



DECEMBER
2015

200 N. James St. PO Box 984, Goldsboro, NC 27530

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www.ststephenschurch.com

From the Interim Rector —

OUTRAGEOUS SALUTATIONS

“The Lord be with you.” “And also with you.”

We say this a lot in Episcopal Churches. Its proper name within the liturgy is the Salutation. It’s a way that the priest and the people acknowledge the other before the community moves into prayer together. More irreverently (and outside formal liturgy), it has sometimes been called the “Episcopal cattle call.” You can always get the attention of a group of Episcopalians, no matter how many are assembled or how many conversations are going on, by shouting “The Lord be with you.” The room will get quieter and the people will respond “And also with you.” It works even if you’re not trying to get their attention for a prayer!

Think about these words for a minute. They are, if taken seriously, pretty outrageous sentiments. To ask that God be with another is, on the one hand, rather silly. God is with us, all the time, in all places. On the other hand, perhaps we need to be reminded of this abiding presence; we don’t always seem to act as if the Lord is with us, or as if we believe it.

In the Gospel account of the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel is sent by God to Mary, and says to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” And the writer of Luke’s Gospel tells us, “But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.” (Luke 1:28-29) We know the story. We know that Mary had good reason to be perplexed by these words, and even more in need of hearing—and believing—that God would be with her when she learns what is about to happen to her. God would be very much with Mary, with her in physical a way that no other human had or has since experienced. Because God was with Mary in this way, because God came into our world incarnate in the form of Jesus the Christ, we can know something about God. God revealed Godself by becoming human like us. God came to be with us as Emmanuel, which means literally “God with us.” And we call, routinely, for God to be with each other. Wow!

In this season of Advent, we explicitly await God’s coming among us, to be with us. Unlike those people who lived at the time of Jesus’ birth, we have a time-line. We count down the days of December with Advent calendars (or with the advertising world’s non-stop chorus of how many shopping days until Christmas). We know what’s coming, and we know precisely the day on which we will rejoice in that coming.

And then our culture tells us that “it” is over. On the 26th of December, it’s nearly impossible to find Christmas music playing anywhere except on personal sound systems and in some churches (like ours—join us for more Christmas music on the Sunday after Christmas, Dec. 27; come back on Jan. 3 and you’re likely to hear at least one or two Christmas carols, since we’ll still be in the season of Christmastide). In our culture, the last moment of Christmas is at 11:59 p.m. on the 25th; in the church, the celebration of Christmas doesn’t end until the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6.

But God in the person of Jesus Christ has come, and God in Christ remains in our world. In the words of one of my favorite hymns, “high o’er all the heavens he reigneth, yet to dwell with thee he deigneth” (“Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness” *Hymnal 1982*, #339). God in the person of Jesus Christ dwells with us, stays with us, or in a now less-common expression, abides with us. God didn’t choose to come among us for a brief visit; God is here to stay.

Maybe it’s because so little in our lives is permanent any more—ours is a culture of disposables and transportables; what’s here today may be in the trash or be thousands of miles away tomorrow—that we need more than ever to be reminded that God is with us. Maybe it’s because it’s so easy to forget it that the church reminds us in those simple and outrageous words: The Lord be with you. And also with you.

May you know God’s abiding presence as we wait expectantly in this season of Advent to celebrate again the coming of the Christ Child, God’s choosing to dwell among and with us, Emmanuel.

Advent blessings,

St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church: Living a tradition of service through Christ to God, to each other and to our neighbors since 1853.

LOOKING FOR A LITTLE ADVENT QUIET?

St. Mary's – Kinston is offering an Advent Quiet Day on Saturday morning, December 5. The Rev. Mary Ogus will offer a series of meditations dealing with the topic of deepening an appreciation of the mystery of the incarnation. There will be the opportunity for silence and meditation between meditations. The day will get under way at 8:45 a.m. with coffee and refreshments in Moseley Hall. The Quiet Day will start at 9:00 a.m. in the Chapel and conclude at 11:30 a.m. If you plan to attend, please contact Linda Johnson in the St. Mary's Parish Office at 252-523-6146.

ANGEL TREE GIFTS

St. Stephen's is continuing its participation in the Angel Tree ministry, through which children with a parent (or parents) in prison receive a Christmas gift of clothing and a toy/game/gift card. The tags are on the tree near the kitchen; please take one (or two), sign the sheet indicating which tags you have chosen, and return your wrapped gifts to St. Stephen's by the 11 a.m. service on December 13, when they will all be blessed. The gifts will be picked up for the children on December 16 and 17.

