



Photo by Gerald Donnelly

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The Song Of An Under-Appreciated Season Advent Has A Time-Honored Place In The Church Calendar

Everyone knows about the songs of Christmas. The songs of Christmas are poured into our ears at supermarkets and shopping malls shortly after Halloween. But whoever hears Advent songs? In fact, most people don't know the season of Advent, let alone its songs. Even those whose traditions do observe Advent tend to experience it as an interruption to their Christmas fun.

But Advent has an ancient and time-honored place in the church calendar. There are hymns appointed for the season in our Episcopal hymnal, songs which expand the Advent theme put forth in the weekly scripture readings. But more important still is a particular song, an ancient song that might be seen as the basis for the season itself.

Early in the Gospel of Luke, a heavenly messenger appears to a young peasant girl Mary, who lives in the village of Nazareth. The angel tells Mary she will have a child – that, in fact, she will bear the Son of God in his human incarnation. Unmarried and surely somewhat unhinged by this startling news, Mary hurries to the home of her cousin Elizabeth, where she tells all that has happened. Finally, with her heart overflowing with joy, she sings the song which is recorded in Luke chapter 1,

Christmas At Holy Trinity

Rejoice and celebrate the coming of the Light into our world! Holy Trinity will offer the following special worship services for Christmas 2010:

Children's Christmas Pageant

Friday, December 24, 10:30 a.m.

Note: There is no Holy Eucharist at this service.

Christmas Eve Choral Eucharists

Friday, December 24, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

These two services will be identical, with music led by Dr. Ben Brafford. Preludes begin 30 minutes prior to the service start time.

Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist

Friday, December 24, 10:30 p.m.

Our traditional 10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service, with music led by Dr. Richard Cox.

The prelude begins at 10 p.m.

Christmas Day Holy Eucharist

Saturday, December 25, 10 a.m.

Service Of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 26, 10 a.m.

Note: There is one service only on December 26.

verses 46 through 55. Her song is a prophetic poem, a paean of praise that sets forth God's plan, not just for the babe she carries, but also for the world into which he will be born.

In this world yet to come, the "proud are scattered in their conceit... the mighty cast down from their thrones... the lowly lifted up... the hungry filled with good things and the rich sent away empty." The song offers hope to the oppressed, the poor, and the outcast. Her son will one day be king, and this is an incredible vision of his kingdom, which is in fact the Kingdom of God. It is a promise that this Kingdom will be manifest on this earth, within the span of human history.

Prophetic though it was, Mary's song did not disturb the leaders of her world. It is unlikely that her song was heard by any Roman ears in her day. Amazingly, it was remembered and heard by some who knew her, and eventually it was passed down amongst the community of

those who became followers of her son during his time on earth. Mary's song was passed on, and on, sung by countless hopeful mothers to their sons and daughters, from generation to generation. Mary's baby was born, grew to

continued on next page

Song of Advent *continued from page 1*

adulthood, and finally was killed by the Roman authorities – not because he was a major threat, but because he was annoying. The Romans thought the problem was removed. But Jesus rose from the dead, and appeared to his followers. Then the people who had held Mary's words in their hearts began to speak. This Jesus, this son of Mary, was the One for whom they had waited, waited oh so many years. This was the Messiah.

Thus, Mary's song became an anthem for the early Christians, used often in their worship services, especially when times were hard, because it was a song of promise. Some 60 or 70 years after Jesus' resurrection, the writer of the Gospel of Luke recorded Mary's song in the book he was writing for his Christian friends and neighbors. The writer of Luke knew this song was important. He knew her words were not mere products of Mary's imagination. He heard in them the writings of the ancient Hebrew prophets. He heard in Mary's song a clear picture of God's promise, a picture that comprised the theme of his entire book, indeed, the theme of what Luke understood to be the Good News. Mary's song was a source of hope in a world where the future, for Christians, seemed at times to be disappearing.

