

*Transforming
Lives Through
Jesus Christ*

SWORD POINTS

January 8, 2026

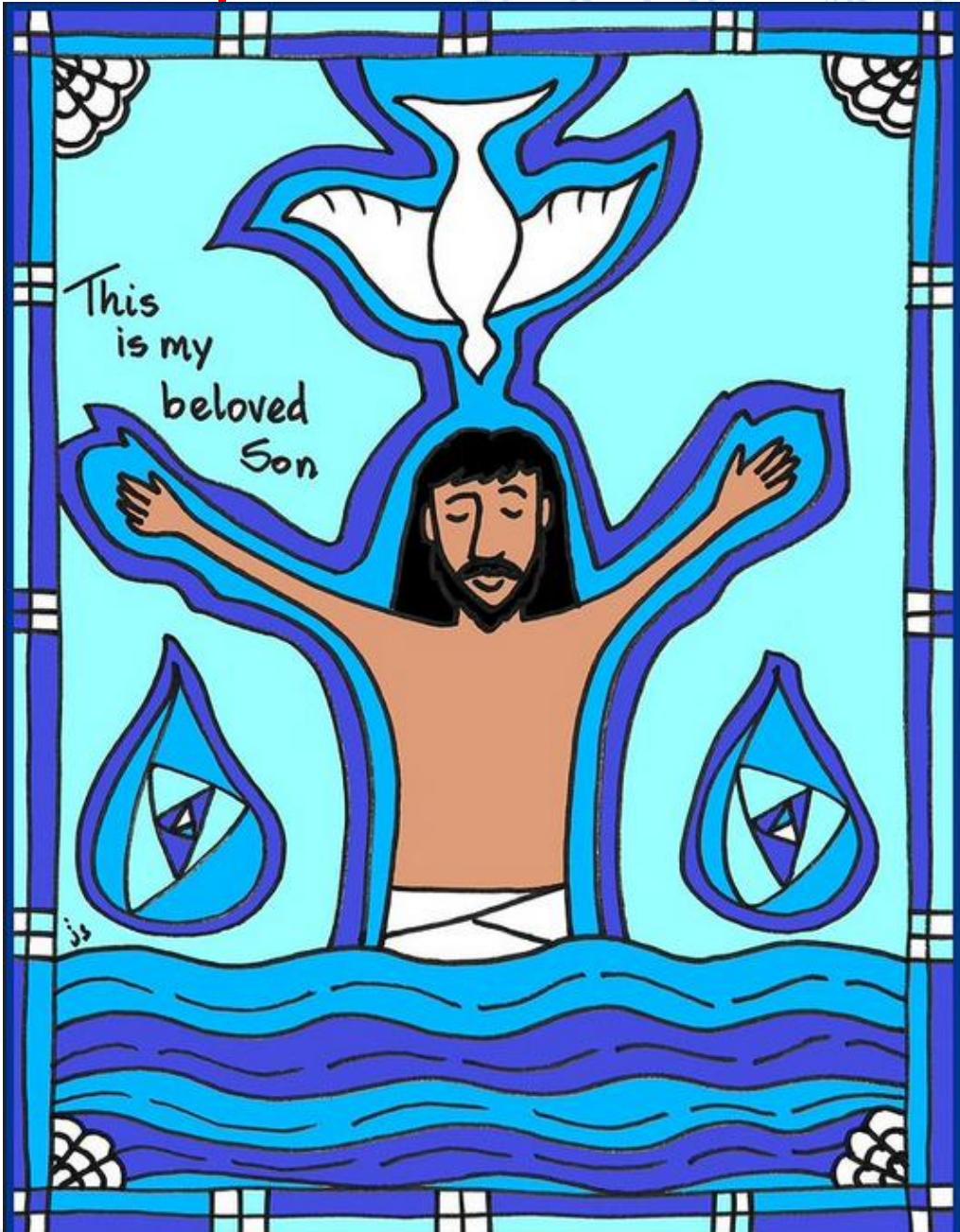
www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com

(203) 775-9587



† The Baptism of the Lord

When Advent began we heard the words of Isaiah: “O that you would tear open the heavens and come down!” Today God answers this prayer. Jesus goes into the Jordan River to be baptized by John. Suddenly the skies open. God's Spirit comes down in the form of a dove. Then God speaks for everyone to hear: “This is my beloved.”



In the fifth century, Bishop Maximus of Turin wrote that we have every reason to celebrate this day with the joy of Christmas: “At Jesus' birth his mother Mary held her child close to her heart. So today the Father holds his beloved Son for all people to adore. Jesus is baptized so all Christians may follow him with confidence.”

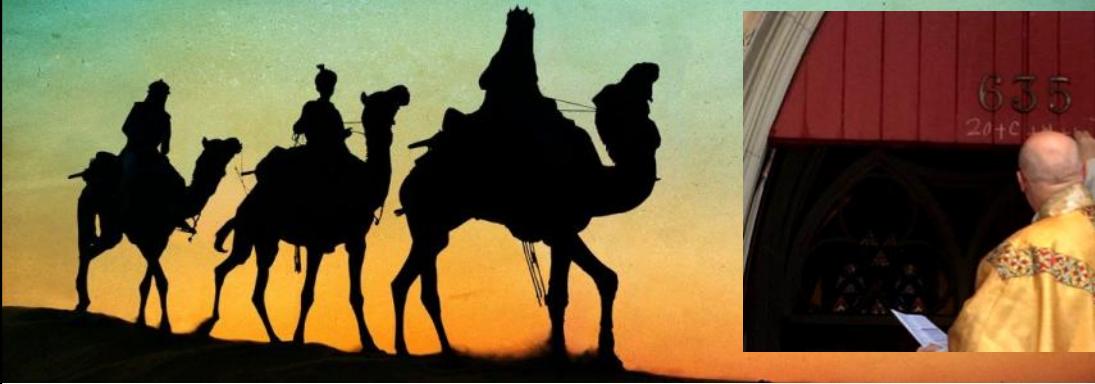
In Hebrew the name of Jesus is Joshua. This name means Savior. A thousand years before the time of Jesus, in the days of the Exodus, after Moses died a man named Joshua became the leader of the Hebrew people. Joshua led the people through the Jordan River and into the Promised Land.

Our Savior Jesus is a new Joshua. Jesus leads us into the Jordan of

baptism. We pass through the water to enter a new life. Sweetened dairy foods such as cheesecake and eggnog are customary during Christmastime in honor of our Savior, who leads us into “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

20 + C + M + B + 26

What does it mean? Are these map coordinates that the Magi used? Is this some kind of math formula for Christians? Come to our service this Sunday to find out!



