

Epiphany blessings from our priest-in-charge

Greetings and blessings this Epiphany, a brief season of light, quietly illuminating the shortest and darkest days of winter. It has been wonderful for me to experience the season of Advent and the coming of Christmas with you all, and I continue to look forward to getting to know each and all

of you even more in the season of Epiphany. Coming so soon after the long-anticipated dazzle of Christmas, the blessings of Epiphany are easily overlooked.

Epiphany, means *manifestation*, or *striking appearance*, shining like a gateway from the dark stable of Christmas towards the brilliant and *striking appearance* of the world changed by the manifestation of God incarnate in it.

The stories from Holy Scripture in Epiphany begin with a shining star in the East inviting strange people to travel a great distance



from a foreign land towards an improbable destination, bringing unusual gifts to a newborn they did not know. Then we follow the Holy Family traveling as refugees from Bethlehem to Egypt to escape the terror of Herod, a ruler who thought nothing of murdering innocent children to protect himself from perceived threats to his political power. In a few weeks, we fast forward to the cries of John the Baptist in the wilderness, preparing us to follow the ministry of Jesus, as he is leaving home, being baptized, calling disciples, and offering his first miracles to humanity.

It is no accident these stories of new beginnings so early in our church year are fraught with peril. They remind us that even though we can be persuaded that our world has never been more difficult or dangerous, that the savior of the world began his own earthly pilgrimage in humble and dangerous circumstances—born in a barn and then carried for his safety to a foreign country by his young parents. Later he left his home in Nazareth to be

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baptized by his strange homeless cousin in the desert, to spend his own time in the wilderness tended by angels before beginning an itinerant life, dependent on the kindness of strangers. God is aware of our perils because he experienced them in the flesh, and God calls us into the only true safety that comes in a salvation

born of love and sacrifice. As we gather together in the manifestation of Epiphany, may we be blessed by its wonder, awe and light, and strengthened by its strangeness, courage, and resilience.

Grace and peace,
Ellen+

Epiphany commemorates visit of Wise Men

Counting from the first day after Christmas, the twelfth day of Christmas falls on January 6th or Epiphany.

The word “epiphany” is Greek in origin and means manifestation, or the act of revealing. Epiphany commemorates the visitation of the Christ Child by the Wise Men or Magi as recorded in the gospel of Matthew.

This visit is the first of three instances in the Bible in which the divinity of Jesus is revealed. The second instance is at the baptism at the River Jordan when the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove. The third instance is at the wedding feast at Cana where Jesus performs his first miracle by changing water into wine. Supposedly, all three manifestations occurred on the same day of the year.

Epiphany marks the beginning of the Carnival Season, which will continue until Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. In the United States, this period is celebrated in New Orleans as Mardi Gras.



Winter gift

“God ... does great things beyond our knowing. He says to the snow, ‘Fall to the earth’; likewise to his heavy, drenching rain. He shuts up all humankind indoors, so that all people may know his work” (Job 37:5-7, NABRE).

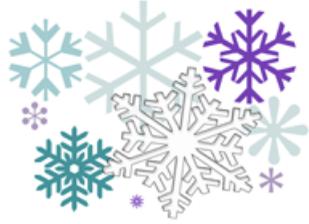
Snow, ice and cold can make winter a hassle. “Snow days” due to a blizzard may thrill students but usually inconvenience parents. But now and then, winter blankets the earth so heavily that it seems to quiet everything. We’re granted permission to hunker down at home, snuggle close with family or pets, enjoy a book or movie, make cocoa or cookies, and rest. It’s like a surprise sabbath — the gift of grace-time — when no one’s expected to get out the

door or the driveway.

Perhaps indeed, as Job declared, God sees fit on such days to put our busyness on hold and shut us all indoors so we pause and remember his work — his place — in our lives. Praise God for snow days!

—Heidi Mann





Twelfth Night celebration and benefit

Thank you to Corey Baker and Don Beach for hosting our annual Twelfth Night Celebration on Saturday, January 6.

Please invite family and friends.

Just as the Wise Men brought gifts to the Christ Child, we are asked to bring our monetary gifts to benefit Blessings in a Backpack, an ecumenical weekend feeding program for over 100 children in our county.



During the school year each Friday selected students receive a bag of six (6) food items to take home to help sustain them until Monday.

Without this bag of food, these children might have to go the entire weekend with no food due to either parental neglect or lack of resources.

These children have been identified as needing nutritional food.

Church of the Advent will be responsible for shopping and packing in March.