Centuries passed. The followers of Mary's boy, Jesus, swelled in number. Groups of followers coalesced into communities, which became known as ecclesia – “the called-out ones” – finally known to us as “the Church.” Just as when Jesus walked the earth, there were moments when the Kingdom was manifest on earth. But those moments quickly passed. Still the Christian church remained hopeful, and sought always to find new ways to tell the story that was the heart of their faith.

One of the ways of telling became known as the church calendar. The leaders of the Church marked portions of the year off in seasons, each season being tasked with telling a part of the Christian story.

When the calendar was complete, each new church year began not with Jesus' birth, but with the angel's visit to the young peasant girl, and the song she sang for her cousin Elizabeth. This first season of the church year, following

Mary's Song In Modern Verse

Except for translation, the ancient words of Mary's Song, known to the church as the Magnificat (from the opening words in Latin), have not changed or been re-written. They provide worshippers with a sacred connection across the centuries – these same words have been prayed, morning, noon and night, by thousands of Christians for thousands of years.

Then, in the 20th century, the world of music had a new venue – known as television. In 1951, NBC commissioned the first opera ever commissioned for television and the first ever performed on television. It was composed by Gian Carlo Menotti, an Italian-American composer, and it was called *Amahl and the Night Visitor*. The story of Jesus' birth is told from the perspective of a poor widow and her young son, who receive a visit from the Three Kings, the wise men who are seeking the child born under a star.

Taking the challenging words of Mary's song, Menotti gives them to the leader of the kings, Melchior. The music builds to its climax in this moment when great wealth confronts great poverty and hope is the only currency that matters. Here is Menotti's version of the Magnificat:

*The Child we seek
Doesn't need our gold.
On love, on love alone,
He will build his kingdom.
He pierced hand will hold no scepter,
His haloed head will wear no crown;
His might will not be built
On your toil.
Swifter than lightning
He will soon walk among us.
He will bring us new life
And receive our death,
And the keys to his city
Belong to the poor.*

the words of Mary's song, taught the Church the crucial spiritual task of waiting. The Church learned to wait with Mary, not just for Jesus' birth, but also for his coming again.

The dual focus continues to this day. The vision has not dimmed with the passing centuries. Each year, during the weeks of Advent, we prepare for the birth of the Baby and for his triumphal return. Even the season's name carries this double meaning, for it comes from the Latin “adventus” which is a translation of the Greek word “parousia” a word most commonly used to speak of Christ's Second Coming.

Across the reach of church history, Advent has varied in its weight and length. For a time, it was a season of baptismal preparation, leading up to the celebration of Jesus' baptism on January 1. But the celebration of Christmas came to overshadow the celebration of baptism, and the season shrank to its present length of four weeks.

The penitential preparatory emphasis faded away, and eventually Advent became the strange hybrid we know today. It is a season of waiting simultaneously for two very different things. Seen from this perspective, maybe our modern-day discomfort with the Advent/Christmas cultural/ecclesial conjunction is not such a bad thing. Perhaps, like the early Christians, we need to take time to practice what it means to wait in hope.

Like the Christians of Luke's day, we are also living “between the times.” We know, because sometimes we experience it, that the Kingdom of God does sometimes appear on earth. But, because we also experience pain, tragedy, war, poverty, hunger, we also know that the kingdom is not yet here. So while our day-to-day lives hurry forward, busy with gift-buying and wrapping, filled with a mixture of excitement and anxiety, our worship time together on Sundays can provide a still point, a quiet space, where we can sort out the

hopes and desires of our harried hearts, and remember what it means to wait and to hope.

–The Rev. Virginia Herring

Putting Feet On Our Prayers

Labyrinth Ministry Transforms Parish And Community

The outdoor labyrinth has become one of Holy Trinity's most visible sacred spaces, drawing individuals and groups from around the community to walk its healing path. Marjorie Donnelly, a certified labyrinth facilitator, talks about how our labyrinth ministry came to be.

