



The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church

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Dec 2020

From Our Rector & Deacon

Advent and Christmas are my favorite times of year. I love preparing all the repeated traditions of church and home – ‘Stir Up’ Sunday for my Christmas cake, mincemeat and pudding, dreaming up menus for all the big days’ celebrations, writing and rewriting to-do lists, decorating the house, church and the trees with light and beautiful mementoes of Christmas past, getting hold of all the little things that add to the fun (Christmas crackers for the table!), and imagining the gifts that will make special people smile!



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering

Then there’s finding the right devotional – this year, it’s two: ‘A Weary World’ by Kathy Escobar and Jan Richardson’s ‘Night Visions’. You might’ve caught some of their phrases in my sermons: ‘Embracing Paradox’ and ‘Borrowing Hope’, and you’ll see ‘Night Visions’ in my Compline prayers on Sunday evenings. And the best bit is that the kid’s come home for a few days. In the southern hemisphere, this season coincides with the summer holidays. There, the rains would end the palpable anxiety about the next year’s harvest. Here, the snow and the cold make for more time indoors, but it’s still fun being together.

It will be different this year. 2020 has reminded me of my school years playing netball. Netball is similar to basketball, except for a key thing – you’re not allowed to dribble the ball. You can only pivot, keeping one foot on the ground, and throw to a trusted team member with the skill and position to move the game forward. This has been the year of the pivot, especially in terms of doing and being church. No sooner have we planned for one way, then another way has to be picked up. It’s been a wild journey and I’m so glad for trusted team members!

As I write, most of my preparations for the season have pivoted in some way, and we still wait to hear about the kid’s travel arrangements. Loving others this year means pivoting. Turning and finding your team-mates. Keeping distance. Wearing masks. Describing services as ‘online not in person’, ‘livestreamed not recorded.’ Lighting Advent candles for healing pain and honoring the remembrance of others as well as for hope, peace, joy and love.

Join with us in these candle lightings on our online Blue Christmas on December 16th. Join with us again online for New Year’s Eve at 12pm to celebrate the end of 2020 and look hopefully forward into 2021. Come hear all the carols and music of Christmas with the Diocesan presentation on December 27. And for our Christmas Eve and Christmas day services. And especially for the musical presentations on those days (online on Facebook and You Tube).

Yes, it will be different this year. But the celebration of Advent’s message of hope, peace, joy and love found in Emmanuel’s coming remains as ever. It is still a time to wait and watch and work together, reminding each other that we belong together. It is still a time for us to work to reflect our desire for hope and peace, and to en-joy one another. It is still a time of beautiful services and traditional music. We just do it differently this year.

And maybe, in doing it differently, we might gain new insight into the meaning of the baby in the manger, the shepherd’s on the hill, and the young woman, Mary, who was visited by an angel and sang a new song, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.’

May all our waiting and watching, wondering and working, enlarge our hearts, our souls and our sense of God, the unchanging holy and mighty One of whom Mary sang.

Helen



Announcing Jesus in the Desert



Deacon Charles

The Gospel of Mark begins with a startling announcement: an itinerant day-laborer turned traveling preacher-healer, Jesus of Nazareth, who would be executed by the Roman imperial government, was in fact the long awaited figure in Jewish imagination who would bring God’s realm more fully into contact with human consciousness. This announcement, according to the first chapter of Mark, originated in the desert.

John the Baptizer, a proto-monk of sorts, lived outside of organized human society. From that position he invited his fellow human siblings to make a public break with their regular pattern of living and commit to a new way of life. John invited them to a strategy of navigating the world that was based on the life and teaching that would be modeled and taught by this itinerant day-laborer from Roman-occupied Palestine: don’t be transactional with your relationships, wish the best for those who make your life difficult, make policy decisions that will improve the lives of the most vulnerable of society, admit your failures and regularly ask God and others for help and forgiveness, expose lies and apply to them the healing tonic of reality, shine a light on misdeeds done in private so that the wronged can have access to restitution. That sort of stuff.

It makes sense that Mark locates this announcement in the desert instead of a palace courtyard or in the middle of commercial banking tables at the city gates. Jesus’ very life would upend both of these centers of power. It was what got him killed. John pointed to that itinerant preacher-healer and soon-to-be-capital-criminal and said: That guy has the knowledge which leads to true life. That’s a message that reverberates through the desert but gets a side-glance in the cities.

In some ways, COVID has made us people of the desert. Our physical connections with other humans have been drastically reduced. Many of the activities that filled our lives are on hold. Daily life is more of a struggle. We continue to live in the city, but we live almost like hermits.

As difficult as this time is for us in so many ways, it might be also be an opportunity. Mark’s announcement of Advent had its start in the desert. If we open our hearts this December, we might find our present desert to be a place where we can more fully embrace the teachings Jesus offers. And if we are able, the things we learn now as we journey through the COVID desert can help us live more attuned to Christ when the city returns.