When making contributions at the Twelfth Night Celebration, please make checks out to **Church of the Advent** with **Blessings in a Backpack** on the memo line.

Meet our new organist

Greetings, Church of the Advent!

For those of you whom I haven't met, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Brandon Woody, and I'm overjoyed to serve as your organist.



I was born and reared in Tarboro by my mother and maternal grandparents. I graduated from East Carolina University with a B.S. degree in English Education and have taught for 14 years, the last four at Riverside High School.

I began piano lessons at the age of eight and organ lessons in high school. For the last ten years, I have served as organist/choirmaster of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, a sister/mission church of my home parish, Calvary Church. I also served as organist/choir director for the Enfield United Methodist Church for the past six months, until being offered the job here.

I am a past-member of the Wilson Chorale and the Greenville Choral Society. I am an active member of the Edgecombe County Chorus, the Tar River Players, and the Edgecombe County Chapter of the North Carolina Symphony, of which I am a board member.

I am so thankful of the warm reception I have received, and I look forward to working with and getting to know each of you!



I apologize for trying to baptize Brandon Woody with the new name Brandon Woodley in the December *Advent Advisor*. *Kit Reddick*

Church of the Advent Annual Meeting December 3, 2017

From the notes of Senior Warden Jim Allen:

With sincere warmth, thanks and appreciation, we welcome The Reverend Ellen Richardson to our parish as Priest-in-Charge. We look forward to her leadership and guidance in helping our parish members continue our faith journey with our Lord, Jesus Christ and in service to those in need in the community. The parish is sound, active in our faith and welcomes all in our community to visit us and consider joining our parish family.

As a parish, we have conducted:

- 61 services of Holy Eucharist, Morning Prayers & Evening Prayers
- 2 funerals
- 1 wedding

Thank you to our wardens and commission chairs as well as commission members.

Other thank yous go to

- Russ Johnsons and Brandon Woody as organists
- Grant Michel as choir director
- Joe Jernigan as parish administrator
- Joe Jernigan and Kit Reddick for the *Advent Advisor*
- Lucia Peel for *Comings and Goings*
- Valerie Cooke, Regina French, Grant Michel, Lucia Peel, John Price, Kit Reddick, and Bill Webb for leading Morning and Evening Prayer services

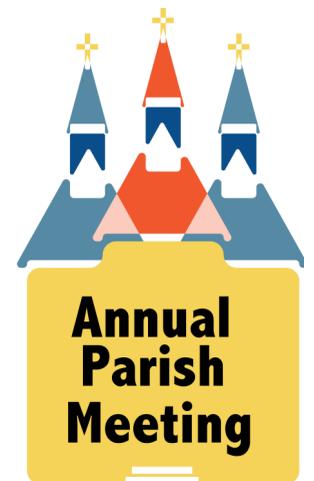
Thank you to all parishioners who volunteered their time, financial resources and talents to our parish and to our community.

Thank you to our

- acolytes
- ushers
- lectors
- Eucharistic ministers
- Altar Guild members
- intercessors
- choir members
- Sunday School teachers

Thank you to those parishioners who serve on a diocesan level.

- Bill Webb, parish representative to the Albemarle Deanery
- Doug Chesson, Diocese of East Carolina Foundation Board
- Kit Reddick, Diocesan Episcopal Church Women Board



Thank you to outgoing vestry members Frankie Biggs, Al Chesson, and Grant Michel. Thank you to Lucia Peel, who has requested to be excused and from her third year of vestry due to family and business reasons

Elections

In accordance with the parish bylaws, the vestry will appoint a parish member to complete the three year term of Lucia Peel.

As established in our parish bylaws, the vestry consists of nine members, each serving a three year term. Each year, three rotate off and three new are elected.

The parish Nominating Committee, which according to the parish bylaws are the outgoing vestry members with input from the rector and other vestry members, have nominated the following parish members for election to this the vestry. The nominees are Johnny Miller, Kit Reddick, and Lori Taylor. They were elected by acclamation.

Two delegates and an alternate are needed for the Diocesan Convention to be held February 9 – 10 in New Bern.

The nominees are Christine Chesson and Doug Chesson as delegates and John Price as an alternate. They were elected by acclamation.



Millers gift church with Episcopal flag

Junior Warden Doug Chesson announced at the Annual Parish Meeting the gift of an outdoor Episcopal Church flag from the Miller family—Johnny, Ellen, Jesse, and Jean.

A flagpole will be installed and the flag will fly when the church office is open and when the church is in service.

William Baldwin designed the flag in 1918 and presented it to the General Convention of 1923 and it was adopted in 1940.