What is the history of the present labyrinth ministry at Holy Trinity?

The labyrinth was first introduced to Greensboro in 1995 when the Rev. Tim Patterson brought to Holy Trinity the Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress, the world's foremost authority on the ancient practice of walking the labyrinth. Shortly thereafter, Holy Trinity purchased a canvas labyrinth, the first one in our diocese, specially made to fit in the Haywood Duke Room. A labyrinth mission group was formed, and from 1996 through 2002, this dedicated group of volunteers rolled out this huge piece of canvas every Thursday, surrounded it with candles, selected the appropriate contemplative music, and hosted a weekly opportunity for the community to experience walking the labyrinth. As this practice continued to grow in popularity and in meaning for our church and the broader community, a task force was established in 1999 to design and establish a permanent outdoor labyrinth as part of the project to expand our columbarium.

On Palm Sunday 2002, Holy Trinity's beautiful permanent cobblestone labyrinth that we presently enjoy walking every day of the year was dedicated. For several years the outdoor labyrinth was not used by the broader community as fully as we had hoped.

All that changed dramatically with the formation in November 2006 of the Labyrinth Mission Group (now the Holy Trinity Labyrinth Keepers). At that first meeting, this group of half a dozen labyrinth enthusiasts planned our first official event for the very next month! On December 31, 2006 we sponsored a labyrinth walk for peace.

Fast forward four years to the fall of 2010, and there are 19 dedicated and active Labyrinth Keepers who volunteer countless hours of their time to plan, advertise, train, and provide facilitators for a variety of community-wide labyrinth offerings on Holy Trinity's outdoor labyrinth.

Now the labyrinth is used frequently by a variety of individuals and groups from both the parish and the wider community – including other churches, non-profits, and hospice and cancer support groups, to name a few.

In terms of the labyrinth ministry, what are you most proud of?

One of our most transformative and inspiring projects is the 365-Day Walkers for Peace, which grew out of that very first walk for peace in 2006. Since 2008, we have had at least one person walk Holy Trinity's labyrinth every single day of the year. Walkers pray for one another and for peace in our community and world as they walk. We now have our own website where you can easily and securely sign up for days to walk.

You can pledge to walk as often as you want – one day a week, one day a month, or one day during the year. Perhaps you will want to walk the labyrinth on your birthday or anniversary or some other special day. Some people sign up for the same day each week or each month. You are free to choose any time of the day that is most convenient for you to walk. Go to www.labyrinthkeepers.com to sign up for specific days to walk.

What do you do in the labyrinth?

Labyrinth walkers put feet on their prayers. And as they walk and pray, they tap into the sacred energy of the labyrinth itself and spread that into the world. The countless people who have walked and prayed on Holy Trinity's labyrinth keep the energy of peace and love flowing in a very tangible way.

The labyrinth walk itself is a metaphor for the inward and the outward

journey. As you walk into the center, you release whatever burdens you brought with you. In the center, you receive from God whatever is there for you. And finally, you return to the world to share what you have received.

Are there any unique factors that you feel have contributed to the extraordinary growth and success of the labyrinth ministry?

There are several factors that I believe have contributed to the success of the labyrinth ministry. One is the fact that we are an ecumenical group. The labyrinth is meant to be shared, and it's easier to share information and opportunities to walk the labyrinth when there are Labyrinth Keepers from various denominations within our community.

Another is the fact that our ministry team is structured around the circle model of leadership. Circle is the practice of creating space where every voice is heard. It is the study of listening as much as it is the practice of speaking. Circle provides the container to be fully present to one another.

Many organizations are based on a hierarchical model represented by the triangle. In contrast, when you sit in a circle and operate as a circle, there are three distinct guiding principles: leadership is rotating, responsibility is shared, and the center is held by reliance on Spirit's guidance. This sharing of responsibility, rotating leadership and relying on Spirit's guidance is a healthy way to sustain a vibrant ministry over time.