† This Week at St. Paul's

Thu, Jan 8	- 9:30 am	- Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room
	11:30 am	- Chronic Pain Group, Guild Room
	7:30 pm	- Property Committee, Guild Room
	7:30 pm	- Choir Practice, Sanctuary
Fri, Jan 9	-10:00 am	- Friday Walking Group, Shepaug River Trail, Roxbury
Sat, Jan 10	- 7:30 am	- <u>John 21:12</u> Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford
	8:00 am	- Men's Prayer Breakfast, Guild Room
	10:00 am	- PraiseMoves, Zoom
Sun, Jan 11		The First Sunday after Epiphany
	- 8:00 am	- Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live)
	9:30 am	- Adult Class, Guild Room
	10:30 am	- Sunday School, Classrooms
	10:30 am	- Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live)
Mon, Jan 12	- 7:00 pm	- Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall (YouTube Live)
Tues, Jan 13	- 9:30 am	- Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room
	7:00 pm	- Boy Scout Troop #5
Wed, Jan 14	-10:00 am	- Holy Communion & Healing (YouTube Live)
	7:30 pm	- Vestry Meeting, Guild Room
Thu, Jan 15	- 9:30 am	- Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room
	11:30 am	- Chronic Pain Group, Guild Room
	7:30 pm	- Choir Practice, Sanctuary
Fri, Jan 16	-10:00 am	- Friday Walking Group, Brookfield Greenway
Sat, Jan 17	- 7:30 am	- <u>John 21:12</u> Group, Bridgewater Village Store
	8:00 am	- Men's Prayer Breakfast, Guild Room
	10:00 am	- PraiseMoves, Zoom
Sun, Jan 18		The Second Sunday after Epiphany
	- 8:00 am	- Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live)
	9:30 am	- Adult Class, Guild Room
	10:30 am	- Sunday School, Classrooms
	10:30 am	- Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live)

Check our website daily for schedule updates.





The Priest-in-Charge

WEEKLY

Fr. Nate, our Priest-in-Charge is distributing a weekly e-mail to communicate things directly from his desk to yours. **Connection, communication, and care** are among the highest priorities of his new ministry, and he wants to make sure there are

regular touch points between us. If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **already receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, you don't have to do anything - you're already included on the list! If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **DO NOT receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, or if you want to opt out, write Fr. Nate at priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com and let him know.

† Julian Calendar Christmas Day

Shortly before Jesus was born, Roman mathematicians created a new calendar. It was called the Julian calendar because the emperor, Julius Caesar, ordered that it must be used throughout the Empire. The calendar is almost like the one we use today.

The Julian calendar was an improvement over the calendars used before it. Still, as the centuries passed, people noticed that something was wrong. The solstices and the equinoxes, which mark the beginnings of the seasons, were occurring a few days too late. By the year 1500, the seasons were 10 days off from where they started out in Caesar's time. If this was allowed to continue, eventually it would be summer on January 1! Pope Gregory XIII asked his mathematicians to create a more accurate calendar. The result was the Gregorian calendar, named in his honor. That's the calendar we use today.

The new calendar was ready in 1582. But because of disagreements among the Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic churches, many countries didn't adopt it right away. England and its colonies didn't begin using the new calendar until 1752.

When a country started to keep time by the Gregorian calendar, they would need to skip ten days. For instance, the day after October 5 would become October 15. This confused some people, who thought their lives would be ten days shorter!

Many Orthodox churches still use the "old style" Julian calendar to set the dates of feasts. But almost all the countries of the world use the Gregorian calendar for business dealings. There is now a 13-day difference between the two calendars. So, January 7 on the Gregorian calendar, is December 25th, Christmas Day, on the Julian calendar.



† Why Did Jesus Ask to Be Baptized?

Neither John nor Jesus invented baptism. It had been practiced for centuries among the Jews as a ritual equivalent of Confession. Until the fall of the Temple in 72 A.D. it was common for Jewish people to make a spiritual cleansing in a special pool called a MIKVEH--literally a "collection of water." This was said to remove spiritual impurity and sin. Men did this weekly on the eve of the Sabbath. Women did it monthly. Converts were also expected to do it before entering Judaism. Orthodox Jews still retain the rite.



John preached that such a bath was a necessary preparation for the cataclysm that would be wrought by the coming Messiah. Jesus transformed this continual ritual into the one single, definitive act by which we begin our faith. In effect he fused his divine essence with the water and the ceremony.

† Annual Meeting On January 25th

Notice is hereby given of the 242nd Annual Parish Meeting of Saint Paul's Church, 174 Whisconier Road, Brookfield, Connecticut, on Sunday, January 25th, 2026, at 12:00 noon in Crocker Hall. The Rector will make appointments and elections will be held for various Vestry positions. Nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting. Communicant members of the parish over sixteen years of age are eligible to vote at the Annual Parish Meeting.



There will be one blended Holy Communion service at 10:00 am followed by lunch in the Crocker Hall at 11:30 am. Sunday School classes will be held at 10:00 am. There will be no Adult Class.



Annual Reports Due - All reports from vestry members, committee chairpersons and others to be included in St. Paul's Annual Report for 2025 are due Monday, January 19th. They may be emailed to dszen@yahoo.com. Thank you for submitting them on time. Copies will be made available online, in-person, by e-mail or, if requested, by regular mail.

The LORD gives strength to his people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Psalm 29:11



† Fulfilling All Righteousness

[Isaiah 42:1-9](#) - [Psalm 29](#) - [Acts 10:34-43](#) - [Matthew 3:13-17](#)

From the perspective of salvation history, the story of Jesus' baptism helps us learn a lot about God. There is the godly humility of both main characters: The prophet who proclaimed himself unworthy yet still submitted to perform the act; and the Messiah who, although he was without sin, submitted himself to be baptized by a sinner so that he might be identified with sinners.

In addition, there is the dove - the symbol of the One who hovered over the chaos at creation; the meaning of the name Jonah, the Lord's prophet to the Gentiles in Nineveh; and the messenger of deliverance to the passengers of the ark. Finally, there is the voice from heaven. The words that are spoken are the words recorded by the Prophet Isaiah when he speaks of the Suffering Servant, who would die for the sins of his people. They are also the words we read in Psalm 2 when the Lord proclaims the future king to be his son who will rule over all the world. The full Trinity is present and involved in the coming of the kingdom into the world and the deliverance of a people to God forever.

Historically, God has called various individuals and groups into his service. Moses, David, Nebuchadnezzar, and Israel are all referred to in the Bible as God's servants. All the previous servants, however, have been imperfect. In the passage from Isaiah, God is telling us about his perfect servant. The Spirit of God in the servant will reveal the truth about him - not only to Israel, but to the whole world. The servant will reveal the reality of a relationship between God and humankind. In obedience to God, the servant will witness to God's kingdom in the world.

Baptism initiates Jesus' ministry of bringing the kingdom of God into the world. John was preaching a baptism for the cleansing from sin, with water as the cleansing agent. But when we think in Old Testament terms, water does not just point to the flood that cleansed the world. It is also a symbol of human birth, the rescue of the people from slavery in Egypt, and their deliverance into the Promised Land. Water is the means by which we move from the kingdom of the world into the kingdom of God.

Jesus' call to humankind is the call to follow him into the kingdom of God. The beginning of his public ministry occurs at the Jordan River with the baptism by John. Our baptism symbolizes both our acknowledgment that we are sinners and our desire to live in the kingdom and to witness to the world about its life and power. In short, through baptism we become members of the community of pilgrims who choose to follow Jesus.

Therefore, baptism is full inclusion in the Church - the community of those who are living under the blessing of God to spread that blessing to the entire world. In that manner our baptism is our ordination service. At baptism we pronounce our intention to be God's ministers, and to live in love of God and neighbor. Furthermore, we are commissioned and empowered to go out as the body of Christ, in the power of God through the pouring out of his Spirit.