He describes the symbolism — “The

red cross is the oldest symbol, dating back to the third century. The white represents purity and the red, the blood of the martyrs. The blue is ecclesiastical blue, light in color and used in the clothing of the Blessed Virgin Mary and, on this flag, represents the human nature of our Lord which he got from his virgin mother.

The nine cross crosslets or Jerusalem crosses represent the nine dioceses that convened in Philadelphia in 1789, when the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church was adopted. The nine cross crosslets are set in the form of a St. Andrew’s cross in memory of the fact that, to avoid swearing allegiance to the British Crown, Bishop-elect Seabury of Connecticut, the first bishop of the Episcopal Church, had to go to Scotland to be consecrated by Scottish bishops.”

The large red vertical-horizontal cross, St. George’s cross, is in recognition of St. George, the patron saint of England, as Andrew is of Scotland.

Let us pray

One of the central concepts of the Christian faith is prayer. An act as familiar as breathing for believers in a God who hears prayer, we pray together in corporate worship, before meals, and alone in the dark before sleep. We pray in praise and thanksgiving, and we pray for ourselves, our families, our friends, and for causes dear to our hearts. And sometimes we pray for others we do not know well—those who might be going through a rough patch—facing an illness or trauma or loss. But what exactly does it mean to pray?

Margaret Guenther, in *The Practice of Prayer*, describes a common fear that people have that they are “not praying right,” as if prayer is a task to be accomplished, and that there is a set or prescribed way to do it. Episcopalians are blessed with *The Book of Common Prayer*, now more than 500 years old, which offers rich, beautiful, and time-tested prayers for just about every occasion. It is foundational to an Anglican spiritual identity, and our regular use of it in community bonds us together. Yet from time to time we need to speak and listen to God from our own hearts. Personal prayer is less about getting the right words to say the right things, than it is an opportunity to be attentive to the voice of God already within us—to be in conversation with God about our deepest concerns.

Praying for others comes naturally to a community of faith. Lifting silently or aloud the name of another in prayer makes us mindful of the suffering of others, and of the power of divine healing. When asked to pray for others, whether we know them or not, our prayers are not meant to capture God’s attention—for God’s attention is always with those who suffer. God’s love and healing are not purchased with a criti-

cal quantity of prayer, as God knows even the solitary needs of a lost or lone soul. Instead, our intentional prayers are an offering of love and compassion towards to who crave a special solidarity in faith during a time of trial, lending them strength and blessing.

It is always important to remember that even with the best of intentions, names offered to a prayer list can be a source of public curiosity as well as concern, and everyone has the right to manage their own circumstances with a sense of safety and privacy. Towards this end, it is never appropriate to offer another’s name to a public prayer list—in church, in print, or online—without their permission, which should never be assumed. Often just asking permission—whether granted or not—is a message of support and much appreciated.



Margaret Guenther, *The Practice of Prayer*, Boston, MA, Cowley Publications. 1998.

Rev. Ellen Richardson

Inside the church

Volunteers are needed to serve as intercessors to read the Prayers of the People as well as to serve as chalice bearers to assist the celebrant during service.

During January the parish prayer list will be updated. Please enter your petitions in the prayer notebook found in the narthex.

Also in the narthex are the 2018 offering envelopes. On the sign-up sheet next to the envelopes, please sign your name beside the corresponding number of the box of envelopes you selected.



Dear ECW and Church Family, Rex and I are so touched by the generosity and outpouring of support shown to Rachel and Jesse with the wedding brunch at

the end of October. The Parish House was decorated beautifully and the food outstanding. Thank you for the memories of this special milestone.

Love,
Ann Raiford

Robert, Hugh, and I cannot find the right words to express our love, gratitude, prayers, and support the Church of the Advent Parish bestowed upon us for the loss of our son, Robert, Jr.

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to our Parish family with love.

Blessings,
The Bonner Family

Inside Our Church



★ Thank you to **Mary Anne Crowe** who sees that parishioners are remembered on their birthdays with cards. She reports that she mailed 124

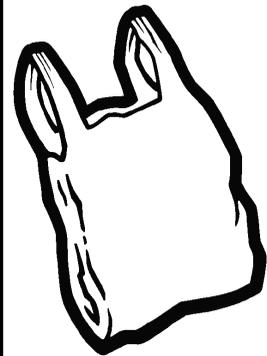
cards during 2017.

★ Thank you to **Doug Chesson** for hosting and organizing the Men's Fellowship at Sunnyside Oyster Bar and **Mary Anne Crowe** for getting the ECW together at her house for annual dinner and gift exchange.

