



Lifeline

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December 2019

The Church of the Holy Trinity

An Episcopal Church
office@holytrinityoxfordmd.org



A Message from Our Rector, Fr. Kevin M. Cross

Gratitude

As I look back on the past year, I see a year filled with challenges, unexpected events, and even unwanted events but I also see a year full of blessings, joy, and abundance. I assume each year we all might find the same litany of mixed blessings. However, in retrospect, I think we will often find that there is more to feel gratitude about than regret. Thus, a good start to each year is to begin the year in a state of gratitude.



From a grateful heart we can look forward to the year to come with glad anticipation of the good that may unfold before us, of the lessons to be learned, and of the love to receive. Why should we do

so? My answer is gratitude itself. We have a loving God. As St. Augustine describes in his **Confessions**, we have a God who runs to meet us. With the birth of Christ: *“He lost no time, but ran with shouts of words, acts, death. Life, descent, ascent, all the time shouting for us to return to him. Jesus is the shout of God, the way God runs out to meet us. “Run the race! I’ll carry you! I’ll carry you clear to the end, and even at the end I’ll carry you.”* How can we not, even in the midst of life’s trials, feel gratitude toward this God of love and redemption. No matter how many times we mess up in the life, our God eagerly awaits to receive us and like the Prodigal son’s father received him, God is always ready to welcome us back with a life renewed. With a life full of promise and joy.

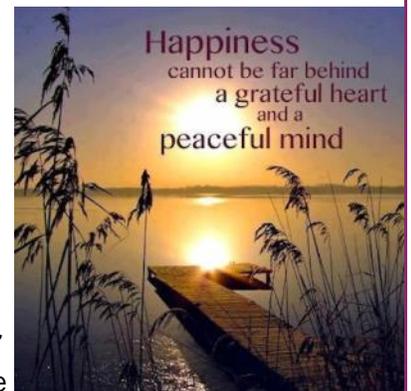
Now you may say, ‘yea’ but what about the really awful events that came into my life this past year? What about having lost a loved one, what about the cancer diagnosis, what about the financial hard times I have experienced? I do not wish to minimize the adverse impact of any of that on our lives. Part of the process of healing from such events is taking time to lament. However, as the world always turns towards the morning, our lives can always turn back to joy. God created this world in love and love abounds throughout creation and among our brothers

and sisters. However, it is always up to us to take the risk of opening our soul to see and receive His love. A grateful heart can help us do so. If we don’t look for and acknowledge the blessings we have received, we will remain in the dark. So, really, what do we have to lose? The season of Epiphany is a season of light. The light came down at Christmas. It is now up to us to make a choice about whether we will carry that light within us - or not. We all experience epiphanies. We can choose to learn and grow from each one, or not. We, like the prodigal son, can choose to return home, or not. Our faith teaches us that if we take that chance, a grateful father is eagerly waiting to receive us and love us.

As paraphrased in The Message version of the Bible by Rev. Eugene Peterson, Matthew 5:14 – 16 tells us, *“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”*

In thinking about the year ahead and what may come, let us devote ourselves to carrying forth God’s Good News. As a saying of Mother Teresa encourages us. *“Don’t look for big things, just do small things with great love... The smaller the thing, the greater must be our love.”*

I pray that you may see God’s blessings of love and joy in your lives this year.



Blessings, Father Kevin



CHEERS and APPRECIATION

- The Just Once Per Year Program would like to thank **Harvey & Louisa Zendt, Suzanne Grimes, Jean Hemphill, and Larry Paz** for their generous donations to the Wednesday Lunch Bunch and to the **Garden Club** for the beautiful holiday flower arrangements.
- Much admiration and gratitude to the **ECW** for another fun, festive, and productive Christmas Bazaar all in the name of charity.
- Thank you to our Parish Administrator, **Connie Greenhawk**. A master of much and juggler of tasks without match.
- Much gratitude to Mary Ann Hensinger for her many years of inspired leadership of Women's Bible.
- Thank you to **Tot O'Mara** for coordinating a very successful Angel Tree program.
- Thank you to **Tim Wilson and the chairmen** for arranging and rearranging the hall and church for numerous functions throughout December.
- Great appreciation to **Bishop Shand, Lisa Webb, Sue Schulze and Fr. John Wright** for your support and service. Because of you we did not miss a beat!
- A huge thank you to our **Sunday School teachers and students and GK, Jane, Jack and Molly O'Mara** for a truly wonderful Christmas pageant.
- Thank you to the **Youth Group** for bringing holiday cheer to the residents of the Bayleigh Chase Gardens.
- Thank you to all who served on the 2019 Vestry. You are inspiring leaders.
- Barbara and I would also like to offer our heartfelt appreciation for all of your support and your prayers. We feel blessed to be in the most wonderful parish anywhere!

Blessings.

