

THE WORD FROM TWO SAINTS

The Church of St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene
A Parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester

December 2006
A House of Prayer for All People

ANTICIPATION

The Word from the Rector

As Advent approaches, I am thinking about a song of Carly Simon's which many of you might remember: "Anticipation." The song is about anticipating time spent with a lover, but the opening words are very much in line with this season of our Church year.

*We can never know about the days to come
But we think about them anyway...*

These are perfect words for our Advent reflecting about the future. It is important right up front to remind ourselves that "we can never know." "But we think about them anyway," of course. That is human nature. We plan, we try to insure, we seek security, and there is nothing wrong with these things, unless they become ways we build idols that make us forget that "we can never know."

Jesus taught another way, a way we must walk at least prior to if not instead of the way of planning and insuring. That way is hope. Hope is perhaps the most important Advent word, and, of course, one of the "big three" that describe the Christian journey: faith, hope and love. Because these words are so important to us, we have to take great care in how we use them. This is certainly true of the word "hope." Carly Simon points the way in this care we must take with the rest of the opening stanza of "Anticipation."

*And I wonder if I'm really with you now
Or just chasin' after some finer day*

Hope is not "just chasin' after some finer day." Real hope has little to do with "optimism," which is why at the same time that hope is the most important Advent word, our Scripture readings in this season at least begin with some fairly pessimistic outlooks on the future. Hope for us is a conscious, intentional choice to be "really with" God now, trusting that God not only holds the present, but the future as well, come what may in human history.

Hope has to begin with utter reality, with the "wars and rumors of wars" that afflict our world, both on a global scale, on our own city streets, perhaps even at our workplace, and often in our own hearts. "Pay attention to yourselves!" Jesus admonishes us in the first gospel reading for Advent (Luke 21:34 as translated by commentator Luke Timothy Johnson). But the purpose of this sometimes painful paying attention is so that our hearts are not weighed down, so that in the day of trouble we can "stand up and lift up our heads, because our day of liberation is coming near" (21:28).

It is easy in the world around us during this season to get caught in "just chasin' after some finer day." What God offers us instead is relationship grounded in reality but chosen in hope, hope that, no matter if the day is fine or not, it belongs to God and so do we.

Lift up your hearts!



The 12 Days of Christmas at Two Saints

Christmas Eve 8 am Eucharist for Advent 4
10 am Christmas Eve Eucharist for All Ages
10 pm Vigil Eucharist of Christmas Eve ("Midnight Mass")

Christmas Day 10 am Eucharist with Carols

St. Stephen, St. John, Holy Innocents (12-26, 27, 28)
12:05 pm Eucharist in the Chapel

Sunday after Christmas (12-31) Regular 8 & 10 am Services

New Year's Eve 5 pm Vigil Eucharist (with Dignity-Integrity)

Holy Name Day (1-1)
10 am Eucharist

9th & 11th Days of Christmas
(1-2 & 4) 12:05 pm Eucharist

Eve of the Epiphany (1-5)
6 pm Eucharist & Epiphany Party



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FORMATION NEWS

ADVENT QUIET AFTERNOON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

An Advent Quiet Afternoon will be offered on Saturday, December 9, beginning with a light lunch at 11:30 am, and continuing to 4 pm. This year's theme will be "A Spirituality of Hope," based on the three sons of the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel: the Songs of Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon. Please sign up for this event on the bulletin board in the back of the church (or call or e-mail the office).

YOUTH CLASS FUNDRAISER

The youth formation class is running a bottle/can drive and cans for use with our Christmas gift project. Please either bring in your bottles and cans to church or, better yet, redeem them at Wegmans and bring in the receipts. We will use the receipts to help pay for gifts that will be given to families in need. Thanks for your help in this project (see related article under "Social Action News").

DECEMBER 10—PUBLIC POLICY FORUM ON EQUAL MARRIAGE

After the 10 am service on December 10, Todd Plank, a marriage equality field organizer, will present information on where we are now in New York State after the recent court ruling against gay and lesbian couples having equal access to legal marriage. He will also suggest ways for us to get involved in building support for legislation supporting equal marriages in New York State.

SUNDAY BIBLE WORKBENCH

Adult Bible study is meeting every Sunday (except All Church Sundays) at 9:05 in the chapel. We are using the Bible Workbench curriculum. No preparation is required, but you are welcome to read the lesson in advance if you wish. The schedule for December is:

Dec. 3 – Luke 21:25-36

We will have a reserved table during breakfast.

