



From the Rector

In December, we are entering Advent - waiting for our Deliverer, the Messiah, who was, we are told, born on a star- and angel-filled night in Bethlehem, laid in a manger, and visited by shepherds and kings. Every year, we follow our own traditions, some set by the parents and communities we grew up in, others changed as we recognize that our stage of family life has changed. Our traditions are set in the darkening and colder days of December (in the Southern Hemisphere, it was the opposite - December was the middle of summer and the long school holiday!). What draws all our traditions together is the message of hope, peace, joy and love of the season and of the Gospel.

Advent's waiting time is a time to learn patience and wonder, whatever our lives may hold. This may be a sad season for some, a joy for others. The book of Ecclesiastes leads us forward:

- 3 1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
- 2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- 3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
- 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- 6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- 7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- 8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen
Van Koevering

I pray that Advent will be a special time for all of you, and a time for us to share with those who might be struggling in some way. I learnt this collect from clergy in WV:

Life is short and we have too little time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. So, be swift to love and make haste to be kind....and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

With love to you all,

Helen



Sr Warden's Corner



Tony Lo Bianco,
Sr. Warden

I was thrilled to see so many people get confirmed, received, and renewed at the Bishop's visit several weeks ago. And I was overjoyed to see the enthusiasm with which we welcomed these people more fully into our parish. I am truly proud of all of them – the young people deciding to continue on their journey, the adults making St. Raphael's their church home, for renewing our baptismal covenants and to celebrating as we expand not only in numbers but in the diversity of experiences that we are.

But I want to celebrate something else too. It takes a great deal of courage to state what one believes. But it also takes a great deal of courage to not state what one does not believe. And at the risk of tooting my son's horn, that is what he chose to do. It wasn't an easy decision – my mother's plane tickets were already booked so that she could be there for his confirmation just as she was for his baptism. I know he was nervous to tell me that he was considering not going through with it. He didn't want to let the other members of his confirmation class or his teachers down.

At first I wasn't entirely easy with the decision myself. I thought back to the night that he arrived in Lexington for the first time, carried in his exhausted mother's arms from a plane trip that left from Guatemala where he was born and adopted from. I still look at pictures from that night and see many faces of St. Raphaelites there at the airport with us. I see and remember the day of his baptism, the pride I felt as our parish promised to help him grow into a fuller relationship with Christ. Selfishly I wondered how many people would be nudging their spouse as the Bishop went down the line of confirmands and whispering, "hey, shouldn't the Senior Warden's kid be up there?" I wanted a detailed list of what he didn't believe, with informed and articulate reasons for what he took issue with.

But the simple fact of the matter is that it is his choice. And it is a choice that I very much respect. One of the things I value most about our church is that we do not force people to do things that they do not believe in. In various points in my life I have omitted parts of the Nicene Creed because I could not say that I believed them. I have heard others alter prayers, collects, even readings for similar reasons. I love that we are a self-reflective and corrective church. If we weren't, I don't know that I would want to be a part of it.

Now I don't think John carefully dissected various elements of our professed theology and took a great stand as a conscientious objector. I think he loves and respects us but isn't at a place on his faith journey where confirmation seems like an authentic step. I have heard many people say, "he's just not ready yet," but I take issue with this too. I do not know where his faith journey will lead. He may never be ready. Or he may be ready next year. We will continue to expose him to what we believe, and what we don't, and will drag him to whatever classes and events are offered as often as possible. But it will remain his decision, as I believe it should remain everyone's decision, whether they will be officially confirmed. I don't know how many others sat through this Bishop's visit or others pondering the same thoughts whether they relate to yourself, a loved one, or anyone else. But know that I, at least, applaud the doubters, questioners, and even unbelievers in our midst. I hope that the examples of the lives we lead will encourage others to be a part of what we have and can offer. But if not, I believe all are welcome. Fully, and regardless.

Tony



Thanks to all who helped out with food and setup/cleanup for the Bishop's Visit and Annual Meeting events last month!



Children's Christmas Pageant Dec. 22

We are starting preparations for the Children's Christmas Pageant to be presented at the 11:00 service on Dec. 22. All children are invited to participate - there are parts for Sheep, Shepherds, Angels, Wise Men and Mary & Joseph. This year the play is an original script entitled "Yes, God."

The rehearsal for the play will be held on Dec. 21 at 10:00AM in the church. Please plan to be there on time so we can get everyone's costumes situated and then rehearse.

Let Dana Berry know if your child, grandchild, or anyone else would like to participate. All ages are welcome! We could also use some adult support in "shepherding" the children before and during the play. Dana can be reached at danabruceberry@gmail.com, or 381-1830.