Look It Up: [Acts 10:34-43](#)

Think About It: What are the elements of the gospel contained in St. Peter's speech?
- by The Rev. Dr. Chuck Alley, *The Living Church*, 2026



Baptism of the Lord |
Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P./Flickr

† *Art in the Christian Tradition*

Paul Preaching in Athens,

drawing by Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691-1765),
drawn in 1734, pen and black and gray ink with gray wash,
heightened with white gouache, on tan prepared paper ,
© The National Gallery of Art, Washington

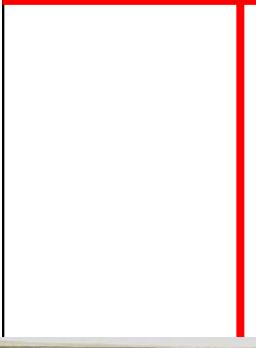
Part of Sunday's gospel reading

suggests that Jesus was looking beyond the physical Temple. When he says, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up,' the evangelist comments that 'he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body.' Jesus was saying that the real place of God's presence on earth was now no longer the magnificent temple but himself. His risen body is the new sanctuary of God's presence, the new true temple. It is no longer necessary to enter a sacred building such as the temple in Jerusalem, to meet with God. We need only to turn to Jesus, our risen Lord, and he is not confined to the physicality of a temple or a sanctuary or a church. He can be found anywhere.

In fact, after Jesus' resurrection, the followers of Jesus who lived in Jerusalem continued to worship in the temple, but they also worshipped together in one another's homes. The communities of believers to whom Paul wrote his magnificent letters all lived a long way from Jerusalem. They gathered together for prayer and the Eucharist in the homes of those members of the community who had the space to accommodate others. There would be no church buildings for almost another three hundred years when Christianity was officially recognized by the Roman emperor Constantine.

This drawing, executed by Giovanni Paolo Panini in 1734, shows St. Paul preaching in Athens. The group is not seated in a temple but among ruins. Yet they are in the temple because they are listening to the Word of God. Panini was an Italian painter and architect who worked in Rome and is primarily known as one of the vedutisti ("view painters"). He is best known for his vistas of Rome, taking a particular interest in the city's antiquities. He painted small figures set in vast ruined landscapes. Though Panini could capture the crumbling columns and arches, the Temple of God remains ever unshaken, a testament to a foundation that no brush can tarnish. For in the gallery of the heart, where faith hangs, the Temple of God is an eternal masterpiece, its beauty never in ruins.





Take note ♫

by Kirsten Peterson, Organist & Choirmaster

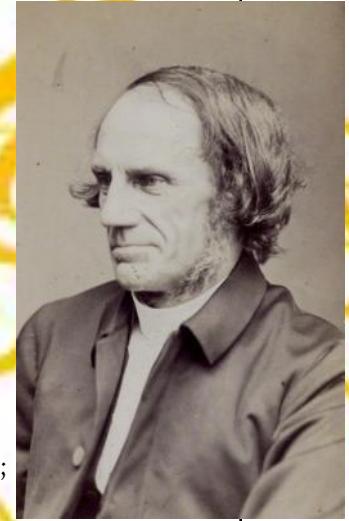
Greetings!

This Sunday we will end our worship with one of my favorite hymns, "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise." I like it both because of the words as well as the tune (SALZBURG), a melody composed by the German court composer Jakob Hintze (1622-1702) and harmonized by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). This Epiphany hymn certainly lays out a timeline of Christ's life: his birth, baptism, performing of miracles, and fighting evil. The 19th century Anglican bishop Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885) describes this beautifully in the first three verses. FYI: the poet William Wordsworth was his uncle!

Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise, manifested by the star to the sages from afar; branch of royal David's stem in thy birth at Bethlehem; anthems be to thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest, and King supreme; and at Cana, wedding-guest, in they Godhead manifest; manifest in power divine, changing water into wine; anthems be to thee addressed, God in man made manifest.

Manifest in making whole palsied limbs and fainting soul; manifest in valiant fight, quelling all the devil's might; manifest in gracious will, ever bringing good from ill; anthems be to thee addressed, God in man made manifest.



Bishop
Christopher
Wordsworth

The fourth verse included in our hymnal was added by F. Bland Tucker (1895-1984), an American Episcopal priest and hymn writer. The verse reads as follows and is a nod to the Transfiguration, which we will celebrate on the last Sunday of the Epiphany.

Manifest on mountain height, shining in resplendent light, where disciples filled with awe thy transfigured glory saw. When from there thou leddest them steadfast to Jerusalem, cross and Easter Day attest God in man made manifest.

That word "manifest"...we sing it twelve times! So, what does it mean exactly? The word means "to make evident or obvious, easily perceived by the senses." It is thought to come from the Latin *manifestus*: the rough

(Continued on page 9)

Choir Notes

(Continued from page 8)

translation is "caught in the hand" or something easily grasped. The manifestation of Christ, his physical appearing to us, is a central part of Christianity. In other words, the only way God thought we'd get the message was by giving us Jesus as a clear and visible sign.

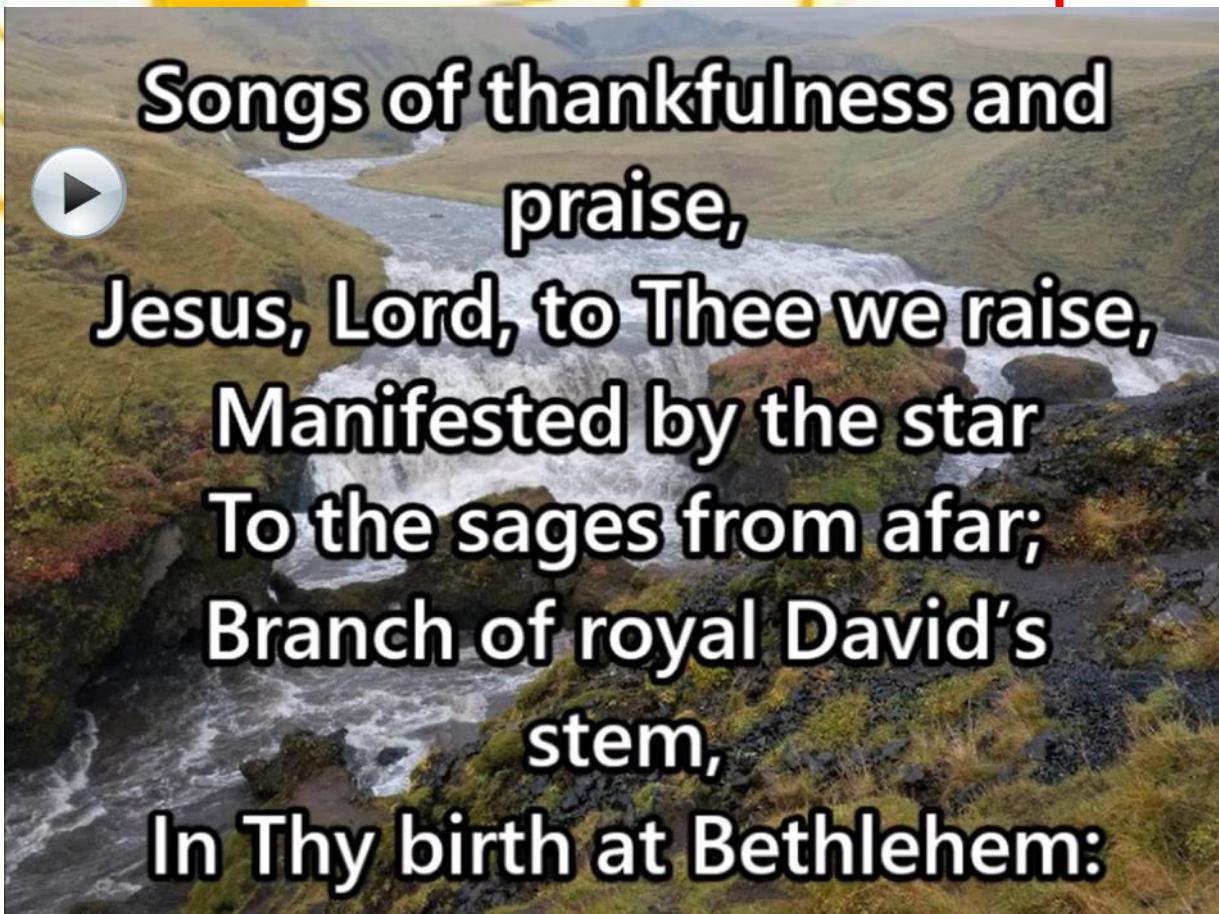
Apparently, there are two other verses that Wordsworth wrote that did not make it into our hymnal, but I like them so I've included them here:

*Sun and moon shall darkened be, stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee.
Christ will then like lightning shine; all will see his glorious sign. All will
then the trumpet hear, all will see the judge appear. You by all will be
confessed, God in man made manifest.*

*Grant us grace to see you, Lord, mirrored in your holy Word. May our lives
and all we do imitate and honor you that we all like you may be at your
great epiphany and may praise you, ever blest, God in man made manifest.*

They're nice, right?

Peace & blessings,
Kirsten



**Songs of thankfulness and
praise,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,
Manifested by the star
To the sages from afar;
Branch of royal David's
stem,
In Thy birth at Bethlehem:**



† Helping Our Neighbors

Here is an update about St. Paul's ongoing food-related ministries serving our community:

Drive Thru Food Collection - occurs every other Wednesday from 11 am - noon. We have now held 149 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time we delivered food to the F.A.I.T.H. Food Pantry, Newtown and the Jericho Partnership in Danbury.

Our next food collection, will be Wednesday, January 21st and will support the F.A.I.T.H. Food Pantry, Newtown, and the Jericho Food Pantry in Danbury.

Thank you all for your ongoing generosity and to the many volunteers who have helped to load the vehicles and deliver food to the pantries.

Next Drive-Thru Food Collection

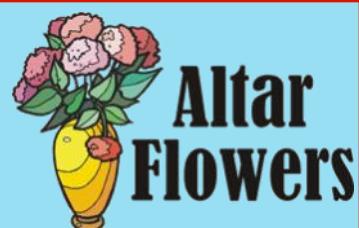
Wednesday January 21st

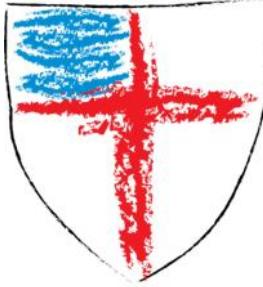


*Help us,
Help others!*

11 am to Noon

If you would like to request Altar flowers for a particular Sunday in Memory of a friend or loved one, please fill out the flower chart or envelope located in the back of the church or send an email request to dszen@yahoo.com or contact David Szen.





† Ih-pis-kuh-puh l / Dik-shuh-ner-ee

(Episcopal Dictionary)



† Acolyte

/ ak-uh-lahyt /

Acolyte - In contemporary Anglicanism, a general term which covers not only servers, torchbearers, and lighters of candles but also crucifers, thurifers, and banner-bearers. Acolytes are mentioned as a minor order (along with porters, lectors, and exorcists) as early as a letter of Pope Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch in 252. They were also mentioned in Cyprian's writings. They assisted deacons or subdeacons at the preparation of the table. Later they carried candles in processions. In Rome they carried fragments of the bread consecrated at the papal Mass to other churches. In the late middle ages, when candles began to appear upon altars, they lighted the altar candles. Eventually lay servers or sacristans performed duties earlier associated with acolytes, and the order of acolyte was normally conferred upon a candidate for priesthood in the course of his training. The minor orders were not perpetuated in Anglicanism. Some of the duties earlier performed by persons in the minor order of acolyte were taken over by lay clerks. In the later nineteenth century the clerks were suppressed and their duties were largely taken over by lay "acolytes" and sacristans or altar guilds.



Then Peter began to speak:

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."

Acts 10:34-35



† Do Whatever He Tells You

John 2:1-11

The wine has run out and with one more sip the guest's goblets will go dry and the party will be over ahead of schedule. Mary is determined to do something about it and counting on those things she has treasured in her heart she gets Jesus to serve the good wine before his time. John records this as the first sign of many and even though the other Gospels remember more pressing first signs, like healing diseases and casting out demons, turning water into wine is the sign for the time to come. It might not seem so in a world where more important things than wine run out, where a surplus of sorrow and suffering beg God to heal and exercise evil before filling the carafe with Cabernet. But the miracle of water into wine is more than a story of good timing for a worried wine steward and it is Mary who gives it to us. Like Jesus in the garden she asks for what she wants and accepts his rebuff. In the same way Jesus will ask for what he wants, "Take this cup from me" but accept "Thy will be done." And so Jesus in faith will leave the garden for the cross and Mary, with every reason to believe the answer is no, tells the servant, "Do whatever he tells you." She has no idea what he will do but believes he will do something. Faith in the face of jugs gone dry is what is called for in the face of circumstances that drain reserves, sorrow that consumes joy, questions empty of answers, which is why water into wine is a sign of the time to come. Without knowing how or when we believe God will do something like Isaiah imagined; a feast of rich food and fine wine for all people where God will dine on death for when Jesus' time finally came the One who asked for the cup to be taken from him is the One who filled it.



† Socks & Toiletries for the Homeless

It's been especially frigid recently, so please remember homeless people are on their feet all day, and the only pair of socks they own are very likely to be threadbare. Once again, this year we are collecting socks and toiletries for the men's homeless shelter throughout the winter months. Place donations in the bins in the back of the church or Crocker Hall.

WHY DO PEOPLE START ATTENDING CHURCH?

A Friend Invited Me - 86%

Organized Visitation - 6%

Invited By The Priest - 6%

Advertising - 2%

RESOLVE

To be faithful
in little.
To be faithful
in much.

GIVE to your
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE Episcopal CHURCH



† Transforming Saints of God

Thursday, January 8th

Harriet Bedell

Deaconess and Missionary, 1969

Harriet Bedell was born in Buffalo, New York, on March 19, 1875, and graduated from the State Normal School in Buffalo in 1894. She taught in the Buffalo public schools. Inspired by an Episcopal missionary, she enrolled as a student at the New York Training School for Deaconesses, where she was instructed in religion, missions, teaching, and health. She then, in 1907, became a missionary-teacher among the Cheyenne at the Whirlwind Mission in Oklahoma.

In 1916, Bedell was sent to Stevens Village, Alaska, where she was set apart as a deaconess in 1922. She also served as a teacher and nurse at St. John's in the Wilderness at Allakaket, just 40 miles south of the Arctic Circle, from which she sometimes traveled by dogsled to remote villages. During her last years in Alaska, Bedell opened a boarding school.