Dec. 10 – Baruch 5:1-9

Baruch is a book of the Apocrypha.

Dec. 17 – Luke 3:7-18

Dec. 24 & 31 – No Session

AN EPIPHANY SERIES: REACHING OUT IN THE SPIRIT

January 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6; Tuesdays at 6-7:30 pm.
On five Tuesdays in the season after Epiphany we will take a look at spiritual practices, our own and four others (Native American, Celtic, Quaker and Buddhist spiritualities). Presenters discussing the other traditions will present basic principals and practices in that tradition, and then discuss how these have informed their lives as Christians. It is a great opportunity to learn and reflect on ways to broaden your own life in Christ.

A LENTEN READING GROUP: MONEY, ECONOMICS AND JUSTICE

**February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 27; April 3: Tuesdays
from 5:30-7 pm**

Our study will be guided by the book *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life*, a book of essays by modern spiritual leaders. We will begin by looking at our own stories and our relationship with money. The five remaining sessions will include Eco-justice and Money, The Place of Money in Modern Life, The Great Economy, Lifestyles & Global Economics, and the Broader Implications of our Everyday Food Choices. Our national church made a commitment to the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) at the General Convention in June. This is an opportunity to begin a personal conversation about some of the economic choices integral to the achievement of these goals.

LET'S ROCK THE CHURCH!

On the third Friday of every month St. Matthias Episcopal Church hosts an evening of youth fellowship in their parish hall. From 7-9 pm youth groups from several of the Episcopal city parishes join in eating pizza, watching videos, playing pool, and dancing the night away. This month Dawn Moore and Mary Ann Brody will chaperone the group of youth from Two Saints as we test the waters and join in the fun! We will meet at Two Saints at 6:30 pm and return at 9:15 pm. If you would like to attend, please talk with Dawn or Mary Ann. Need a ride? Let the chaperones know so that we can arrange carpooling ahead of time. Youth who are interested in going must complete a permission form. They are available on the Diocesan bulletin board or from Mary Ann.

THE BASKETS WERE FULL!!

We did it!!! We successfully filled to brimming twelve baskets for families in the city. Monetary donations through parishes and at the Spaghetti Dinner totaled \$470. This allowed us to provide more than a good meal with fresh produce in the baskets. We were also able to provide a few extras (toilet paper, foil baking pans, can openers, cheese, extra canned vegetables and fruit, snacks, peanut butter, coffee and tea) that can be used. THANK YOU to all who contributed in any way, through time, food contributions, or money. Thanks to Nicole Whitaker who volunteered at the Spaghetti Dinner and to Nicole, Tatianna Jones and John & Toni Burr for delivering baskets on Tuesday evening following the Thanksgiving service. Everyone's help made this project possible.

STEWARDSHIP & EVANGELISM NEWS

THANKSGIVINGS FOR PLEDGES

Many thanks to those who have turned in their 2007 pledges thus far, although we are still waiting for a significant number. As of November 26, 50 pledges have been turned in, 44 returning and 6 new. The very good news is that the returning pledges are averaging a 21% increase over 2006! This is certainly a fulfillment of the Peter Maurin quote that was the theme of this year's fall drive—"The future will be different if we make the present different."

There are, however, at least 40 outstanding pledges, so please turn in your right away. If you have misplaced your pledge card, they are more available in the rear of the church or by calling the parish office.

WORSHIP NEWS

**ADVENT ORGAN LESSONS & CAROLS
DECEMBER 9**

At 4 pm on Saturday, December 9, there will be an Advent Organ Lessons & Carols featuring several Eastman organists and our own Annie. The Service will feature Advent readings with organ responses (we'll sing

a couple hymns as well!). Readers are needed—please sign up on the bulletin board in the back of the church.

CHURCH DECORATION FOR CHRISTMAS

We will be decorating the Church for Christmas on Saturday, December 23, beginning at 10 am. All are welcome. There will be refreshments available and good fellowship. We will also be sorting and wrapping our Christmas gifts for AIDS Rochester families at the same time.

PRAYER LIST CHANGES

As a result of conversation and feedback at the October Rector's Forum, we will soon begin a new method of maintaining our parish prayer list, which will also affect the prayers of the people at Sunday worship.