Finally, the Labyrinth Keepers are a caring group whose hallmark has always been hospitality. One of our most effective marketing tools for spreading the word about the labyrinth is by personal invitation. We welcome all who are interested to join us in this inspirational and transformative ministry.

–Marjorie Donnelly

An Inner Life Leading Outward

Cursillo Group Still Going Strong After 30 Years

In Spanish, *cursillo* means “little course,” but a tiny seed can grow into a great tree.

The benefits for a local group forged by the Cursillo retreat experience and extended over many years of meetings are by no means small. For a certain group of Episcopal church women in the Greensboro area, most of whom are parishioners at Holy Trinity, commitment to their reunion group as a system of spiritual support has proven extraordinary and has borne good fruit indeed.

Every week for over 30 years, these women have gathered for coffee and conversation with the purpose of helping each other’s spiritual life. The Sunrise Reunion Group was formed in the late 1970s as a followup to the experience of Cursillo by Charlotte Partrick and Dot Latham. They participated in some of the earliest Cursillos open to women. The reunion group started meeting for breakfast at 8 a.m. after the communion service at 7:30 a.m. then offered at Holy Trinity on Thursday mornings. Over the years, the Sunrise Reunion Group’s meeting time has changed to suit changing schedules of members, but the group has continued to meet faithfully each week.

Cursillo became a widespread phenomenon in the Episcopal church in the 1980s and ‘90s. Still ongoing today, sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, a Cursillo is meant to be a short, vivid exercise in Christian living. Two or three dozen men and women make a retreat for three days, while two or three dozen lay men or women create for them a community of Christian love. Retreatants return on the fourth day to their respective environments, inspired to serve the world more vibrantly as Christians.

Thereafter, participants form reunion groups in their local community made up of those who have also experienced Cursillo. Building upon the original retreat, meetings of such

It’s a privilege to know these women. They are all saints, but they don’t like me to call them that.

groups over time can help anchor one’s life.

When asked what attending meetings of the Sunshine Reunion group has meant to her, parishioner Dot Latham, one of two original members still attending meetings, replies: “My character has been guided and formed by being a part of a group of people serious about their spiritual development.”

Parishioner Jane Aycock, a longtime member of the group, puts it just as strongly: “Being part of it keeps me grounded in who I am and what I’m here for.”

When even two members are in town, the group meets as usual. It has failed to meet on only one occasion, when all but one member was traveling. Over the years, the membership and size has waxed and waned; some members have died or moved away. Today, a meeting averages six or seven women, falling within the ideal size of five to eight that Cursillo recommends.

“In our meetings, we remember those who are not with us,” says Jane. “They are there in spirit.”

Not an ordinary social gathering, this. Talk is purposeful here, and is treated with respect. Each woman must trust all the others to keep confidential what is shared. “It takes deliberate discipline to hold things in confidence, but we have learned that we can trust each other,” Dot says.

Mutual trust is a key to the success of such a group, and must be earned over time by each member in it. The guarantee of confidentiality frees

everyone to share even the most intimate details of the week’s life: where they have met Christ that week; what spiritual aids, such as reading the lectionary, they have used; when they failed; when they triumphed. Each member reports on actions taken to strengthen the faith of others, such as volunteer work and kind deeds. She also shares a plan for the coming week’s spiritual practice, and she accepts accountability to the group for the implementation of it. Longtime member and Holy Trinity parishioner Ellen Day notes, however, that members prefer being supportive to being judgmental.

Meeting weekly is not all that this group does. Its members have participated in a number of service projects as a group: packing food for the needy, helping prepare supplies for earthquake survivors in Haiti, and so on. Dot Latham points out that such actions are a natural outflow of the spiritually charged identities and relationships that the reunion group fosters.

“Cursillo helps you to develop an inner life that leads outward,” she says. “It helps you to find out what you want your life to be.”