In 1932, hearing about the plight of the Seminoles in Florida, Bedell used her own salary to reopen a mission among the Mikasuki Indians. There, she worked to revive some of their traditional crafts: doll-making, basket-weaving, and intricate patchwork designs. The arts and crafts store that they established to sell their handicrafts improved the economy of the Blades Cross Mission. Though officially forced to retire at age 63, Bedell continued her ministry of health care, education, and economic empowerment until 1960 when Hurricane Donna wiped out her mission.

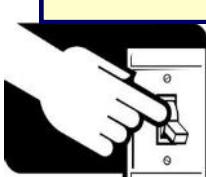
Active into her eighties, Deaconess Bedell drove an average of 20,000 miles per year during her ministry. She was one of the most popular writers in the Episcopal mission periodical, *The Spirit of Missions*. Bedell



won the respect of indigenous people through her compassion and respect for their way of life and beliefs. While active in ministry among the Cheyenne, she was eventually adopted into the tribe and given the name "Bird Woman." The Diocese of Southwest Florida has long celebrated Harriet Bedell Day on January 8, the anniversary of her death in 1969.



Covenant Envelopes - for 2026 are in the back of the church. Please take yours and those of any friends who may be absent, as this helps us save on mailing costs. If you do not wish to use the covenant envelopes, as long as your gift can be identified, an account is established in your name and you will receive quarterly statements. If you have any questions, please contact the Parish Office at 203-775-9587. Thank you.



† Good Stewardship Begins At Home: *Our Home*

Please remind all who use our home to be good stewards by turning off lights, closing curtains, turning down thermostats, cleaning up after themselves and locking doors when they are leaving, especially as fuel prices are costly.

Psalm 122:6

Pray
for the
peace
of
Jerusalem;

May they prosper that love you.

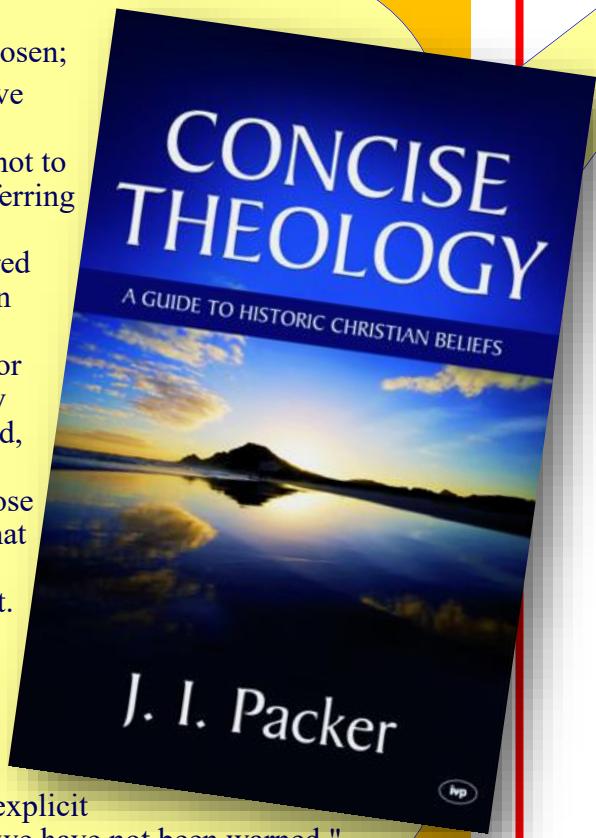
**Take a Hanger
Fill a Hanger**

We are holding our annual Coat Drive to benefit the various agencies in Danbury supported by the Jericho Partnership. **“Take a Hanger”** from the rack we'll have at the back of the church this weekend. Check your closets for those unused coats. And **“Fill a Hanger.”** Bring it back to St. Paul's and we'll get that coat on the back of someone who needs it.

† Thought for Reflection

- from Fr. John Morrison

"Scripture sees hell as self-chosen; those in hell will realize that they have sentenced themselves to it by loving darkness rather than light, choosing not to have their Creator as their Lord, preferring self-indulgent sin to self-denying righteousness, and (if they encountered the gospel) rejecting Jesus rather than coming to Him. From this point hell appears as God's gesture of respect for human choice. All receive what they actually choose, either to be with God, worshiping Him, or without God forever, worshiping themselves. Those who are in hell will know not only that for their doings they deserve it but also that in their hearts they choose it. The purpose of the Bible teaching about hell is to make us appreciate, thankfully embrace, and rationally prefer the grace of Christ that saves us from it. It is really a mercy to mankind that God in Scripture is so explicit about hell. We cannot now say that we have not been warned."



J. I. Packer, Concise Theology, pp. 262-263

Phishing Scams - Don't fall for them! Please do not respond to any message from Fr. Nate or St. Paul's by email or any other method of communication that asks you to purchase something (often a gift card) or asks for a "favor." Delete reply, do not click links in the messages, mark them as any doubt about the veracity of a text or email, at priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com or the office





Israel - Walking in Jesus' Footsteps



† Holy Family in Egypt - part 2 ⚡

The popular list of locations suggests the Holy Family - travelling by foot, donkey or boat, and moving often - crossed and re-crossed the forks of the Nile Delta, then travelled south (upstream) as far as Gebel Qussqam, before returning by boat down the Nile to the Cairo area and retracing their steps overland to Israel.

Some of the best-attested sites, with their associated Coptic traditions, include:

Bubastis: After arriving through the customary entry point of El-Farama - following in the footsteps of Abraham and Jacob - the Holy Family came to the city of Bubastis in the eastern Nile delta, a center of worship for the cat goddess Bastet. Coptic tradition says the arrival of the infant Jesus caused a temple's foundations to shake and all the idols to fall on their faces - echoing Isaiah's prophecy that "the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence" (19:1). A field of fallen idols remained in modern times in the ruins of Bubastis, now within the modern city of Zagazig.

Mostorod: In this city, now part of greater Cairo, Mary needed to bathe her son and wash his dusty clothes. Jesus extended his hand to bless the place and

a spring of water arose where a well beside the Virgin Mary Church remains.

Belbeis: As they entered the town, the Holy Family met the funeral procession of a widow's son. Foreshadowing the miracle at Nain in Luke 7:11-17, the infant Jesus raised the dead man to life.

Samannud: Backtracking northwest, the family crossed the Nile at Samannud. Here Mary baked bread and the Coptic community displays a large granite bowl she is said to have used.

Sakha: In this town near the center of the Nile Delta, tradition says Jesus left a footprint on a rock. Rediscovered in 1984, the rock was authenticated by Coptic Pope Shenouda III and several miracles have been attributed to it.



Ruins of Bubastis
(Einsamer Schütze)

(Continued from page 16)

Holy Family in Egypt

Wadi El Natrun: Travelling through this long valley in the Western Desert, 80 feet below sea level, the family were approached by two lions. With a wave of his hand, Jesus told them to leave and, bowing their heads, they obeyed. The holy infant also caused a sweet-water well to open up among lakes saturated with natron salt. From the third century the Wadi El Natrun desert attracted thousands of hermits, and it remains the most important center of Coptic monasticism.

El Matareya: Leaving the desert behind, the Holy Family crossed to the eastern bank of the Nile and headed for the ancient city of Heliopolis, now El Matareya - a name thought to have come from the Latin word "Mater" in recognition of Mary's presence. On the way they would have passed the pyramids of Giza, built 2500 years earlier.