Stewardship Corner

Roger Kirk, Stewardship Chair

I will only submit a couple of sentences regarding Pledges. Please submit your pledge as soon as possible. Your pledge campaign results will determine the direction of the Parish budget.

We have much to be thankful about at St. Raphael. The beauty of our worship, the blessings of our mutual mission to God and to Central Kentucky, and the wonders of watching the Lord play out his hand in all our lives. Celebrate with me in prayer and thankful blessings for 2019. And share in the abundance of life lived to those who have passed over the veil.

You have four newly elected members of the Parish coming onto your Vestry in 2020. They are a varied and accomplished group. It will be very exciting to work with them in the weeks ahead. Reverend Helen will pick her Senior Warden for 2020 and the Vestry will elect a Junior Warden, a Clerk, and a Treasurer (some of whom are returning if the Vestry so chooses).

God bless us all as we look forward to the various celebrations in December and the Dawning of the New Year 2020, which will come equipped with a “Leap Year” bonus!

Now below is a new feature of the Stewardship Corner that the Vestry thought might be of benefit to the General Parish. Each month I will give the latest Monthly Fiscal Year-to-Date Percentages, for both income and for expenses. We welcome your feedback.

NOTE: Figures are for YEAR-TO-DATE through October, which is 83% of the Budget Projection Year.

Income January to October 2019 is running at 79.1% of Budget, or 3.9% under Projection.
Expenses January to October 2019 is running at 82.8% of Budget, or 0.5% under Projection.
The overall Budget is running 4.9% Behind Projections (Perfect Balance would be zero).

Let us give thanks for God’s blessings at St. Raphael (with a bit of fun added in to show our humanity).
Roger L Kirk, Stewardship Committee Chair



A View from the Pew

Happy Thanksgiving!

Out of darkness comes the LIGHT!

Hark the joy of the season! But as death and darkness abound, how can heralds touch our souls?

I thought about this with the recent passing of our beloved parishioners, Sharon Thompson and Rod Glancy. Their funerals on this cold, rainy weekend had me musing back to JFK’s assassination. November 22, 1963, was a cold, gray, rainy Friday before Thanksgiving, much like today. I was an 8-year old third grader. Early that afternoon the principal entered our classroom, whispered something to our teacher, then left. Our teacher was a kind young woman. Upon hearing the news her hand shot to cover her mouth and she started weeping. She then turned to us and with a soft, grief-stricken voice told us that President Kennedy had been shot. If we didn’t already realize it, the fact that school let out early drove home the full import of the tragedy on our young psyches.



Richard Dawahare

The shivering cold grayness of that dreary day deepened our despair. It was the first of an endless series of such days that season. Nights came early, and they were blacker and bleaker than ever. Our home joined others across America--shocked, saddened, worried about the future. The pall was inescapable. It marked our parents’ faces. It beckoned from the television—all two channels—the radio and the newspapers (Lexington had two of them back then, equaling the number of television stations). It was a depressingly dark, dank and dismal lead-up to Christmas.

And in many ways, it still is. Seems most every year someone close dies during the holiday season. Parents, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends, friends of friends and countless others around the globe meet their maker during the holidays.

Yet the joyous reality of Christmas reaches us. And teaches us. Death, after all, is the essential prerequisite for eternal life. And chief among the Good News Tidings of Christmas is the assurance of our heavenly home. Sure, we who are left behind suffer for a bit because we miss our loved ones. But it is the message of Christmas, the hope of Christmas, and the JOY of Christmas that we shall enjoy a heavenly reunion.

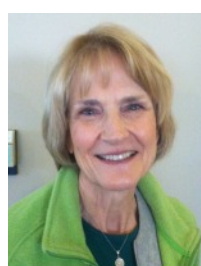
Similarly, the full significance of Light cannot exist without darkness. It is as if God wills the darkness as a challenge, a contrast to prove the transcendent power of his incomparable light. In the midst of the darkest time of the year, God’s light shines triumphant!

For on that holy night came the birth of Jesus, the true light of the world. His rays of hope, love, and joy comfort us. We feel it, we are warmed by it, and we share it, now and forevermore. O Holy Light, out of a most holy night. And so, we rejoice:

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth,
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appears and the Soul felt its worth,
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fa-l-l-l on your knees; O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Richard Dawahare

Music Notes



Melinda Storey

A New Year at St. Raphael Episcopal

Yesterday (the last day of November) I went to our church to practice the organ, and found the sanctuary bustling with activity. It was the Altar Guild, approximately five ladies led by Diane Whorley, with boxes of materials, brooms, a vacuum cleaner, dust cloths: all in preparation for – no, not Christmas, but Advent. By the time they were finished, the sanctuary was transformed with quiet beauty for this season of hope and expectation. It’s the beginning of our liturgical year, soon to be followed by Christmas, when we will “pull out all the stops,” (to use an organ metaphor!) But for now, it is enough to appreciate a time of peace and tranquility as we wait and reflect upon the coming of a promised Savior.