Keep the faith,

Charles

Senior Warden’s Corner



Dave Sevigny
Sr. Warden

This weekend, Christians around the world have charged into the season of advent in delightful anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ. The season brings about hopeful anticipation.

2021 Pledge Update

COVID has created many casualties this year, and one of them is church in person attendance and interaction. It also created casualties with finances-for both individuals, corporations, and non-profits. 2020 has been a tough year.

As of November 30, we are short of our goal for the 2021 paired down draft budget for St. Raphael’s. So far for 2021, we have 46 pledges (vs 49 for 2020) of \$172,811 (vs \$175,168 in 2020). The 46 pledgers increased their pledges by an average of about 4%. Thank you for stepping up.

Pledges for 2021 can still be made or altered at www.sreclex.org/pledge2021. By making a pledge, you allow your vestry to understand our financial picture more fully for 2021 and make changes accordingly. For me, I consider pledging for next year much like planning for what I hope for 2021 to be like. I hope to be at St. Raphael’s, and I hope that my financial picture is stable.

Annual Meeting-January 10, 2020

COVID has created a new method of managing meetings-ZOOM! St. Raphael’s bylaws require us to have an annual meeting each year between November 1, and January 31. The vestry (with diocese approval) altered our bylaws in October 2020 to allow for a virtual annual meeting. Our annual

Senior Warden's Corner Continued

meeting will take place on January 10th, most likely during the 11 a.m. livestream service on Facebook, YouTube, and/or Zoom. We will require Zoom (or some method of polling TBD) because there will be a vote that needs to take place for 3 new vestry placements for 2021, 4 deputies for convention, and 4 deputy alternates for convention. If we have a slate of candidates that does not exceed the numbers, we can approve them via acclamation.

Also, the Renewalworks team is wrapping up the report based on 75 completed surveys of our parish. The report will be delivered to the vestry in December, and a summary delivered to the parish at the annual meeting. Its eye opening and provides a strong basis for our plans for 2021 and beyond.

Christmas

Paula and I plan to be in Lexington this year, and our kids plan to join us for the holidays. One of the interesting parts of COVID was that we have been able to spend some longer and safer periods of time in their proximity because of remote work and the lack of places for them to go on vacation. So, staycations and longer stretches of time with them have created new opportunities and experiences. I realize we are fortunate in that and not everyone will have the same experience this season. I do care tremendously about our church, but I care more about being church with you as individuals. Please let me know if there is anything, I can do to make your season a bit brighter, a bit more hopeful. If you just need a few prayers, or a little socially distant camaraderie-I am great with that as well!

May the anticipated joy of the birth of Jesus Christ be with you this season and I thank God for bringing us together as fellow parishioners at St. Raphael's.

Season's blessings-
Dave Seigny
Sr. Warden
thekydude@gmail.com

Finance Information

What a great year that 2020 has been!

Roger Kirk, Finance Chair

Surprised to hear that particular phrase? Let's count our blessings; start with me. There have been many blessings in the Kirk family. My mother still living after multiple medical events. A daughter, Lord willing, who is planning to get married in 2021. A son who has walked back from a medical abyss and is doing better every day. And a wife who continues to cherish and love me every day (ok, there may be a bit of optimism hidden in there).

Our Parish has continued to flourish, prosper (both spiritually and physically), and nourish our hearts and minds and those of our community as well. Our Rector has managed to reinvent most everything in her church life that she had learned all her life in how she comes to preach to the flock.

The primary reason that this Parish has been able to flourish over these difficult times is the generosity of our Parish. Without your financial support, whether by pledge or other donation, has allowed us to function, and actually function well going forward.

As a Parish, you will soon elect a new Vestry. Please give this your prayerful thoughts as we once again dive into the deep end of the unknown of 2021.

This Parish is resilient and like our Episcopal leaders, strong and mindful that we need to stay safe! And most importantly, strong in the Lord, as He has commanded us. One day, we ARE going to have a joyous reunion to celebrate our passion for the Lord and this Parish.

See you on Sundays—perhaps in 2021?

A View from the Pew

Tis the Season of Thanks, Tis the Season of Light.

Tis the Season of the Reason for our purpose in Life.

This most special time of year fittingly kicked off with Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving may be purest day of the year. It is a day of intentional, mindful appreciation of all the many things for which we have to be thankful. No worries about hustling to and fro shopping for gifts, Thanksgiving is just a quiet celebration with family, friends, loved ones, or even alone. Hopefully, the day is just one of many in which you naturally feel grateful for all the good in your life. But that's the beauty of this genius, secular celebration, for it cuddles us with a gratitude that calls us to feast together, in love, and with thanks to the Almighty for our many blessings.