Far from being only contemplative or inward-turning, the activity of the reunion group sends its members into the world to serve it. The effect is integrative, spiritually healing. Ellen Day says of her fellow cursillistas: “It’s a privilege to know these women. They are all saints, but they don’t like me to call them that.”

What attracts people to Cursillo? “A desire to feel more fully alive,” says Dot. As longtime member Alice Rice notes, when the group meets, God is always in their midst, for they are gathered in Christ’s name. The longevity of the Sunrise Reunion group is a testament to eyes being opened, to ears being unstopped, to the realized possibility of living the life that Jesus came to give us more abundantly.

—Ellen Summers and Alice Rice

Made For Goodness

Parishioner Cleta Baker Blazes A Trail Nearly 90 Years Long

As I sat down to interview Cleta Baker about her life, I noticed the book *Made for Goodness* by Desmond Tutu on her coffee table. She had just finished reading it and invited me to take it for my own enjoyment.

You may know Cleta as the petite elder in our church community, but you may not know she has always had large ideas. She is one of the most radical people I have ever met – yet she seems oblivious to her trail blazing.

Cleta's father and grandfather were both coal miners in rural Iowa, and yet she attended college and seminary in the 1940's and early 1950's. She has always been an advocate for racial reconciliation – unusual for a Midwestern white woman in the 1940's. She has been liberal politically and theologically even though a seminary professor addressed the class as "you men" and refused to look at the few women in class.

Cleta knew Martin Luther King Jr. while he was working on his doctorate at Boston University, and she helped to educate young people about the sit-ins in the south in the early 1960's. She took vacation time to go and support Peter Beebe, and Anglican priest being tried in Ecclesiastical Court for hiring, as his assistants, two women irregularly ordained as priests in Philadelphia. She worked at the YWCA and educated whomever she

could about institutional racism. She marched with Caesar Chavez, an American farm worker, labor leader, and civil rights activist who, with Dolores Huerta co-founded the National Farm Workers Association (later the United Farm Workers). Since she has come to Holy Trinity, Cleta has been a member of the Diocesan Racial Justice Committee and Christian Social Ministries.

Cleta remains radical and hopeful as she approaches her ninth decade. She, indeed, has been made for goodness. I, for one, marvel at her life and hope I can have this kind of integrity as I approach another turn.

—Ruth D. Anderson



Parishioner Cleta Baker has been a pioneer in social justice causes for nearly 90 years.

It's All In The Way You Tell It

Former HT EYC Member Journeys From Film Set To Pulpit

The Rev. Bernard J. "B. J." Owens IV worked in the movie business for several years in New York City. Later, he went to Yale Divinity School. Then he served as a chaplain resident in the pediatric unit at UNC Hospitals.

All of that varied and sophisticated training has come to fruition for B. J., who was ordained an Episcopal priest in 2006. B. J. served as associate rector for children's and family ministries at St. Paul's, Cary until recently, when he accepted a call as rector at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in his hometown of Greensboro.

It's an impressive resume for a young man of 35, but B. J. reflects with the aplomb of a veteran cleric on some of his most demanding audiences.

"I've had the privilege to lead the preschool chapel at St. Paul's," he says, "and if you lose them, they will just get up and go to the bathroom."

When his family settled in Greensboro, B. J. was in third grade. He attended the Catholic church for many years, but when he started high school his mother, who was raised an Episcopalian, started attending Holy Trinity.

B.J. came, too, and it proved to be a pivotal move.

"At Holy Trinity, I met Tim Patterson, Robert Payne, and other great people who introduced me to the Episcopal Church's deep sense of spirituality, its sense of community, and its value on critical thought in the context of faith."

Holy Trinity also engaged him at Glory Ridge, which B. J. attributes as "a real spiritual bedrock for the journey that I was beginning." He found the structure of the days at Glory Ridge particularly meaningful for understanding the link between action and contemplation.

"We always came back to camp and talked about the work we were doing," he says. "I learned an important lesson about vocation there. It was like trying on a suit of clothes to check the fit."