This year, in hopes of increasing the number of parishioners who participate in this ministry, we have separated the clothing gift tags from the toy/game/gift card tags (in previous years, one bought both gifts for the child). The recommended limit for a gift (clothing or toy/game/giftcard) is \$40.

Sue McDonald

AIRMEN'S COOKIE DRIVE

Help make an airman's holidays a little sweeter! Bring some Christmas cookies to St. Stephen's by December 6 and Allan Pedersen will get them to the base. Your generosity means that every single airman at Seymour Johnson AFB will receive a package of holiday sweets.

CHRISTMAS CHURCH TOUR

The Wayne County Historic Association is sponsoring a Christmas Church Tour of 6 area churches, including St. Stephen's, next Sunday from 2 - 5 pm, starting from the Wayne County Museum. Tickets are \$10; they are available at the museum. Marshall Foster will be playing our organ and Jon Williams, a former parishioner, is returning to talk about the history and architecture of the church.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

The sign-up sheet for poinsettias to decorate the church for Christmas is on the bulletin board. And we're making it easier for you (and us!) to pay for them: there are small envelopes in the red envelope tacked on the bulletin board. You can sign up, grab an envelope, put your check (or cash—just make sure you put your name on the envelope) and leave it in the office. Poinsettias can be given in thanksgiving or in honor of someone. The cost is \$10/plant.

DECORATING THE CHURCH

Join members of the Altar Guild after the 11 a.m. service on Advent IV (December 20) and help decorate the church for Christmas. If you think you lack that talent of decorating, there are still ways you can help: we'll have LOTS of poinsettias to move from the Parish Hall, the tree to set up and decorate, the crèche to unpack. We also need cuttings of greenery (evergreens, boxwood, holly). Thanks.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST. STEPHEN'S

Christmas Eve – 5:30 p.m. – Holy Eucharist with all three of our children's choirs singing.

11:00 p.m. – Holy Eucharist with the adult choir singing

Christmas Day – 10 a.m. – Holy Eucharist and carols



FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN

December brings Advent and Christmas, the preparation and celebration of our Lord's birth. What an excellent time for us to prepare our lives for service to God and our neighbor. Hopefully by now everyone has received a 2016 Stewardship commitment card. If you have completed your pledge of time, talent, and treasure for 2016 I thank you. If you haven't gotten around to it, please do so now. The Finance Committee will be meeting the first week of December to create the 2016 budget, and we need all pledges in before the planning begins.

Also, included in your pledge card mailing is a request to update your personal information. This will make communication between all our ministries, members, and staff much easier; so getting your most current contact information is very important.

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, December 6th. We will have our annual meeting during the 11:00 service. Reports will be provided from the Wardens, Treasurer, and Search Committee. We will also vote for the 2016-2018 Vestry as well as our delegates to Diocesan Convention.

This will be my last Senior Warden's Report, as December marks the end of the Vestry term for Allan Pedersen, Robert Daniel, and me. It has been my honor and privilege to serve St. Stephen's these past three years. Much has been accomplished and I thank my fellow retiring Vestrymen, as well as the remaining members, for the good work they have done for our parish. Our class leaves the leadership of St. Stephens in very capable hands, and we are prepared for even greater things in 2016.

David Jackson

FROM THE JUNIOR WARDEN

We are in the midst of making our improvements upstairs. Most of the lighting is done however we are waiting on some replacement lenses to come in particularly for the music room. Our next step will be finishing the painting, chiefly the ceilings and then we will be in a position to have the carpet installed which we have already authorized. We did have an overflowing urinal in the upstairs bathroom (believed to be totally clean water as the leak was at the top of the unit) which stopped leaking after I followed the wisdom of Bob Cagle and hit it several times with a wrench. Because of the leak, there was overflow into the nursery below and even though Pinkney cleaned the carpet we had a professional cleaning service to do it again. As several have expressed concern about the stability of the nursery ceiling we are having someone exam it. The Landscaping team led by Mr. Cagle, planted hundreds of tulip bulbs around the church as well as some other plants and we have authorized the purchase of pine straw to put out around the church for the winter months. So thanks to our Landscaping Committee and to Allan Pederson and Ann Hine who have been proactive concerning recent developments at our building and all of you, please know I am always available to discuss property matters or other concerns at the Church

Peace & Thanksgiving, Geoff

STEWARDSHIP

We are deeply grateful for the 2016 pledges of time, talent, and treasure that have been returned to the church. If you have pledged, thank you. If you haven't, there's still time! Pledge cards are available in the office and at the back of the church.