Heliopolis as envisaged by early 20th-century German landscape painter Carl Wuttke



hours to rest. Mary is also believed to have promised a farmer at nearby Klot Bey that her son would bless his farm so that melons sown on one day could be harvested the next day.

Zeitoun attracted international attention when apparitions of Mary were seen on the roof of the Church of the Holy Virgin during a period of about three years from April 2, 1968.

The visions were pronounced authentic by the Coptic Orthodox Church and a statement from the Muslim government declared: "Official investigations have been carried out with the result that it has been considered an undeniable fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary has been appearing on Zeitoun Church in a clear and bright luminous body seen by all present in front of the church, whether Christians or Muslims."

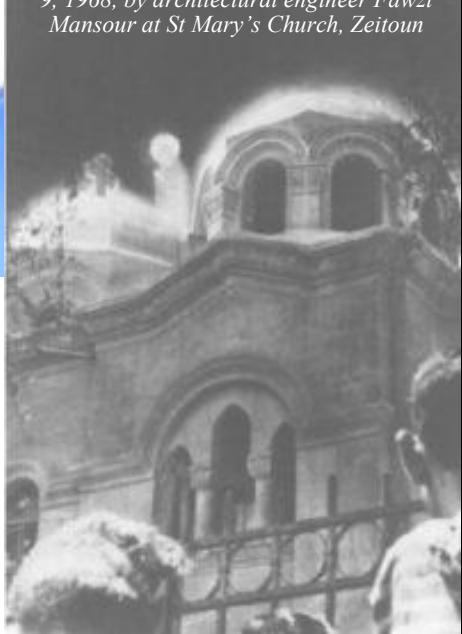
Babylon Fortress: Joseph is believed to have worked at this Roman fortress in Old Cairo to support his family, who lived in a cave that is now the crypt of the 11th-century Church of St Sergius and St Bacchus (known locally as the Abu Serga Church). The cave, within the walls of the fortress, floods when the level of the Nile are high. Tradition marks the area as the place where the baby Moses was discovered by the pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:3-5). The church also has a well believed to have been used by the Holy Family.

Maadi: Moving south, the Holy Family reached Maadi, now a leafy suburb of Cairo but then home to a large Jewish community, and boarded a papyrus felucca sailboat to take them up the Nile towards southern Egypt. The stone steps they used to reach the river are still accessible to pilgrims through the Virgin Mary Church.

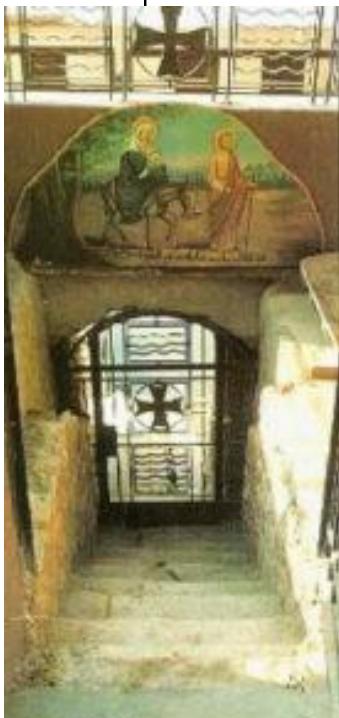
At Heliopolis they lived in the Ain Shams neighborhood, where there was a large Jewish community. According to one tradition, two brigands pursued the family but a fig tree opened its trunk to conceal them.

Zeitoun: Coptic tradition says Mary was so exhausted from fleeing Herod's soldiers that she had to stop at Zeitoun, in Old Cairo, for several

Photograph of an apparition taken on April 9, 1968, by architectural engineer Fawzi Mansour at St Mary's Church, Zeitoun

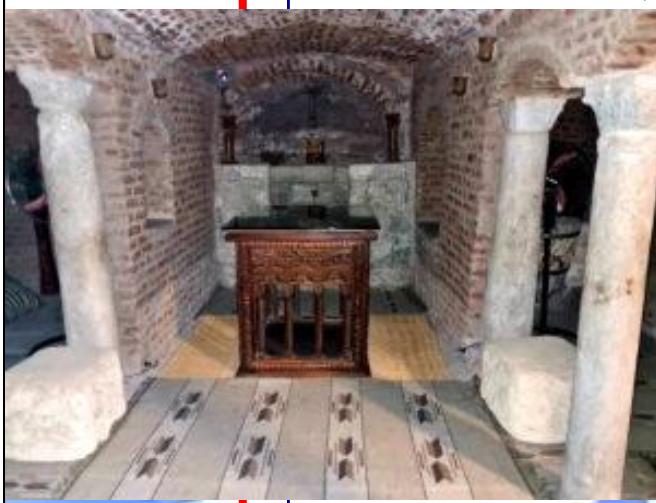


(Continued on page 18)



Stone steps in Church of the Virgin, Maadi, believed to have been used by the Holy Family to descend to the Nile (John Sanidopoulos)

Crypt in Abu Serga Church, Cairo, where the Holy Family is believed to have lived.



(Continued from page 17)

Holy Family in Egypt

Ishnin al-Nasara: On reaching this village, the infant Jesus felt thirsty. There was a well but the water level was too low. His mother took his finger and held it over the well, which then rose to the top. (A rival tradition locates this event at nearby Al-Bahnasa.)

Deir Al-Garnous: Here, where the family rested for four days, Jesus is said to have left a well with water that not only cured every disease but foretold the height of the Nile's annual inundation.

Gabal Al-Teir: The Holy Family crossed the Nile to use a cave at Gabal Al-Teir, a nesting place for thousands of birds. As their boat passed a cliff, a rock threatened to fall on them but Jesus held it back, leaving his handprint on the rock. (When Almeric, King of Jerusalem, invaded Upper Egypt in the 12th century he is reported to have had the rock chiseled out and taken with him.)

El Ashmunein: On arrival, according to the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the family did not know anyone from whom they could seek hospitality, so they went into a temple with 355 idols. All the idols prostrated themselves on the ground. When the governor saw what had happened, he said: "Unless this were the God of our gods, our gods would not have fallen on their faces before him; nor would they be lying prostrate in his presence . . ." and "all the people of that same city believed in the Lord God through Jesus Christ." The fifth-century historian Sozomenos said there was a tree in the town that bowed to the ground to worship Jesus.

Deir Abu Hinnis: Just outside this Christian village is Kim Maria ("hill of Mary") where Mary is believed to have rested. Sixth-century wall paintings by monks in a cave church nearby include perhaps the earliest illustrations of the flight into Egypt.

El-Qusiya: This town (formerly called Cusae or Qesy) has the reputation of not only being visited by the Holy Family but also of being cursed by the infant Jesus. According to Theophilus, this happened after idols fell down when the family arrived, the pagan priests told the family to leave, and townspeople chased them away with rods and axes.

Gebel (Mount) Qussqam: Coptic tradition says the Holy Family's longest stay in one place was in a cave at Mount Qussqam, 1,200 miles south of Cairo - and precisely dates its duration on the Coptic calendar from the 7th of Barmoudah to the 6th of Babah, a period of 185 days. It was here that an angel revealed to Joseph that Herod was dead and it was safe to return to Israel, fulfilling Hosea's prophecy "Out of Egypt I called my Son" (11:1). And it was here that Theophilus received his vision of the family's travels. Around the cave spreads the fortress-like Monastery of the Holy Virgin of Al-Muharraq.