Richard Dawahare

The soul-felt gratitude of Thanksgiving sets the perfect tone for Christmas, for the coming of Jesus is what we most have cause to celebrate. Since the night of his birth in on that cold winter's night, Jesus has lit the world with love, with truth, with hope, and with joy.

And while Christmas is ostensibly a "Christian" holiday, the reality of Jesus's goodness draws people of all faiths, and even those of no faith, to celebrate his birthday. The purity of Jesus, his simple message of love, charity and goodwill resonates. All sheep hear his voice and follow him, whether of "this fold" or a different flock. True to his word, Jesus is drawing all to him, just as he said he would (John 10:16).

It would be hard to imagine life without Christmas, without Jesus. Perhaps God would reach and teach in other ways, I don't know. But for me it is this special season that Lights the Way and brings Good News (make that GREAT NEWS) tidings of peace, hope, and joy in this life, and the assurance of eternal bliss thereafter.

The anticipation of the Christmas season inspires me and keeps me going throughout the year. It reminds me that God is in control and has a plan for my life, with Jesus enlightening my path forward each and every day.

The Season of Thanks and Light is truly the gift that keeps on giving.

Merry Christmas!

Mission Opportunities

16 Days of Activism November 25-December 10

St. Raphael's will be part of the International Anglican Women's Network and UN Women 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence! To support this campaign, follow the St. Raphael Facebook page from November 25 to December 10 for daily information on how to contribute to local, national, and international advocacy against gender-based violence.

Angel Tree Information

With the difficulties of meeting and shopping this year, we would like to let people know that the support for the Angel Tree Project of Salvation Army that we all enjoy each year will happen differently this year. We invite you all to respond directly to the Salvation Army in the Mall rather than through our church. Carol Summers has sent the necessary information here below.

MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS!

CELEBRATE ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WITH US AT ST RAPHAEL'S!

Join us in-person/online 8.30 & 11am Eucharist, Advent Sundays Nov 29- Dec 20
* 'Times of Conflict' online *lectio divina* study for Advent, 7-8pm Mondays Nov 23-Dec 14
* 'Blue Christmas' service on Dec 16th in-person/online at 12.00
* Jesse Tree Moments online, Saturdays at 2pm * Pageant-on-Zoom at 2pm Dec 20
* Christmas Eve Eucharist online 5.30 with music * Christmas Day Eucharist, online 10am
* Diocesan 'Lessons & Carols' online 8am * NYE Eucharist: 'Celebrate the end of 2020' online 12.00

Find us on our Facebook page, YouTube, sreclex.org
1891 Parker's Mill Rd, Lexington, KY 40504 Tel: 859-255-4987

MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS! MERRY XMAS!

A Church Mouse in God's House



Since I pretty much have your whole church to myself a lot of the time now I decided I would watch the evening news a few nights ago. So there I am with a box of Cheez Its listening to stories about your election, vaccines and know of the other usual stuff when a lighthearted "human interest" story comes on. The gist of it was this: more of you are buying REAL trees this year for Christmas rather than using your artificial trees. WHAT?! You've been using fake trees all this time? I didn't even know they make fake trees. And why would anyone get one?

This started me on a downward spiral where I began to question the reality of everything that you do around Christmas. I mean, I thought the whole point was that this was when Jesus was born and you were celebrating that. But as I looked deeper it turns out that nobody even knows when he was born. Basically, you all just picked a day that seemed like a good day to celebrate and attributed this massive cosmological event to it. Was he even born in Bethlehem? It seems like there are some questions around that too. Were there shepherds and wise men or just one or the other? If there were wise men why do you assume there were three? I'm so confused...

As you may have noticed, we mice tend to take things pretty literally and when we find out that what we thought was real may not be the absolute truth we don't function very well. But you all seem pretty smart, so you must know some of this stuff. I mean, if it brings you some joy to put a fake tree in your living room then who am I to judge that? And while I, myself, would never be able to celebrate someone's birthday if I didn't know that they were born on that day I guess that doesn't mean that they're not worthy of a party. Is there any cheese in these Cheez Its? Okay, you win. I will try to embrace things for their symbolic value.



Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please continue to support St. Raphael Episcopal Church.

You can give online at our secure Online Giving page or mail in a check. The mailing address is in the footer of this email. Contributions in any amount are very much needed and appreciated.

ST. RAPHAEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH, LEXINGTON KY



Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God

EPHESIANS 5:2

Please Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!

Once we get 100 subscribers we can add the St. Raphael name to our channel URL, which will help others to find it through Search. There is no cost to subscribe. You don't have to be a paid YouTube subscriber or church member to subscribe to our channel.