If you would like envelopes for 2016, please contact the parish office. You can have a box of 52 envelopes, or a packet of 12 if you give on a monthly basis.

And please remember that contributions for 2015 need to be postmarked by December 31 or brought to the office by noon on that day (the parish office will close at noon on the 31st).

OUTREACH

Through the Outreach Committee, St. Stephen's continues to support a number of ministries helping those less fortunate, both in our community and around the world. A new ministry we are supporting is the Make A Difference Food Pantry, an endeavor of a 10-year old Wayne County girl. Here's her story:

In April, ten years old Mackenzie Hinson wanted to feed the hungry and started collecting and distributing bags of foods to feed a four person family for four days. She had help from Food Lion volunteers in Mar Mac, her 4-H club and others.. In August she moved to her new location on Highway 13 South in a strip mall near Grantham. It is the only feeding program between Goldsboro and that part of the county. They serve on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

Mackenzie worked at the Belk's Volunteer Day and Zaxby's and received a percentage from them. She will go anywhere to speak. Lowes sold her a freezer below cost when one of hers died, donations come from food walks, a club in Benson, Tero Farms in Florida (vegetables), and more. A Smithfield dealership gave her a van. Many others are helping. The pantry now has official 501(c)(3) status.

The program has grown by leaps and bounds. Social Services calls her because they are 45 days behind certification for food stamps and people need food. They packed ninety-two bags at the end of October and had to come up with eighteen more.

Every Friday, she packs back packs for fifty-two students at Brogden Elementary and Middle Schools to get their families through the weekend.

The Outreach Committee allocated \$400 to the Make a Difference Food Pantry at their November meeting. Mackenzie has said she would like to come meet us.

Mackenzie is eleven now and is a dancer, horseback rider, and 4-H Clubber. Her mother says she (AND THEY) do it because they know how blessed they are.

If you would like to contribute directly to this project, here's the address: Make a Difference Food Pantry, 188 Mills Loop Road, Mr. Olive, 28365.

DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Be A Blessing!

Our Winter Offering for the students at Dillard will be a gift of warmth. The staff at the school tells us that whereas most students have warm coats to wear TO school, they often have only tee shirts under those coats. School rules require that coats and any zippered garments (ie cardigan sweaters and zip-up sweatshirts) must be stored in the school lockers during the day. Therefore, during the day students often are distracted by the fact they are cold, especially when moving around campus between classes, to electives or lunch. Let's contribute SWEATSHIRTS to share with the students! They can be hooded but they MUST be pull-overs. Watch the sales ads for bargains on these wonderful extra layers of warmth. Youth through adult sizes are needed and welcomed. Buy a sweatshirt in honor of each of your children or grandchildren knowing that you have given a gift of warmth this holiday season. Please place your gifts in the tub outside the office.

JanCagle /bcagle2@suddenlink.net

KIDS H.O.P.E.

St. Stephen's is expanding its hands-on outreach! Xena Morrison is leading a new ministry called KIDS H.O.P.E. (Helping Out People Everywhere) for children age 3 – fifth grade. Every other month there will be a Saturday morning gathering during which our children will engage in an outreach project for people in our community.

The kick-off for KIDS H.O.P.E. is Saturday, December 5 at 10 a.m. The children will be making small gifts (ornaments, stockings, etc.) to attach to the Angel Tree gift. Future plans include showing our police officers a little love and appreciation around Valentine's Day, and an environmental project in April, in conjunction with Earth Day.

Adults and youth are welcome to help with this ministry. Contact Xena for more information.

FROM THE CHOIRMASTER

The season of Advent, rather than being a month of Sundays that celebrate Christmas, is a time of preparation and a season of hope, expectation and waiting. Each of the four Sundays in Advent becomes successively a little fuller, a little nearer and a little brighter as we approach Bethlehem. Many of the hymns we sing and the music we hear include themes of preparing the way, watching for the coming Messiah and rejoicing that Emmanuel is coming.

Then there are actually five Eucharists during the twelve days of Christmas: two on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the First and Second Sundays after Christmas. At the 5:30 Eucharist on Christmas Eve, Cherub, Junior and Schola Nova children's choirs, all three, will be on hand to help us welcome the birth of our Savior. Our adult choir sings at the 11:00 p.m. "midnight mass."