At the University of North Carolina, B. J. studied history and communications. He was involved in theater and television production, and he stayed active in the church. From this nexus of interests, a narrative thread was weaving its way through B. J.'s life – it

just wasn't apparent to him yet.

After college he went to New York to work in film production. There he learned the importance of learning a craft and how most good ideas and successful projects ultimately depend upon the contributions of other people.

It was on a movie set that part of the tapestry began to reveal its innate design.

"I was sitting at my desk," he recalls. "My job had to do with managing the logistics of the movie. At one point, I remember several people congregating around my desk, and suddenly it dawned on me they weren't talking about the project, they were telling one another about their personal lives. That's when I realized that, for me, work needs to be about the people and not just the job."

Taking this insight – that he wasn't using all his gifts to their fullest – B. J. decided to explore the challenge of vocation by going to graduate school. "I had a deep desire to return to the life of questioning and the life

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The Power Of \$50

Micro-Financing Group Changes Lives For The Price Of Lunch

When Pat Bailey and Dee Irwin read *Half the Sky*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's book about micro-financing opportunities for oppressed women and girls, they knew the topic was a perfect fit for the wisdom circles that Healing Ground and The Servant Leadership School of Greensboro offer. SLS Director Ruth Anderson agreed, and the three created a wisdom circle around the concept of micro-financing. The group began meeting last spring.

Micro-financing that focuses on women and children offers a way to support reform on several levels. It fits well with Sacred Activism, a theme that both Healing Ground and The Servant Leadership School have been developing in their offerings.

The stories that the group read were all about women and girls in developing nations.

Worldwide, females tend to suffer the most from poverty and are more likely to be denied educational opportunities. But when women have control of financial resources, they are more likely to spend the money on nutrition, medicine and housing, creating conditions where their children are healthier and their families more stable.

"It was clear that our micro-financing group wanted to support health, business and educational opportunities for oppressed women and girls internationally," Pat says, "but we also wanted to do something right here in our own community."

Individuals and groups from the Triad were invited to present information to help the group understand what is occurring in our own back yard, opening up a variety of opportunities for group members.

Presenter Ben Wilson of Children of Vietnam in Winston-Salem explained how his organization provides a number of life-changing services for children through its four program areas: education, housing, nutrition and medical services. COV was recently recognized as one of the 10 best nonprofit groups making a difference for children in Vietnam. This caught the attention of Pat, whose daughter is Vietnamese, and group member Marty Halyburton, who has made numerous service trips to the impoverished nation. The two had been meeting to organize a service pilgrimage to Vietnam and now have found new allies whose mission fits well with their goals.

Presenter Mary Martin, also of Winston-Salem, started the Nyanya Project in 2007 to work with grandmothers who are raising a generation of children in Africa who have been orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. Group member Linda Faltin was so moved by Mary's presentation that she went with Mary to Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda this past



A group of participants from the Nyanya Project pose for the camera. The project began in 2007 to help grandmothers in Africa who are raising a generation of children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. Microfinance group member Linda Faltin visited Africa with the Nyanya Project in 2010 and will return in 2011.

summer and will return next summer to help begin a new preschool and work in one of the AIDS clinics.

Other opportunities were closer to home. As the group researched micro-financing organizations, member Emily Reeves discovered Dining for Women, an organization that began in South Carolina and now has chapters nationwide. Dining for Women brings women together for a brown-bag lunch, during which they explore micro-financing opportunities and contribute whatever they would have spent for lunch out to a project they choose.

"I like the sense of community locally, with the ripple effect of creating a significant impact globally," says Emily, who has organized a local Dining for Women chapter.

With one-third of the world's population existing on less than \$2 a day, even a micro loan of \$50 can make a huge difference.

"Micro-finance works," says group member Clem Clement. "The challenge for us is to translate the principle to this country, where safety nets and entitlements are imbedded, and where \$100 often doesn't mean a great deal to the recipient."

Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, founded by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, has championed micro-finance in the third world by making small loans to poor women to help them start a small business. An initial loan might be for \$50, with loans averaging \$380 for established businesses.

While it's true that a \$50 loan doesn't have the same leverage in the United States, the recent economic decline

has made micro-financing attractive here as well. Loans of \$1,500 to \$10,000 can make a big difference to someone trying to start or maintain a small business, but most banks don't make business loans for less than \$50,000.

Grameen America has opened new branches in New York and Omaha and will soon add four others including one in Charlotte, joining the country's 362 other micro-finance outfits. Kiva.org, one of the best known international micro-lenders, is also beginning pilot projects in the United States.

Meanwhile, the group that began by reading *Half the Sky* continues to meet monthly, alternatively focusing on international and local micro-finance opportunities. New members are welcome.

—Pat Bailey and Dee Irwin

Want To Get Involved?

The micro-financing group that began by reading *Half the Sky* continues to meet on the third Thursday of each month from 12:30–2 p.m. in Broome Hall. Bring a bag lunch; a love offering will go toward micro-financing projects.

To learn more about the micro-financing group, contact Pat Bailey, 644-0076 or healingground@triad.rr.com. To learn more about Dining for Women, contact Emily Reeves, 315-6430 or bandereeve@aol.com.

Tell It *continued from page 5*

of the spirit that I missed, most notably from my experience as a youth and later a staff member at Glory Ridge.”

Next stop was Yale Divinity School. There he was able to apply his interest and his experience in the business of storytelling to God's story.

“I needed to experience faith from a new perspective,” he says. “Graduate school offered me the opportunity to explore and expand upon the vocabulary of faith and spirituality that Holy Trinity gave me.”

In retrospect, he sees a correlation between the filmmaker's obsession with telling the story in the best, most meaningful, way possible with that of the priest, who must remain open to all the stories unveiling themselves while simultaneously staying true to the one great story that links them all.

B. J. is excited about moving back to Greensboro with his wife, Jo, an ordained Presbyterian minister, and daughter, Amelia, who turned 1 in October.

“This feels almost like returning to that circle at Glory Ridge, where I got to try on that suit of faith and explore it to see if it fit. It turns out that it fit quite well and I just had to live a little more life off the mountain top before it all made sense,” he says. “Now I get to take those elements of filmmaking that are so important – planning, execution, nurturing human interaction – and apply them in a context that feels even more meaningful and inspirational.”

“I loved being in New York and working on movies; I loved being at Yale in a strong ecumenical environment with solid Episcopalian links,” he concludes.

Now he assumes direction for the next stage of his vocation.

—Steve McCollum

Money Matters

Our Treasurer's Report

Once again, we are in one of the most exciting periods of the church year. The Every Member Canvass is wrapping up, and we anxiously await the final tally of the canvass, since it will determine many things, including the programs Holy Trinity offers during 2011.

I encourage you to carefully weigh your decision about your pledge for the coming year. It seems appropriate to repeat the definition of giving in Kevin McCarthy's book *The On-Purpose Person: Making Your Life Make Sense*: “giving has a threefold purpose, the first being joy, a way to say ‘Thank you God for all your gifts to me;’ the second being intentionality, meaning that there must be a commitment so that we give God our first fruits and not our leftovers; and the final purpose is proportionality, meaning that we are called to keep up to 90 percent of all we earn; we all have different conditions in our lives, but we must consider how much of our treasure we will return to God.”

As we approach Christmas, I would encourage you to pull an angel off the tree outside the Haywood Duke Room and participate in one of the happiest things that we do as a church family. At our Art with Heart event in August, a parishioner purchased a photograph from me; it depicts Ginny's office near Christmastime in 2008, a few days before the gifts were distributed to various individuals and agencies. One would think it was an office at the North Pole, given the multitude of wrapped gifts. A really fun thing is to be around when the gifts are picked up – the sound of true love and happiness is evident from the noise.