Beginning Sunday, December 10, folks should look for a notebook at the rear of the church (located at the beginning of center aisle across from where the baptismal font is usually found). If you have someone for which you would like the parish family to keep in prayer, write their name in the book as provided.

The notebook will be updated each week and the names submitted will be placed on a four-week cycle (in the notebook you will see that typed names are followed by an "A," "B," "C," or "D"). It is the submitter's responsibility to re-submit the name after four weeks if continued prayer is desired.

It will be possible for *members of the parish* to be placed permanently on the prayer list. We will do so automatically with those listed on the current prayer list as those "living with long-term challenges" and "who are shut-in and homebound." Speak to the rector if you want yourself or anyone else added to this list. We will be maintaining a list also, of those serving in Iraq or Afghanistan.

This change is an attempt to better manage our prayer list, keeping it better up to date and, therefore, more effective.

As you do your Christmas shopping remember...
When you shop at
Amazon.com
through the link on the TwoSaints website,
a portion of your purchase benefits the parish.
Check it out—much, much more than books and
DVD's are available!
You must go through the link at www.twosaints.org!

JUST PLAIN FUN!

ADVENT BOWLING PARTY DEC. 10

The annual Men's Association sponsored Bowling Party will be held at 1 pm on Sunday, December 10, at Olympic Lanes, 1350 Scottsville Road. This is an annual gift to the parish by the Men's Association and includes free pizza and wings. All are welcome for a fun time!

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

MEAL & MORE CHRISTMAS BAGS

Now is the time of year to focus on the Meal & More Christmas Bag project. This year, St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene Church has been asked to provide the guests with fifty (50) unscented deodorants. We have not as yet received a due date for the deodorants but if we start early, we'll be sure to meet our quota. Thank you for your continued support.

PEACE VIGILS BEGIN THURS., DEC. 7

We are joining our brothers and sisters from Downtown United Presbyterian Church to hold a monthly vigil/witness for peace, with the particular prayer for the end of the war in Iraq. The vigils will take place outside our Church from 7:30—9:15 am on the first Thursday of the month. These will coincide with similar witnesses at other sites in the city. At these vigils we will also be collecting the names of those serving in Iraq or Afghanistan so that our congregations may lift them up in prayer.

Our Vestry affirmed this participation at its November meeting, noting that it is in full accord with resolutions passed by the Episcopal Church's General Convention this summer and our Diocesan Convention this fall.

The resolution passed at the General Convention is as follows:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the conclusion of the October

1, 2002 letter of the House of Bishops to members of Congress, stating that the conditions of the "Just War" tradition have not been met in the national government's decision to attack the nation of Iraq; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention of the Episcopal Church call upon the Congress and the President to immediately develop for implementation a plan for the stabilization of Iraq, to be followed by the prompt withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces from Iraq, to provide for transfer of peacekeeping functions to an international peacekeeping force, to work through international and Iraqi organizations in the reconstruction of Iraq's civil and economic infrastructure, and for the full restoration of Iraqi sovereignty; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call on The Episcopal Church to acknowledge and confess that our government's participation in the war in Iraq has resulted in individual and global injustices including passive acceptance of the loss of our military personnel; lack of support and care for those returning home; indifference to the loss of countless Iraqi citizens; silent response to atrocities; illegal confinement without representation or formal charges and torture; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call on The Episcopal Church to request the Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer step up dialogue with the Iraqi Muslim and Christian community to work toward nonviolent resolutions to conflict; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention, as a community of faith committed to reconciliation and nonviolence taught in the gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, direct the Presiding Bishop and the Executive Council to encourage wide use of Christian formation materials that stress nonviolent methods to conflict resolution and change; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention request the Standing Liturgical Commission to commission prayers and liturgies to be used in time of war, and that this General Convention call on Episcopalians to honor and support, through their prayers and actions, the armed service men and women who return home with injuries to body, mind, and spirit that they might be restored to wholeness of life and assisted in recovering from injury and trauma; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call on all Episcopalians to honor through their prayers and actions the men and women who conscientiously serve their country and especially those who have been killed and wounded; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention call upon all Episcopalians as an act of penitence, to oppose and resist

through advocacy, protest and electoral action the continuation of the war in Iraq, and encourage the President and Congress to take proactive steps to end our participation as soon as possible.