GIFT SHOP NEWS

It's that time of year...Christmas! The Gift Shop is ready! We have Advent calendars for the children; you have to see them to believe them! Soft-sculptured toys including Nativity sets are available.

Beginning December 6 we will once again have gifts and merchandise set up in the hallway outside the Shop. Also, we will be open during the Christmas Church Tour on that day from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

All proceeds from our sales benefit ECW outreach programs, and we appreciate your support during the year!

*Glenda Futch, Manager
Peggy Musser, Asst. Mgr.*

ST. HILDA'S GUILD

St. Hilda's Guild will meet Thursday evening for the annual Christmas party December 17 at 6:00 at the home of Emmy Mitchell, 705 Lakeshore Drive. All Episcopal church women are invited and should bring a \$10 gift and a hooded non-zip sweatshirt size Youth Large or XL or adult S, M, L, XL or XXL for the Dillard project.

PASTORAL LETTER ON MARRIAGE FROM BISHOP SKIRVING

Bishop Skirving has written a pastoral letter to the diocese on marriage and the changes in the Episcopal Church that became effective on the First Sunday of Advent. Copies are available on the ushers' table at the back of the church and in the office, or you can find it on the diocesan website (diocese-eastcarolina.org).

TREASURER'S REPORT

Here is a summary of the parish finances through October:

| | OCTOBER | YEAR TO DATE (YTD) | BUDGET YTD |
|----------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|
| INCOME | \$19,395.72 | \$311,935.67 | \$313,541.72 |
| EXPENSES | \$27,293.35 | \$289,403.45 | \$317,208.39 |

As you can see, we are slightly behind in budgeted income for the year to date but our expenses year to date are well below both the income received and the budget year to date. The October expenses included several one-time expenses and those were within the amounts budgeted. We are grateful for your financial support of the mission and ministry of our parish. If you have questions about these numbers, please feel free to contact me.

Marjorie Fickling, Treasurer

EYC EVENTS FOR DECEMBER

Sunday School - We will wrap up our fall Sunday School schedule on December 13!

EYC

December 6, 2015 - Service Project

Jr. EYC - 5:15 - 6:00 pm.

Dinner - 6:00 to 6:30 pm

Sr. EYC - 6:30 - 7:30 pm

December 13, 2015 - Christmas Party/Progressive Dinner

Details to follow!!

For more information on all the great things happening in the Diocese of East Carolina please check out the Diocesan Website, Facebook and twitter pages:

<http://diocese-eastcarolina.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/DioECYouth/>

<https://twitter.com/DioECYouth>

Happening #67

March 3-6, 2016 at Trinity Center

Cost: \$145 by mail or \$150 through Paypal. Payments are NON-REFUNDABLE

MIQRA

St. Mary's Church

800 Rountree Street, Kinston

January 16-18

Parish Registration Early Bird Deadline is December 15th (Fee is \$90 per person) Regular Deadline is January 6th (Fee is \$115) per person!

CAMP TRINITY APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE

There's a poster on the youth bulletin board (across from the kitchen) with the dates of camps at our diocesan Camp Trinity this summer. Camp Trinity is a great way to spend part of the summer, and camps are available for children and youth who will be rising 4th-12th graders. Applications can be downloaded from the Trinity Center website:

<http://www.trinityctr.com/campt/downloads/camptapplication%202016.pdf>

ST. STEPHEN'S ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

DURING THE 11 A.M. SERVICE

Be there!

ACOLYTES

DECEMBER 6 Crucifer: Hayes Gerrard
Torch Bearers: Cam Gerrard
Will Fickling
Flag Bearers: Zachary Lulay
Jackson Harris

DECEMBER 13 Crucifer: Aimee Barnes
Torch Bearers: Langley Barnes
Drew Grice
Flag Bearers: Berkley Woodard
John Grice

DECEMBER 20 Crucifer: Jeff Bland
Torch Bearers: Lucy Bland
Cady Stanley
Flag Bearers: Sarah Boyd
Caroline Smith

DECEMBER 24 5:30 & 11:00 p.m. TBA

DECEMBER 27 Crucifer: Catherine Freemon
Torch Bearers: Anne Stuart Freemon
Louise Gurley
Flag Bearers: David Gurley
Thomas Gurley

FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEE

Chairman– Cathy Howell.....919-778-1548
Lucy Jeffreys.....919-735-7001
Kathy Harris.....919-922-2287
Pat Sasser.....919-735-1969
Gay Elmore.....919-920-1923

