

SOUNDS

of

Volume 39 No. 47

December 20, 2009

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Schedule of Services

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 20

8:00am Holy Eucharist

9:00am Morning Prayer

Adult Education Hour

11:15 am Holy Eucharist

4:30 p.m. Sunday School Christmas Pageant

THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Thursday, December 24th

5:00 pm Choral Prelude

5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist

9:30 p.m. Choral Prelude

10:00 pm Holy Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday, December 25th

11:00 am Holy Eucharist

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday, December 27th

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

THE HOLY NAME

Friday, January 1st

11:00 am Holy Eucharist (Chapel)

FROM THE RECTOR

Advent is a season of wonderful music. There are some splendid hymns that are essential to a proper observance of these holy days. Not only do they foster “the beauty of holiness”, they are also instructive (as all good hymns are), and occasionally surprising. A little background may be helpful before pressing on to the conclusion.

Ask a typical worshipper to list a few of her favorite hymns, and the answer will likely be something like this (for example): “Praise my soul, the king of heaven” or “Lord of all hopefulness” or “For all the saints”. Ask that same question of an organist and the (parallel) answer would be: *Lauda anima, Slane*, and *Sine Nomine*. The organist has answered by giving names of the tunes associated with the texts suggested by the worshipper. Both are ways to identify a hymn, differing only in emphasis. One stresses the text, the other the music. In truth, without both elements something is missing, and in worship, both are essential.

Not until 1916 did Episcopal hymnals contain specified tunes. Prior to that edition, tunes were not printed with texts. Organists selected either a tune inextricably linked to the text, or they adopted a tune that worked metrically from the repertoire known to the congregation. Even in the current era, organists can select an alternate tune to that printed in the hymnal, something we do here from time to time .

My listening habits include opportunities to hear British worship services on the internet or from my own collection. In the matter of hymnody, it is not unusual that the same text will ascend heavenward in different musical settings depending on which side of the Atlantic it is offered. Such differences may be more a matter of culture than of musical accomplishment, and the tunes may in fact be of equal merit.

Occasionally, however, a surprise variation in a tune will work to cause an entirely different understanding of the text. That happened for me the other day when I heard a service from Cambridge in which the well-loved text “Come, thou long-expected Jesus” was offered. This text is by the masterful Charles Wesley. In its simplicity it is a great hymn, combining elements both of the Lord’s Nativity and his second coming at the end of the age. We are accustomed to singing that text to the solid tune *Stuttgart*, a tune also associated with the text the Epiphany hymn “Earth has many a noble city” (Hymn 127). In fact, it is with the Epiphany hymn that this tune made its way into English and American usage, and only secondarily (and in this country) to the Advent text.

So, what do the English use for this wonderful Advent text? Their preference is a tune by the Victorian composer John Stainer (1840-1901), his composition *Cross of Jesus*. That tune is taken from Stainer’s Passiontide cantata *The Crucifixion*. The cantata itself retains mixed and often unfavorable status among music critics, but the hymn to this tune is a good one, and its use during Holy Week services is very effective.

To hear and use that tune in Advent is quite a different matter. Stainer’s tune is seasonal, to be sure, and to the alert and knowledgeable ear, it is a different season that comes to mind. In the subtle association of word and music is a most important point: The Christ whose advent, whose coming, we await is the Christ of whom it is said: “Born thy people to deliver.” That deliverance was accomplished by “his one oblation of himself once offered”, and that brings to mind that this Lord Jesus was born to give his life for us as a ransom for many. It is easy to lose sight of that important truth amidst all the tinsel and distraction of this season. Simple, profound beautiful music and incomparable poetry can call us to Advent’s deeper truth.

STRING AND WOODWIND PLAYERS:

Would you like to play in a small ensemble for the Christmas Pageant on December 20th at 4:30 p.m.? If so please contact Victoria Ellsworth via email at: vellsworth@norwoodschool.org

Rehearsal will be on Sunday, Dec. 20th, in the Youth Room after Sunday School.



2009 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT DECEMBER 20TH, 4:30PM

Preschool through Grade 12 students will participate in the 2009 Sunday School Christmas Pageant. The Pageant will be held on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 20, at 4:30 p.m. The Preschool through Grade 4 students have been preparing special musical numbers and those in Grades 5 through 12 will tell the story of Christmas through Bible readings and acting out the various scenes. All the students have been working very hard to make this a Christmas gift for our St. Francis family.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE VESTRY

Parishioners wishing to offer suggestions for consideration by the Nominations Committee are asked to submit those suggestions this week. Suggestions can be given to the Ellen Tozer, Senior Warden, or to Laurel Bahar, Fran Baker, Corey Burr, Devar Burbage, or the Rector. Qualifications for nominees were printed in the two previous issues of *Sounds*, and are posted in the lobby of the parish house.



JOY AND CONCERN

Please join us in prayer for Thomas M. Gittings, who died and for Lillian M. Hansen, mother of Carol Hansen, who is ill.

COULD YOU FULFILL YOUR PLEDGE OFFERING WITH AN "IRA ROLLOVER" ?

You can do so if you are age 70 ½ or older and are required to make a taxable "RMD" (required minimum distribution). Congress included a two year extension to the provision, termed the "IRA Rollover," as part of the Financial Rescue Package so that it now covers the period from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2009. In these turbulent economic times, you may want to consider paying your 2009 (or even 2010) pledge under this provision. Consult your financial planning professional to see if this would work for your situation.

ST. NICK'S APPEARANCE WAS A BIG HIT

Many, many thanks to Karen Schneider who spearheaded the St. Nicolas Workshop and Crafts event. Thirty-five (35) children attended with their moms, grandmoms, babysitters, dads... and of course our own St. Nicolas, complete with costume and his bag of gold coins. By meeting St. Nicolas the children learned about his life and good works. Following that, they painted pottery, made snowflake ornaments, and created Christmas cards. It was a wonderful event for all concerned.

Thanks also go to Devar Burbage for his excellent character acting as St. Nicolas, Libby Rubin for furnishing refreshments, Mary Ashworth for crowd control, Wayne Jarvis and Devar for set up, and Adam Schneider for clean up.

COMING UP AT ST FRANCIS

For more information, please visit our website at www.stfrancispotomac.org

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

8:00am Holy Eucharist
9:00am Morning Prayer
Adult Education Hour
11:15 am Holy Eucharist
4:30 p.m. Sunday School Christmas Pageant

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22

5:30 pm St. Clare Girl Choir
7:00 pm Centering Prayer—Undercroft

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

3:00 p.m. Sounds Deadline for 1/3/10 Issue
5:30 pm Jr. High Bible Study
7:00 p.m. St. Francis Choir

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

EVE OF THE NATIVITY
5:00 pm Choral Prelude
5:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist
9:30 p.m. Choral Prelude
10:00 pm Holy Eucharist

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY
11:00 am Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

8:00 am Holy Eucharist
10:00 am Holy Eucharist

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2010

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME
11:00 am Holy Eucharist

The Scripture appointed for the Fourth Sunday of Advent
Zephaniah 3:14-20, Canticle 9, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18

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