Fr. Kevin

Inquiring Believers

The sessions for the Men's Bible Study meets in the River Room on Monday nights at 6:00 pm.

WOMEN ON A JOURNEY

Next meeting is Monday January 22nd 9:00—10:30

Any questions please contact Beverly Rohman at 410-829-9561 or beverlyrohman@gmail.com

January Fellowship Event

Join us for the first "Winter Pot Luck Supper"! It's a wonderful opportunity for good food and fellowship during the winter months. Bring your favorite dish and relax with old and new friends.

Date: Sunday, January 26th. Time: 5 – 7 pm

Place: Parish Hall

Questions: Contact Nancy Roberts at (609) 647-2622 or Nancy_Roberts@verizon.net

Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible study remains strong with a devoted, caring and prayer filled core of women. We have tackled topics and personalities of the bible as they translate to our world today. Please think of joining as we search for God's word revealed through study, reflection and prayer. The discussion for Feb. 1, 2020 "Fix Your Eyes on Jesus." \$7 for student guide and runs 4 weeks. For March 2nd, "By His Wounds We Are Healed." \$7 for student guide and runs 4 weeks.

Questions call Linda Wilson 410-226-1340.

Daughters of the King Meetings

Monday February 10 at 10:45 am

ECW BAZAAR

Once again we had a wonderful Christmas Bazaar to begin this joyous holiday season. A huge thank you to all of you for sharing your time, talents and your financial support. Through your generosity we raised approximately \$12,500 to allow us to be able to give funds to many deserving organizations locally. We are truly grateful to all of you for being such a caring congregation.



Linda Wilson and Margaret Munsch
Bazaar Co-chairs

Mission



The DOK gathered at the Bayleigh Chase Gardens to celebrate Berry Passano's birthday.

The Youth Group Bakes, Carols and Spreads Christmas Joy



The Trinity Youth Group gathered on Sunday, December 15 to learn about and practice our Christian commitment to service. Youth from Holy Trinity and Trinity Cathedral came together to bake apple crisps for the residents of the Bayleigh Chase Gardens, which include parishioners from both of our parishes. Under the guidance of Lisa Pagano, and chefs Larry Paz, Dennis Roberts and Brian Schmidt, our youth baked over 70 individual apple crisps! These hot and tasty treats were then served by the youth to the residents and they sang carols and visited. The

youth, group leaders and residents all had a wonderful time of fellowship and service. Fr. Kevin was present for the beginning of the activity until he was asked to leave after telling some truly groan-worthy food jokes!

This month, the group will, for the second year in a row, participate in the Easton Rotary Club's Rise Against Hunger Event on Saturday January 25. Last year we helped package over 20,000 meal packets for distribution around the world. If you would like more information about this group, please contact the parish office and ask for Fr. Kevin.

A Christmas Story

I never thought that I would be an active participant in a Christmas story. However, I believe that this season I have been one. Let me tell you about it.

For the last several years an Hispanic gardener has come to us occasionally doing gardening work around the house. He came to America with his mother from Guatemala as a boy. He went through high school here. He is now 41 years old, married with children, is articulate and knows the names and requirements of most garden plants. He employs several young men, also from Guatemala, to help him. They all are industrious, honest and dependable. During the years they have come to us I have learned that he is very active in his church as a group leader, teacher and musician. During that time he has, of course, noticed that I make furniture. I found that his church group holds their services in a local church before that church's regular service. These are responsible people who work hard and pay their way. Although their means are very limited, their faith and commitment are strong. Now, the Christmas story part.



Several months ago, he asked me if I would consent to build them a reading stand for their services for which they expected to pay. The church which permits them to hold services requires them to bring in any equipment they may need for each service and remove it all before the regular service. I asked him to bring me a picture of their present unsatisfactory stand. What I saw was what appeared to be a very wobbly insubstantial metal stand. I then told him that I would make them a proper lectern and that it would cost them nothing. He protested saying that they should pay. I then said, "You are a very active member of your church and I am active in my church. Let us call this a gift from my church, The Church of the Holy Trinity, to your church." I confirmed rough dimensions with him and asked about the height. He said, "Mr. Noble, we are all short. Please make the bottom of the reading surface come here." Whereupon he pointed to his chest and I asked him to hold his finger there while I measured the distance to the floor. I told him that it would take a while to build and I would let him know.

I decided that if I were to build a lectern for them I should make it more than just a reading stand but a simple but elegant lectern of which they could be proud.

A few weeks ago, I realized that with luck and no expected delays the project could be completed before Christmas. I succeeded, finishing it about ten days ago. I telephoned to tell him that it was finished. He expressed pleasure saying that they didn't think it would be ready by Christmas. He came over that afternoon, seemed very pleased and said that he was taking it right away to show his brothers (meaning his church group). Since then I have been thanked several times. I am pleased to know that it is enhancing their services during this Christmas season. Attached are two pictures of the lectern.