USHERS - Ken & Hayes Gerrard

EUCCHARISTIC VISITORS

DECEMBER 6..... Karen & Steve Mzyk

DECEMBER 13.....Glenda & Ed Futch

DECEMBER 20.....Jan & Bob Cagle

DECEMBER 27Mark Ladd

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

DECEMBER 6

8:00 a.m. Sally Pope
11:00 a.m. Kyle Saylor
Adam Livengood

DECEMBER 13

8:00 a.m. Michael Headen
11:00 a.m. Tom Brown
Geoff Hulse

DECEMBER 20

8:00 a.m. Allan Pedersen
11:00 a.m. Beth Saylor
Will Bland

DECEMBER 24 5:30 & 11:00 p.m. TBA

DECEMBER 25 10:00 a.m. TBA

DECEMBER 27

8:00 a.m. Doris Thompson
11:00 a.m. Davis Harris
Mark Ladd

Vestry Person of the Day (VPOD)

DECEMBER 6 - David Jackson

DECEMBER 13 - Ann Hine

DECEMBER 20 - Ken Gerrard

DECEMBER 27 - Mark Ladd

DECEMBER 2015

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | 1 7 am Men's Bible Study | 2 Noon HE 3 p.m. Boys & Girls Club 5:15 Cherub choir 5:45 Junior & Schola Nova 7 Adult choir | 3 Noon Bible Study | 4 | 5 9-4 Goldsboro Area Photographers 10 am Kids H.O.P.E |
| 6 - 2 Advent 8 & 11 am Holy Eucharist 11 am Annual Meeting 10 am Christian Formation Church tour 2-5pm EYC meets | 7 | 8 7 am Men's Bible Study | 9 Noon HE 5:15 Cherub choir 5:45 Junior & Schola Nova 7 Adult choir | 10 Noon Bible Study | 11 | 12 |
| 13 - 3 Advent 8 & 11 am Holy Eucharist 9-9:45—Breakfast 10 am Christian Formation Angel tree gifts blessed EYC meets | 14 | 15 7 am Men's Bible Study 6 pm Vestry meets at David Jackson's house | 16 Noon HE 5:15 Cherub choir 5:45 Junior & Schola Nova 7 pm Adult choir Angel Tree pick up | 17 Noon Bible Study 6 pm St. Hilda's Christmas party Emmy Mitchell's house. Angel Tree pick up | 18 | 19 Christmas in the City 8-11 am Free yard sale |
| 20 - 4 Advent 8 & 11 am Holy Eucharist 10 am Christian Formation Decorate church after 11 am. svc. No EYC | 21 | 22 7 am Men's Bible Study | 23 Noon HE 5:15 Cherub choir 5:45 Junior & Schola Nova 7 Adult choir | 24 Christmas Eve No Bible Study 5:30 Holy Eucharist with all children's choirs 11 pm Holy | 25 Christmas Day 10 am Holy Eucharist and carols | 26 |
| 27 8 & 11 am Holy Eucharist No Christian Formation classes No EYC | 28 | 29 7 am Men's Bible Study | 30 No noon HE | 31 No noon Bible Study Parish office closes at noon | 1 New Year's Day | |

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| Al Brame..... | 12/01 | Frances Brame..... | 12/21 |
| Gay Stanley..... | 12/02 | Joann Logan..... | 12/21 |
| Kitty Sauls..... | 12/03 | Bruce Berkeley..... | 12/22 |
| Noah MacDonald..... | 12/05 | Glenn Johnson..... | 12/22 |
| Ethel Barnhill..... | 12/06 | Paul Lewis..... | 12/23 |
| Thomas Yarboro..... | 12/07 | Catherine Tanner..... | 12/23 |
| Peggy Griswold..... | 12/10 | Harrell Everett..... | 12/25 |
| Paul Jeffreys..... | 12/12 | Xena Morrison..... | 12/25 |
| Katherine Sauls..... | 12/12 | Kyle Saylor..... | 12/27 |
| Ellie Saylor..... | 12/12 | Isabelle Sumrell..... | 12/29 |
| Geoff Hulse..... | 12/14 | John Hine..... | 12/30 |
| Marjorie Snyder..... | 12/17 | Linda Richter..... | 12/30 |
| Nancy Musser..... | 12/18 | Jamie Livengood..... | 12/31 |
| Charlotte Weaver..... | 12/20 | Campbell Williams..... | 12/31 |