Finally, as I have said before, if you have questions about our church finances, please call or e-mail me: jcompton1@triad.rr.com. As your treasurer and a parishioner, I believe that the fiscal strength of our parish is important, and I am committed to making the finances of Holy Trinity transparent to all parishioners.

—The charitable give out the door and God puts it back through the window.

Traditional Proverb



John Compton is a parishioner and serves as Holy Trinity's treasurer. He can be reached via e-mail at jcompton1@triad.rr.com.

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The Manifestation Of Christ's Light Season Of Epiphany Focuses On Missions And Outreach

Epiphany used to be a big deal.

"Christmas was late in coming to the church as a feast day because Epiphany was the big feast day," says Ginny Herring, assistant to the rector. "Epiphany was primary because it focused on the light of Christ in the whole world. But after awhile, Christmas, with its lovely story of a tiny baby, born in a stable, just became more popular. Epiphany almost disappeared."

There are several theories about how Christmas came to be celebrated on December 25 and Epiphany on January 6.

One thought is that both incorporate ancient pagan feasts of the sun, since both dates happen in winter. "Christianity is syncretic – it takes in traditions from other religions and Christianizes them," Ginny says. "That's one way Christianity was spread."

The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship notes another theory: that Epiphany came from the practice of keeping Easter on the equivalent of the 14th or 15th of the first month of spring in Asia Minor. That would have been April 6 on the Julian calendar. Adapting an idea that the deaths of patriarchs would have fallen exactly on the anniversary of their birth, Christians would have come to believe the April 6 was also the date of Christ's conception, and counting forward nine months arrived at January 6 as the date of his birth. (*The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, edited by Paul Bradshaw).

But pagan origin or not, today's Epiphany, which means appearance or manifestation, signifies an important part of the Christian calendar. We have renewed our emphasis on the light of Christ come for all people. At Epiphany we tell the story of the arrival of the magi at Bethlehem.

"That's Matthew's story," Ginny says. (The story can be

Celebrate Epiphany

The Mistress of the Feast requests your presence at The Great Medieval Epiphany Feast on Sunday, January 9.

The Epiphany Evensong begins in the church at 5 p.m., followed by dinner in the Great Hall (Haywood Duke Room) at 5:45 p.m. Tickets, \$14 (bring your own wine).

Reserve your space by contacting Patty Jennings, 272-6149 ext. 236 or patty@holy-trinity.com, or register online at www.holy-trinity.com by Wednesday, January 5.

found in Matthew 2:1-2.) "The baby Jesus was found by the magi, the wise men from foreign lands who were non-Jewish people. That's how Matthew makes clear that Jesus came for all people, not just Jews. Epiphany is the manifestation of Christ's light shining into the world."

The celebration at Holy Trinity includes white vestments and hangings on Epiphany Sunday and an Epiphany feast that night complete with boar's head and madrigals. "That's a nod to the Church of England's love of feasts and ceremonies," Ginny says. "It's one way of remembering our heritage as part of the Church of England."

Ginny notes that in today's church, the focus of Epiphany is missions and outreach. "When my children were growing up, we used celebrations as a way to learn the church year, but also to get the all the kids home for dinner," she says.

One year, friends of Ginny's family lost their jobs. Both the mother and father were laid off, and with five children, there wasn't much money. Ginny's family secretly adopted them as an Epiphany project. "We'd buy their groceries, leave them on the front porch, ring the bell and run," Ginny says. "It was our way of teaching our children how to be Christ's light and love in the world."

The story of the magi closes the Christmas season which celebrates the incarnation, the gift of God among us. The feast of the Epiphany moves us to look at Jesus' actions in our world. We reflect on his miracles, such as changing water into wine, healing and feeding the hungry.

"Our celebration of Epiphany is a reminder of our work as Christians," Ginny says. "When we act as Jesus did, we are continuing to bring Christ's light to our world."

–Harriette Knox