That's the story. I feel rather good knowing that I have done something that will help brighten the spirits of these worthy people. - Jack Noble



Faith and Cancer Support Group

"You are a lot stronger than you think and God is much greater than you think." Lynn Eib

"Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace."

Ephesians 4:3

Since I heard the words, "you have cancer" I have found much reassurance in my faith. However, I know that at its core Jesus taught us that our faith is a communal journey. There is an African quote "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This quote has come to my mind several times in the last couple of months. When facing the challenge of cancer, I do not believe God intends for us to go on this journey alone. I believe God's desire, as in all things, is that we travel together offering support, prayer and encouragement to our fellow sojourners. Cancer is a unique road to travel. It can be a lonely time. It can be discouraging. It can be a journey that causes us to close out the world around us. I feel called to offer an alternative. I believe this journey can be a journey of hope on which we offer each other companionship, prayer, humor, and encouragement. It can be a time to deepen faith. I would like to discuss starting up a faith and cancer support group. Whether you are a believer, a seeker, or a questioning believer you are welcome. If you are on this journey as one with cancer or have a loved one with cancer, and would like some companionship, please call or email me. I would like to schedule a time to come together to discuss my idea and hear your ideas for such a group. You may reach me at 410-226-5134 or rector@holyltrinityoxfordmd.org. All communications will be held confidential.

Habitat For Humanity Update

Habitat Choptank makes it possible for lower income residents of Talbot and Dorchester Counties to own homes. The prospective homeowners must meet financial requirements, work the required number of hours as "sweat equity", and make mortgage payments.

Recently there are 13 houses under construction in Cambridge, Easton and St. Michaels. On Saturday, December 14 at 9 am the 84th house built by Habitat Choptank was dedicated at 221 Brooks Lane, St. Michaels.

Also on Brooks Lane, Habitat is constructing a faith build house. This is being funded by churches and church members in the area. Volunteers from the churches are doing the construction. Holy Trinity is a participant in this effort. Holy Trinity volunteers work on the 4th Saturday of the month on the Faith Build House. Holy Trinity volunteers also work on Port St. in Easton on the second Saturday of the month. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Otts Schnellenberger at 443-385-0464. As of December \$65,000 of \$110,000 needed to fund construction has been raised for this effort. A picture of the faith build house under construction is shown below. Contributions for the faith build should be made at

<https://www.habitatchoptank.org/restore-2-2/donate/>





Many thanks to the Sunday School for presenting a wonderful and meaningful Christmas pageant. It was so wonderful to have multiple generations participate in the Christmas pageant and to have a real baby for Jesus! We are grateful to the O'Mara and Delushmet families for their willingness to make this pageant so special. I am told that Molly's grandparents were making the most interesting faces to keep Molly (baby Jesus) entertained until it was her turn. Martha Callahan was an awesome angel! And the children did such a great job projecting their lines. It was also wonderful to have so many visiting grandchildren participate. A very special evening...



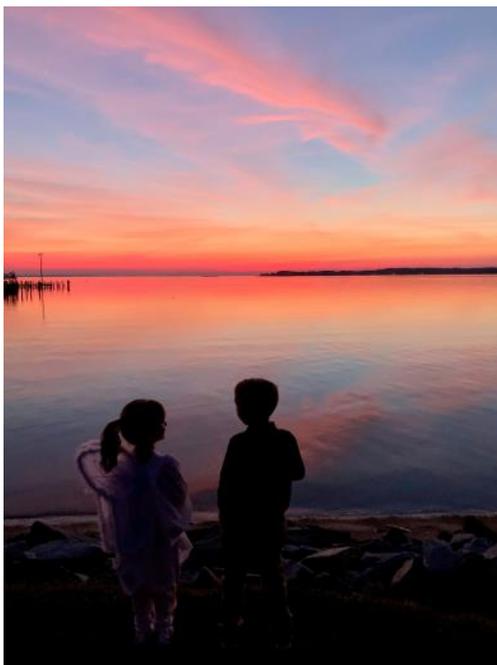
Sunday School

Just as our Gospel the first Sunday after Epiphany focuses on Jesus' baptism, and we then continue with Jesus' life, the Sunday School curriculum will also be following the lectionary. We will use this time to include learning about Holy Communion.



The Schmidt Family with devoted Eagle Scouts Josh and Will.

Baptism of Martha, Justin and Joseph Callahan



Angels by the River





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The Church of the Holy Trinity



Lifeline

Save the Date: February 28th.
American Spiritual Ensemble
Concert

MISSION

The Church of The Holy Trinity, an Episcopal Parish in Oxford, Maryland: a caring Christian community dedicated to growing in God's love through worship, study, service and fellowship.

Who We Are

We are a small parish with a big heart comprised of committed people willingly sharing their talents to help those in need.

We are all seekers on a spiritual journey; encouraging of others also on the journey, and non-judgmental of where one might be on that journey.