URBAN MINISTRY CENTER TASK FORCE TO BEGIN MEETING

The first meeting of the Urban Ministry Center Task Force will be held on Saturday, December 16 at 10 am. Those who signed up for the Task Force at the Ministry Fair are invited to attend, as well as any other interested parishioner.

The purpose of this Task Force is to develop further our vision of Two Saints as “a center for urban ministry in the Diocese of Rochester.” We will be working on this task in conjunction with work being done in the Diocese on a renewed sense of cooperative urban ministry, which the Rector called for at Diocesan Convention in October and the Bishop has announced will be a priority for the Diocese in the coming year.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS PROJECT

This Christmas our parish is coordinating with AIDS Rochester to provide gifts to children in the Rochester area who might not otherwise wake up to presents on Christmas morning. We will be collecting *unwrapped* gifts over the next few weeks. If you wish to participate, speak to Mary Ann Brody or Michael Hopkins. We will give you the age and gender of a child. You simply purchase a gift and bring it in! On the morning of Dec. 23rd everyone is welcome to join in decorating the church for Christmas, help wrap our gifts, create tags & cards for the recipients and deliver all that we have collected. Give the gift of joy this Christmas to someone you do not know. Watch the weekly bulletin for more information!!

VESTRY NEWS

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

Two Saints Vestry met on November 16 and transacted the following business:

- Affirmed our participation in Peace Vigils to end the War in Iraq (see above).

- Affirmed the start of a parish Prison Ministry Team in conjunction with our relationship with ICARE and the diocesan network of prison ministries.
- Saw a first draft of a long range plan to bring use of our endowment within best practices, i.e., the use of only 5.5% per year for operating expenses. Vestry hopes to have a plan to present to the Annual Meeting in January.
- Discussed both the annual mutual ministry and vision review to be held in early January and the Annual Meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING IN JANUARY

The Annual Meeting of the parish will be held at 10 am on Sunday, January 28. Reports for the Annual Report are due by the end of the day on January 10. This year's Annual Meeting will be electing the following:

- A Warden for a term of two years (current Warden Bruce Colburn is eligible to run again).
- Four Vestry persons for a term of three years (current Vestry members Walt Kannapel, Lillian Marcus, Dawn Moore and Geneva Robinson are all eligible to run again).
- One Delegate to Diocesan Convention for a three year term (current delegate Merle Welsh is eligible to run again).
- Three Alternate Delegates to Diocesan Convention for a one year term (current alternates John Clinton Bradley, Allan Cuseo, and Sharon Nelson are eligible to run again).

If you wish to be nominated, or to suggest someone for nomination, please see Warden Madeline Gamble, chair of the nominating committee.

BISHOP'S VISIT JANUARY 21

The Bishop of Rochester's Annual Visitation of the parish will be Sunday, January 21. This is always a great day of celebration. For us it will be an “All Church Sunday,” beginning with breakfast at 9 am. After the 10 am Service there will be a forum with the Bishop in the parish hall.

Bishop McKelvey has announced his retirement at the time of the consecration of his successor, scheduled for April 19, 2008. The nominating and transition committees will soon be announced as the process to elect our next bishop begins.

The Epiphany (1-6)

9:30 am Eucharist

The Word from Two Saints is a publication of:

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DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 3—Advent Sunday

8 am Eucharist
9 am Parish Breakfast
9:45 am Sunday School
10 am Sung Eucharist

Sunday, December 10—Advent 2

8 am Eucharist
9:45 am Sunday School
10am Sung Eucharist

Sunday, December 17—Advent 3

8 am Eucharist
9:45 am Sunday School
10 am Sung Eucharist

Thursday, December 21—St. Thomas' Day

12:05 pm Eucharist



Sunday, December 24—Advent 4

8 am Eucharist for Advent 4
10 am Christmas Eve Eucharist for All Ages
10 pm Vigil Eucharist for Christmas Eve

Monday, December 25—Christmas Day

10 am Eucharist with Carols

Tuesday, December 26—St. Stephen's Day

Wednesday, December 27—St. John's Day

Thursday, December 28—Holy Innocents' Day

12:05 pm Eucharist

Sunday, December 31—Sunday after Christmas

8 am Eucharist
10 am Sung Eucharist
5 pm Vigil Eucharist for the New Year

*Holy Eucharist every Tuesday & Thursday
at 12:05 pm in the Chapel*