Durunka: A rival view maintains that the Holy Family travelled 31 miles further south to get on a sailboat for their return down the Nile. Here the massive Virgin Mary Monastery of Durunka stands 165 feet high on a mountain side above the Nile Valley. Though no ancient text suggests Durunka as a Holy Family site, Coptic studies expert Otto Meinardus explains that the local bishop began to promote it as such from the 1950s after the Al-Muharraq monastery was riven by internal disputes. Business interests backed the development of the site and it has become a major venue attracting a million pilgrims and tourists a year.

In Scripture:

Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt: Matthew 2:13-15

Joseph is told to return to Israel: Matthew 2:19-23

Monastery of the Virgin in Durunka



† Wednesday Morning Healing Service

Our mid-week Wednesday morning 10 am Holy Eucharist with healing prayer, now has about 50 worshippers weekly.. With live music and a brief homily, this service is just what you need to sustain you through the week. Come join us and check it out or watch on YouTube Live.

Our Men meet weekly to study on Monday nights. They are currently dissecting the Gospel of Luke. Join them each Monday night at 7 pm in Crocker Hall. All the studies are available live on YouTube.



|||| A THIRD OF US

† Praying for the 1/3 of our world that are still unreached with the Gospel

Chhetri

Country: Nepal | Population: 4,799,000 | Language: Nepali | Main Religion: Hinduism | Evangelical: less than 0.14%

The Nepalese Chhetri are the major ethnic group in Nepal. They speak Nepali, which is the country's official language. The Chhetri have many racial, cultural, and linguistic similarities to the people of northern India. Their domestic and religious practices are also similar to the higher Hindu castes of India. The Chhetri have held onto their traditional animistic beliefs. They recognize local gods, goblins, and spirits, and also believe in ghosts and demons that haunt the crossroads and rivers. The Chhetri make offerings to these spirits in order to appease them. With Hinduism embracing 330 million gods, Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, has more temples, houses, and idols than people. Pray that the Chhetri would encounter Nepali believers and recognize the peace, forgiveness, joy, and freedom that is only found through Jesus.



† Women's Wed Evening Bible Study

The Women's Evening Bible Study is beginning a new study on the Gospel of John, beginning Wednesday, January 7 at 7:00 on Zoom. All women are welcome. For more information contact Kathy Whipple at kthyw49@gmail.com.



† St. Paul's Walking Group!



Our St. Paul's walking group is racking up the miles! Their next walk will be at the Orzech Faimily Preserve trailhead, Friday, January 9th at 10:00 am. Plan to meet at the parking lot parking next the blue barn at 1 Botsford Hill Road in Roxbury . Sign up with Ron Switzer (rjswit@msn.com) to be on the mailing list.



† Sunday School Info!

ATTN: PARENTS OF ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Sunday School classes start at 10:15 am each Sunday. Bring the students directly to their classrooms. Children will be returned to the sanctuary in time for Communion.



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Jan 11th	8 am - Mary/Chuck Allen	10:30 am - Pam Koniecki
Jan 18th	8 am - Tim Huber	10:30 am - Vivian Namale
Jan 25th	Annual Meeting Sunday—Parish Brunch	



Contact Mary Allen at
203-775-6633 or
chamla@charter.net



ANDREW PETERSON



Resurrection Letters TOUR

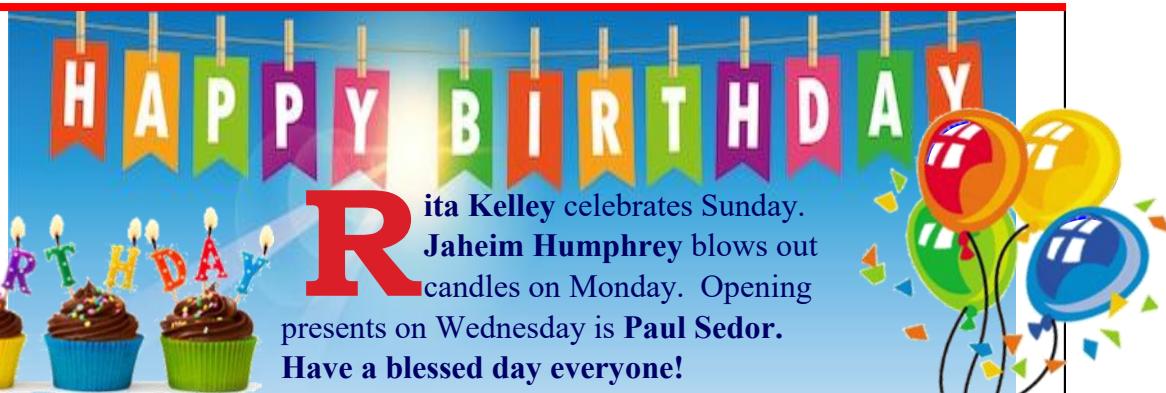


Walnut Hill Community Church

156 Walnut Hill Rd, Bethel, CT | Mar 28, 2026 | 7 pm

find tickets at andrew-peterson.com/tour





R F B 

Presents

COFFEE WITH JESUS

**Great
Physician**



It's like I'm overloaded, Jesus. Frazzled. Not functioning at my peak. Slow. Fragmented. I dunno.



Sounds like you're describing a malfunctioning computer to the IT department, Kevin.



So you're the Great Physician, right?

Can't you also be the Great Computer Technician?



I like your faith, Kevin.

Launching Spirit_Cleanse.exe.

©Radio Free Babylon® All rights reserved. We pay attention to our bodies. We go on diets post-holidays to shed the fat. We work out. We want to be fit. Your spirit should be fit, too. Maybe your spirit needs a diet. A little less social media. A little less rage. More time with God. We usually think of "revival" on a grand scale, a regional or national thing. Maybe the revival around the corner is a personal one, just you and the Great Computer Technician, executing the Spiritual Cleanse program. Ask him.

† The Voice of the Lord Is LOUD!



Psalm 29

Glory! Many people experience God in the beauty of nature; sunsets, mountain tops, misty lakes at dawn and the like. They are generally experienced in solitude and bring a sense of peace and contentment. We might not equate the blessing of peace with a voice that strips a forest bare. But the psalmist imagines the glory and splendor of God in the terrible and terrifying. Making Lebanon skip like a calf, and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox is just a poetic way of saying earthquake and flashing fire doesn't need to strike twice to get you diving for cover. This image of a terrible and terrifying God evokes praise not only from nature but from the heavenly beings who know a thing or two about terrifying and maybe that is the point. This voice cannot be ignored or denied and all the forces of the universe are obliged to respond. But for those who belong to the Voice hearing God in the terrible and terrifying means the terrible is less terrifying for God present in the whirlwind and the earthquake is our strength and peace. And when from the cross God cried out with a loud voice even death had to sit up and take notice and admit it was finished. And that is a blessing of peace indeed. Glory!

† Adult Class

Being Real – The Power of Vulnerability and Transparency is the title of our next Adult Christian Formation series starting January 11th. Perhaps when you hear the word vulnerability or transparency you get uncomfortable. However, the only way we can grow as Christians and be authentic believers is to recognize what we truly need and be open to God and to others. When it comes to transparency, God is not asking us to do something that He hasn't already done himself! Please join us in the Guild Room each Sunday morning at 9:30 for this intriguing and challenging 5-part series.