- ★ Thank you to **Organist Brandon Woody**, **Choirmaster Grant Michel**, and the choir for a moving service of Lessons and Carols.
- ★ Congratulations to **Lucy Horton** for her appointment by Governor Roy Cooper to the North Carolina Council on Women. Lucy has served on the Martin County Council of Women as well.

Bags Needed for Blessings in a Backpack

Please bring your used plastic grocery store bags to church and place them in a specially marked hamper in the church vestibule. A collection hamper is also located in the hallway of the Parish House.



These bags are used as individual food packs for students to take with them to use during the weekend.

Once the volunteers pack the bags, they then load them into carrier bags for delivery to the schools.

Also needed are very large cloth or canvas or heavy duty plastic bags to be used as carrier bags. These bags can have logos.

If you have bags that can be used as carrier bags, please give these directly to Kit Reddick when you see her.



The Prayer List is found in the notebook marked "Prayer Lists" on the usher's table in the narthex of the church. Names may be added at any time by writing them in the notebook or calling the church office after requesting permission of those for whom prayer is requested.. The Prayer List is read aloud weekly at Sunday services. Contact the church office if you wish to have a name added, re-listed, or taken off the list.

Prayer List

- James Ford
- Nita Fitzgerald
- Margaret & Asa Bailey
- Ricky Roberson
- Evelyn Smith
- Rudy Worsley
- Bill & Nita Smith
- Katherine Skinner
- Sara Osteen*

Birthdays

- 2, Mark Richardson
- 5, Ellen Richardson
- 6, Lowell Taylor
- 12, Adison Bosso
- 13, Will Michel
- 15, Joey Godard
- 18, Maria Allen
- 19, Carrie Elizabeth Mills
- 22, Mary Anne Crowe
- 22, Don Mills
- 25, Sara Chesson

*I apologize if this name is wrong. I had a hard time reading the handwriting in the prayer notebook. Please contact the church office to let me know if this right or not.

The Church of the Advent Founded 1850

The Rev. Dr. Ellen Richardson, Priest
Jim Allen, Senior Warden
Doug Chesson, Junior Warden
Joe Jernigan, Parish Administrator

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January 2018

Church of the Advent

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Birthdays in Italics</i>	1 The Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ	2 <i>Mark Richardson</i>	3	4	5 <i>Ellen Richardson</i>	6 The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ 12th night celebration @ Corey & Don Beach's house <i>Lowell Taylor</i>
7 1 Epiphany 9:45 am, Choir Practice 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, HE II	8	9	10 Evening Prayer & Supper 6:00 pm	11	12 <i>Adison Bosso</i>	13 <i>Will Michel</i>
14 2 Epiphany 9:45 am, Choir Practice No Sunday School 11:00 am, HE II & Baptism	15 <i>Joey Godard</i>	16	17	18 <i>Maria Allen</i>	19 <i>Carrie Elizabeth Mills</i>	20
21 3 Epiphany 9:45 am, Choir Practice 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, HE II 6:00 pm, Vestry Meeting	22 <i>Mary Anne Crowe Don Mills</i>	23	24	25 <i>Sara Chesson</i>	26	27
28 4 Epiphany 9:45 am, Choir Practice No Sunday School 11:00 am, MP II	29	30	31			

January 2018

Church of the Advent

Lay Schedule

	7 1 Epiphany 11:00 A.M. Holy Eucharist II	14 2 Epiphany 11:00 A.M. Holy Eucharist II & Baptism	21 3 Epiphany 11:00 A.M. Holy Eucharist II	28 4 Epiphany 11:00 A.M. Morning Prayer II
Acolytes				
Large Cross	Jean Miller	Dawson Taylor	Will Michel	Khira Jefferson
Small Cross				
Torches				
Gospel Book	Khalil Jefferson	Khira Jefferson	Adison Bosso	Standrick Jefferson
Lay Worship Leaders				
Lessons	Grant Michel	John Price	Michael Biondi	Leader: Grant Michel
Intercessory Prayers	Lucia peel	Bill Webb	Kit Reddick	Lessons: Jane Jernigan
Eucharistic Minister	Chloe Tuttle	John Price	Doug Chesson	Sermon: Grant Michel
Altar Guild	Angi Godard	Angi Godard	Angi Godard	Angi Godard
	Lori Taylor	Lori Taylor	Lori Taylor	Lori Taylor
Ushers	Don Beach	Don Beach	Don Beach	Don Beach
	Rex Raiford	Rex Raiford	Rex Raiford	Rex Raiford