Becoming a Member - Family Information Record

Are you new to St. Raphael's? Does St. Raphael's have your updated contact information? Visit our new page: <https://srclex.org/becoming-a-member-family-information-record/>

Announcement of Election at the St. Raphael Parish Annual Meeting on January 10th, 2021

Please note that the next Annual Meeting of the St. Raphael Parish will be held on Sunday January 10th of 2021 via Zoom.

There will be a vestry election as well as the election of deputies and alternates for the 2021 Diocesan Convention. There are three (3) available three-year terms for Vestry. There are four (4) deputies and four (4) alternates needed for the 2021 Diocesan Convention (October 2021) .

If you are interested in running as a vestry candidate or Convention deputy, please send an email to Roger L. Kirk at: biscuit7g@gmail.com by December 13, 2020.

Per parish by-laws, candidate requirements include:

Members qualified ... shall be those persons who are sixteen years of age or over and who, at the time of the meeting, are confirmed "communicants in good standing" (those who for the previous year have received Holy Communion at least three times, been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God); or any other baptized persons who are sixteen years of age or over and who have been regular worshipers in the parish for at least six months prior to the meeting and who have been regular contributors to the support of the Parish.

Reverse Advent Calendar

December 1 - Box of Cereal

December 2 - Peanut Butter

December 3 - Stuffing Mix

December 4 - Boxed Potatoes

December 5 - New Pillows

16 Days of Activism - GreenHouse17

December 6 Canned Fruit

December 7 Canned Tomatoes

December 8 - Canned Tuna

December 9 - Socks for Survivors

16 Days of Activism - The Nest

December 10- Jar of Applesauce

December 11 - Shampoo/Conditioner

16 Days of Activism - The Well

December 12 - Cranberry Sauce

December 13 - Canned Beans

December 14 - Toothpaste

16 Days of Activism - the Well

December 15 - Package of Rice

December 16 - Package of Oatmeal

December 17 - Packaged Pasta

December 18 - Spaghetti Sauce

December 19 - Canned Soup

December 20 - Laundry Detergent

16 Days of Activism -The Well

December 21 - New Twin Sized Sheet Sets

16 Days of Activism - GreenHouse 17

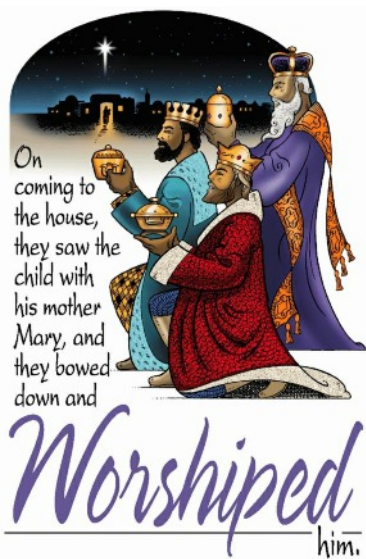
December 22 - Canned Mixed Vegetables

December 23 - Macaroni and Cheese

December 24 - Items for Newborn Babies

Wrapped in white tissue paper

16 Days of Activism - The Nest



December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Sarah Edmundson	Dec 3
John Hazlett	Dec 5
Beverly Bouse	Dec 6
James Matics	Dec 7
David Monk	Dec 14
Amy LoBianco	Dec 15
Alexandra Vance	Dec 18
Paula Brockman	Dec 21
Helen Van Kouvering	Dec 21
Jeannie Graham	Dec 25
Marie Sutton	Dec 26
Margie Williams	Dec 27
Terry Bey	Dec 30
Paula Seigny	Dec 30
Carl Fosnaugh	Dec 31

Anniversaries

Heather and Mark Matics	Dec 13
Moses & Helen Massaquoi	Dec 17

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.

Prayer Requests:

Long term prayer list: Art, Jack, Laura, Hilda, Lee, Mary Jane, Paul, Roy, Joan, Martha-Helen & Al, Pat Dinsmore, Steve & Ginger, Rose, Sonya, Don & Gail, Bill, Paula

Currently in need of prayer: Kenneth, Vicki, Seth, Sue, Tommy, Stephen, Noah, Maggie.

Recently deceased: Bill Thompson, Millie (Jean Ellen Melton's mom)

Services - Current Schedule

Sunday Services

Virtual Worship on Facebook & You Tube

11:00 a.m. Rite II

Each week the Wednesday Noon Healing Service will be published to the Facebook Page.

Compline services

Deacon Charles and Rev. Helen will lead on alternate Sundays, Sister Becky Cooper and Rose Canon alternate Tuesdays, Erika Mayers and Diane Whorley will alternate on Fridays. Find the livestreams on our Facebook Page.



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Articles and news information for Jan. must be submitted by **Dec 20, 2020** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

The Herald is a monthly publication of St Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church.