphany!” —And the intense feeling of God’s love didn’t evaporate the way feelings engendered by dreams usually do. It lingered for weeks.

The meaning of my dream was clear. God cares more about our “being” than about our “doing.” What He wants most is for us to stay close to Him, take pleasure in His presence, listen to His voice, and accept the gift of His love. Jesus is always there. That was His final promise to His friends: “*Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the ages.*” (Matt. 28:20) I think Jesus means that literally: “I am with you always.” Our busyness and our striving as Christians—all in good causes, of course—is useful and important, but it’s *not* the main thing to Him. The main thing in His eyes is our being *with* Him.

Years have passed, but I still think often about my December 2007 epiphany. One particular aspect of it continues to resonate: consciousness that Jesus’ presence is a gift to us, one that’s “right here, right now.” It’s not something we achieve, it’s something we *receive*. My epiphany taught me that the main task of priests is to help people discover for themselves the living presence of Christ. That’s what I want to do.

When I write it out, this seems so simple, so obvious. But that’s the nature of epiphanies. They seem so obvious! May God grant you a sense of the closeness of Christ in this new year.



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Vestry Report

Frank Ford

While Advent and Christmas demands on our time prevented a December meeting, the Vestry has not been idle. As the end of the year approached, it became apparent that there would be a little money left over that had been earmarked in our budget for general Ministry and Outreach initiatives. Seizing on the opportunity and in the spirit of the season, the Vestry elected to present the Wood Bank with a \$500 Christmas gift beyond that already pledged for support of that worthy effort. Needless to say, the money was put to good use in that ministry and the congregation has received a very gracious note of thanks from Fr. Harry Neeley.

With the new year, your Vestry is considering a number of planning issues for 2014. Always foremost in their thoughts is the matter of how best to meet our clergy needs within the constraints of our available financial resources. Continuing with our efforts to take care of deferred maintenance also requires considerable planning, with rectory painting and maintenance; replacement of the Parish Hall flooring; and continued upgrading of the kitchen being at the top of the list of projects for next year. We also are seeking to expand upon our ministry and outreach efforts as we look for ways to reach young people and children as well as other members of the Ruby Valley community. Your input on this planning is always welcomed, particularly as we look to our 26 January annual congregational meeting.

While on the subject of the annual meeting, let me urge you to prayerfully consider what leadership or other ministries you might be able to personally take part in for Christ Church in 2014. There are many options available and if you have some ideas of your own, please share them with the Vestry so that we can consider how best to integrate them into our overall planning for next year.



Celebrating the Season

Sandra Baril

The month of December was filled with preparations and celebrations as Christ Church parishioners, family, and friends came together to celebrate the birth of Christ Child.

The traditional greening of the church was a joyful event as always and it was especially delightful to have Harry and Val with us. As usual the tree was beautiful and tall – this time it almost reached the rafters! Ashley climbed and perched on the narrow ledge at the top of the wall to decorate the top of tree!

Lessons and Carols was part of the regular service led by Fr. Bruce McNab on December 22. It was an inspiring prelude to our Christmas celebration. As the prophet's words prepared the Jews for the coming of Christ, they also bring us back to promises of the Christmas season.

Christmas Eve Fr. Bruce McNab officiated at a beautiful candlelight Christmas Service and Eucharist.



Above : Ashley on her precarious perch and Harry and Frank watching - amused or praying?



Legacy Project

Janis Hansen

Janis has been working with some of our long term members to document the history of Christ Church. Each month we will try to include something interesting from the archives.

Christ Church 78 Years Ago... 1935

Rev. William J Reeves, Jr. writes in the Christ Church "asides:"

-Thanksgiving. "Got stuck on way over to Va. (sic) Had no shovel darn it!"

-First Sunday in Advent: "Took Curley Hautier with me. Coming home the car broke down and Curley wired up the front brake rod."

Christ Church 78 Years ago.... 1936

Rev. William J. Reeves writes in the Christ Church "asides:"

-Jan 5. "No 1. on New Year's. No fire so couldn't have a service. Dinner at Bennetts."

Evidently Rev. Reeves went on a two month "holiday" after the January 5th service. He writes on March 8th: "Nice to be back. Found that I could have driven over the hill on only two Sundays in the past two months."



Christmas Eve Eucharist

Humor Corner

Joe was opening a new business, and one of his friends decided to send flowers for the occasion. The flowers arrived and Joe read the card. It said, "Rest in Peace." Joe, enraged, called the florist to complain. The florist replied, "Sir, I'm really sorry for the mistake, but rather than getting angry, you should imagine this: somewhere there is a funeral taking place today, and they have flowers with a note saying, "Congratulations on your new location."

An Episcopal priest and his wife were driving in Chicago, and they were pulled over for speeding. As officer O'Malley approached the priest, he saw the Roman style collar and mistook him for a Catholic priest. "Oh, sorry about that, father," he said. "Just try and slow it down a little, OK?" As they drove away, the priest's wife said, "Shame on you! You know who he thought you were!" "Oh, I know who he thought I was," replied the pastor. "I'm just wondering who he thought you were."

REMINDER : Annual Congregational Meeting January 26 following the service. There will be food – details to follow.

Touched by the Words

A new year has begun. During this year, too, all the paths from east to west, from morning until evening, lead on and on as far as the eye can see, through the deserts of life, with all its changes. But these paths can be turned into the blessed pilgrimage to the absolute, the journey to God. Set out, my heart, take up the journey! The star shines. You can't take much with you on the journey. And you will lose much on the way. Let it go. Gold of love, incense of yearning, myrrh of suffering – these you certainly have with you. He shall accept them. And we shall find him.

-Karl Rahner
The Great Church Year



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INVITE people into our midst
INCLUDE people in the life of the church
INFORM people about past events that shape our present,
and current events that shape our future
PROCLAIM the gospel in thought, word and deed
REJOICE in a new life found in Christ Jesus.

Mission Statement

To be formed as the body of Christ, seeking to love and serve one another and those in need.

Vision Statement

To be Christ's continued presence in the Ruby Valley by welcoming those who seek Christ, offering varied forms of services, reflecting our diversity while maintaining our Episcopal identity.

Service Leaders for January and February

Upcoming Service Leaders for January / February

- 5 Jan: Rev Bruce McNab (Epiphany)
- 12 Jan: Morning Prayer (Sandra Baril)
- 19 Jan: Rev. Jean McLean
- 26 Jan: Morning Prayer (Deacon Janis Hansen) (Annual Congregation Mtg to follow)
- 2 Feb: Rev Bruce McNab
- 9 Feb: Morning Prayer (Deacon Janis Hansen)
- 16 Feb: Rev. Jean McLean
- 23 Feb: Morning Prayer (Deacon Janis Hansen)

Upcoming Lectors for January / February

- 5 Jan: Jerry Aaker
- 12 Jan: Alice Forwood
- 19 Jan: George Rich
- 26 Jan: Sandra Baril
- 2 Feb: David Hansen and Beth Wrzesinski
- 9 Feb: Don Snyder
- 16 Feb: Judy Aaker
- 23 Feb: Kit Dale



[The Conversion of the Apostle Paul](#)
January 25