The music of Advent is lovely, much of it in a minor key. We always begin the season with the hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” with its plainsong melody. The choir will sing “Rejoice, O Jerusalem; Behold, Thy King Cometh” by Canadian composer Healey Willan (1880-1968), with text from the book of Romans. On the second Sunday, the choir will sing a congregational favorite, “People, Look East,” arranged by Malcolm Archer (b. 1952). December 15 is “Gaudete Sunday,” originally a day to rejoice and to give the faithful a small break during this season of fasting. The choir will present “And the Glory of the Lord,” from “Messiah” by G.F. Handel (1685-1757). On the last Sunday of Advent, Carolina Fernandez will sing the beloved “Ave Maria” by Franz Schubert (1797-1828).

Then, onward to Christmas, only the “dearest day in all of the year,” to quote from the Albert Finney version of “A Christmas Carol.” You can be assured that our Christmas Eve services will be filled with Christmas carols and anthems, including “O Holy Night” sung by soprano Junghyun Lee during the 10:00 service. Again this year, Kris Olson will play “Silent Night” on guitar during the candlelight portion of both our services. And our church will be transformed yet again by our devoted Altar Guild ladies for the arrival of “A Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”

A blessed holiday season to our wonderful congregation and friends!



A Collect for our Diocesan Vision

Gracious Father, your Spirit connects and restores all life to unity with you and each other in Christ Jesus. Energize our faith so that we may courageously live into our calling to be the church by praising your Holy Name, making disciples and discovering your presence at work in our neighborhoods. Shape us to be the change that brings hope and joy to an aching world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

A Church Mouse in God's House



Do you want to know my plans for Christmas? I'm going to stir. Yeah, that's right, stir. So when you start in with that whole, "not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse" line you'll know that wasn't me. This creature is going to stay up, and he's going to stir.

In fact, I'm going to stir so loudly that I'm probably going to wake you up. Maybe you ought to have more sleepless nights. Be a little nocturnal. Great things happen in the dark, you know. Sure, the Christmas season is bright and full of light... maybe even bright snow. But don't forget the darkness that made it possible. Lie awake and wonder... wonder what your future holds for you, wonder what the next day will bring. Maybe even feel a little anxious ... just enough to bring forth some creativity.

Maybe you are one of those daylight people. The ones who always think they know the answers to everything. Or dance blissfully unaware into a happy future. I can respect some summer people. But this is not the time, so I will stir.

I will do my part to make you wake up at 3 a.m. questioning your own mortality. To let you fall back asleep only to wake up wondering what you may have forgotten that seemed so important. Did you lock the door? Did you make the cookie dough? Did you tell your family that you loved them? Oh, you wanted a peaceful night when no creatures were stirring. Sorry, you're Christians, you have to do the hard work. If you won't show love why would you expect others to do so? If you will not be accountable who will? If you need help who will you ask for it?

These are not daytime questions. Not carefully constructed logical arguments. They are what haunts your jumbled mind in the early hours of the morning. They are what make you human. Tomorrow will arrive whether you sleep peacefully or not. You can go out into the world and proclaim whatever good news, whatever solutions, whatever insights you have then. Little is accomplished when everything is comfortable. Did your Lord and Savior enter a perfect world to rainbows and sunshine? No, I tell you creatures were stirring on that dark night. So when you wake up to some vague sound this month, remember that I promised to stir for you.



Up-Coming Events At St Raphael's

Crafter's Circle

The Crafters will meet downstairs in the main parish hall on Dec 14 and 28 at 10:00am. Everyone is welcome to come and work on quilting projects, or knitting or crocheting. If you'd like to learn how to knit, crochet or quilt, we have several very experienced crafters who would love to teach you!

BUILD Upcoming Events

Dec. 9th, 6:30pm, Research to Action Kick-Off, beginning of the research process for clergy, team leaders, and network members.

Sages

Sages will not meet in December. Watch for more information in January!

Outreach Opportunity

Kimberly Siahkoohi will be joining a small group from ABRO (American Belarussian Relief Organization) visiting orphanages, children's homes, shelters, hospitals, and villages affected by the radiation from the Chernobyl Nuclear Plant accident. They plan to see approximately 200-250 children.