† Readings for the 1st Sunday after the Epiphany

(Click on the red links for the readings)

“This Is My Son ... ”

Isaiah 42:1-9

In our lection from the Hebrew Bible we hear of the mission of the Lord's servant, the one whom God has chosen to bring forth justice and salvation. This is the first of the "servant songs" that form a portion of the Book of Isaiah, written at the time when the exile in Babylon was ending and the city of Jerusalem had begun to be restored. The servant is sometimes thought to be an individual, or is understood as an idealization of Israel. Christians see in the servant a prefiguration of the ministry of Jesus, who will become a light to the nations of the world.

Psalm 29

The majesty of God is described in the likeness of a mighty thunderstorm.

Acts 10:34-43

In this reading we learn how Peter recognizes that the good news, which Jesus began to proclaim after his baptism, now extends to all people. At first Peter was slow to believe that God wanted him to bring the word to a non-Jew. But God has revealed this to Peter, and Peter gladly responds to Cornelius, a Roman centurion, together with his family and friends. Peter and the disciples are witnesses to Christ's ministry, death, and resurrection and have been commanded to preach forgiveness of sins through Jesus' name.

Matthew 3:13-17

Our gospel is the story of Jesus' baptism. John wonders why Jesus should come to him to receive a baptism for the remission of sins, but Jesus tells him that it is right and fitting. After he is baptized, the Holy Spirit is manifest. A voice from heaven proclaims who Jesus is, with words that echo ancient oracles concerning the king and the calling of the Lord's chosen servant.

Matthew 3:13-17

Fulfilling of righteousness requires letting go of our personal sense of what is right and proper in order to let it be God's will that is fulfilled. For Jesus, as at the end, so too at the beginning: a deep and profound aligning of his heart and will with the will and Spirit of God.



† Sermon Shorts

“The Call” To replay all our sermons, audio and videos follow this link for the [Sunday Sermons](#). Check out our [Sermon Archives](#) as well.



† Your Prayers Are Requested For...

It is such an intimate time when praying for the health and well being of others and such a privilege. Rejoicing in the mercy of God, manifested for our salvation in the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior, we pray for all the needs of the world and for...

.....**Ed Licence, Gail Winkley, Barbara Hock**, and other parishioners convalescing in extended care facilities.

.....Trinity, Collinsville; St. James', Danbury; St. Luke's, Darien.

.....Revival at St. Paul's and the greater Danbury area.

.....Indigenous Peoples Network. For Prayer & Healing Ministry Networks.

.....For the Peace of Jerusalem. - *Psalm 122:6*

.....**Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Sr., Peter Scalzo, Jr., Doris, Cathy Latimer, Karen, Beverly Hall, Roger, Cynthia, Valerie, Heidi Pinheiro, Dale Mitchell, Ruth, Blake, Cliff, Evelyn Kirner, Jane Sedor, Jim Beck, Larry Wanzer, Bob Finn, Paul Kovacs, Peter Ruscoe, Larry Coleman, John Crisalli, Erin LaBrake, Walter, Amy Boyce, Elana and Veronika** continued healing.

.....the people of Ukraine; the people of people of Hungary; the people of the Solomon Islands; the bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Sialkot - The Church of Pakistan (United); and our sister and brother members of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

.....For the Church: that we may participate more fully in the mission of Jesus and place our gifts and talents in God's service.

.....Faith Food Pantry, Newtown, which is the recipient of our food basket collections for the month of January.

.....Our missionaries, Will & Becky McLaughlin and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; and for all missionaries: that God will inspire the message that they offer, help them to recognize how they can best serve their communities, and sustain them in times of loneliness.

.....For all who have experienced violence: that God will heal their wounds and memories, free them from fear, and protect them from further harm.

.....Immanuel Lutheran Church, Danbury, a church partner of the Jericho Partnership.

.....Courts of Justice.

.....For a greater awareness of the deepest longings within our hearts: that we may recognize the hopes and dreams which God has placed in our hearts and allow God to lead us to their fulfillment.

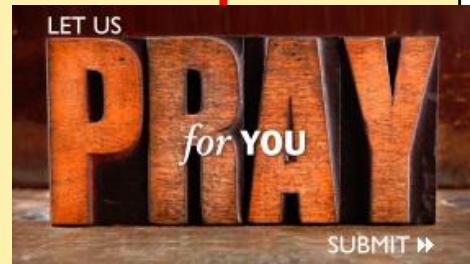
.....That we may fulfill our own baptismal call by giving ourselves entirely to God and to answer his call to holiness.

.....For the gift of hope: that we may share the Good News with others so that they may find light, meaning and possibility in times of trial.

.....For all who suffer the ravages of winter, the hungry, the elderly, the unemployed, and the sick among us, that they be clothed with healing and comfort.

.....For all who are discerning vocation choices, for those considering marriage, the single life, religious life, or ministry: that God will open them to greater self-understanding, inspire them to greater love, and strengthen them in their commitments.

.....Peace Among the Nations.



What Were Houses Like in the Time of Jesus 2,000 Years Ago



What were houses like in the time of Jesus, more than 2,000 years ago? In this biblical documentary, you will enter the homes of first-century Galilee and discover how entire families lived in simple spaces, without bedrooms, without furniture, and without modern comfort.



Just For the Joy of It!

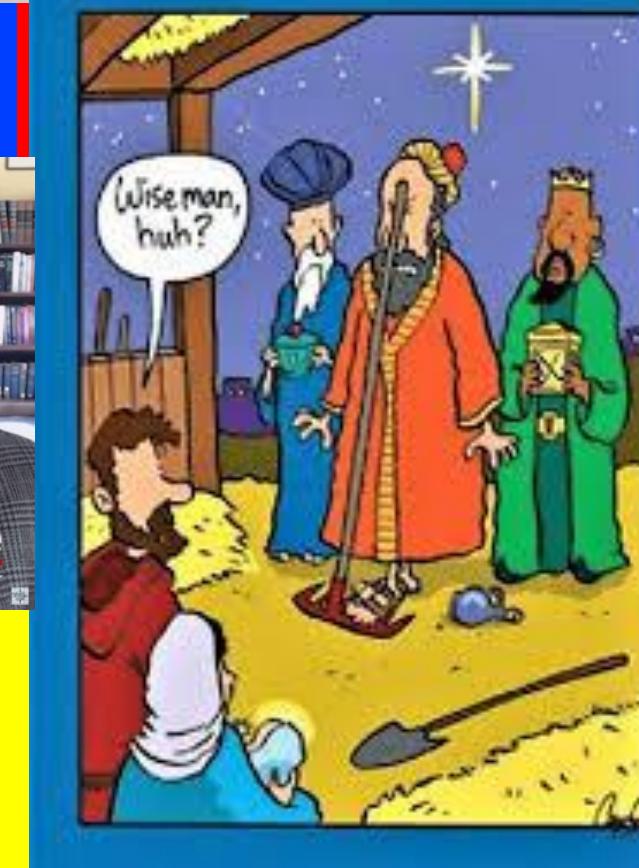
(And Christian Fellowship)

ONE BIG HAPPY

by Rick Detorie



Did you know...that the *Anglican Unscripted* popular podcast on Anglican news has been described as crossing "the boundary that separates truth from truthiness"?



Ecclesiasticus 43:27 - We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: 'He is the all.' - 30 -