The organization arranges for children to stay in the US for six weeks annually for medical and dental attention. A dentist has donated 200 toothbrushes and travel toothpastes. One church has donated 72 small stuffed animals. Lufthansa Airline is allowing each of us a free fifty pound suitcase for the relief effort. Desirable items are:

Winter hats * Gloves * Winter weight Scarves * Small toys/stuffed animals

If you would like to participate please let her know. **They leave December 29.** Thank you!

Events at Cathedral Domain

'New Year in the Spirit' for 7-12th grades: Dec 27-30

For more info and for online registration, go to www.cathedraldomain.org

If anyone needs financial assistance, let Rev Helen know.

Reading Camp - Kids don't just read, they soar!

Childhood illiteracy in Kentucky is a problem. Reading Camp offers a life-changing solution. Each camper receives the following, at no cost to the families:

- A full week of day or overnight camp
- Over 17 hours of intensive, small group reading instruction
- Fun, confidence-building activities
- New, age-appropriate books
- A high-quality backpack
- Time and attention of caring adults and teens
- Meals and snacks

In 2019, contributions to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund will go to Reading Camp. This funding will be used to increase the Reading Camp Director's working hours. This will allow Reading Camp to offer training, grant application assistance, and organizational support to our Diocese congregations that operate Reading Camp programs and those who would like to start new programs.

Learn more online at www.readingcamprocks.org or at our Facebook page, Reading Camp! If you are interested in volunteering with Reading Camp or if you have any questions, please email Sarah Harcourt Watts, Director, at info@readingcamprocks.org or call the Reading Camp office at Mission House: 859-252-6527.

Fiction Reading Group Meeting Monday December 2 at 6:30 p.m.

For December we will be reading and discussing the 2nd half of A Tale for the Time Being by Ruth Ozeki. It's a tough book to describe, but is filled with philosophy, mental health, Zen nuns, WW 2 pilots, a touch of sci-fi and a whole lot of heart. We will be meeting at the Good Foods Coop Cafe. For more information contact Tony LoBianco at tflobi1@uky.edu

Advent Book Study begins Sunday, Dec. 1

Our Advent study book is "Names of the Messiah" by Rev. Dr. Walter Brueggemann. Copies were available for purchase on Christ the King Sunday, Nov. 24 for \$10 each. They are also available or can be ordered from bookstores. Here is the link for Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Names-Messiah-Advent-Walter-Brueggemann/dp/0664262570/> The book has four parts, and each week participants will discuss one part.

Advent study will begin with breakfast Sundays at 9:30 followed by study at 10. There will be a Girls' Night In Advent study Sunday evenings from 5 - 6:30 p.m. A light soup/sandwich/salad supper will be provided and the evening will include discussion and meditation. Please wear comfortable clothing. Contact Amy LoBianco at blueheronpl@yahoo.com or Rev. Helen if you have questions.

Birthdays and Anniversary Celebrations

December Birthdays

Sara Edmundson	12/3
Madison Dedman	12/4
John Hazlett	12/5
Beverly Bouse	12/6
James Matics	12/7
David Monk	12/14
Amy LoBianco	12/15
Alexandra Vance	12/18
Paula Brockman	12/21
Helen Van Koeving	12/21
Kristin Hurst	12/22
Shaun Smith	12/22
Jeannie Graham	12/25
Marie Sutton	12/26
Brynna Monk	12/28
Terri Bey	12/30
Paula Sevigny	12/30
Carl Fosnaugh	12/31

December Anniversaries

Cynthia & Nigel Smith	12/10
Heather & Mark Matics	12/13
Rob & Sarah Combs	12/17
Moses & Helen Massaquoi	12/17
Susan Rahmsdorff	12/19
Michael & Patti Boggs	12/22
Thomas & Ann Evans	12/22
Andrew & Cheryl Cassens	12/23
Michael & Nancy Dunn	12/28
Chip & Alison Wood	12/29
Tess Utterback	12/31

Please let us know if we missed a birthday or anniversary! We try to keep the records up to date, but if you've recently joined the parish, we want to celebrate your special days with you! So, let us know! Contact Dana Berry, (danabruceberry@gmail.com) or the parish office.



Parish Events Photos

Annual Bishop's Visit & Confirmation



St Raphael Episcopal Church
1891 Parkers Mill Rd
Lexington, KY 40504
Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koeving, Rector
Phone: 859-255-4987
Email: Office: revhelen@sreclex.org or SROffice@sreclex.org
Website: www.sreclex.org



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Articles and news information for September must be submitted by **Dec 20, 2019** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

Sunday Services

8:30 am Holy Eucharist (Rite I)

Christian Education all ages 10:15

11am Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

Children are welcome during each service - there are activity sheets and coloring pages at the back of the church for their enjoyment.

Wednesday

12 Noon Holy Eucharist with Unction

6:30 pm Holy Eucharist with Unction