



The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church
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From Our Rector



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen
Van Koevering

I write this in the week before Christmas - a whole weekend this year of looking at Christmas from different angles offered to us in our lectionary and traditions. This is only the second year that we have had a not-real-live Christmas tree. January 6 (Epiphany, the end of Christmas tide) was usually the time we would be taking down decorations and wondering what to do with the tree, but now we just pack it up for next year. I've been pondering the meaning and traditions of Christmas trees.

History tells us that, long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning in the winter. Ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows, to keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness. The winter solstice was celebrated in the northern hemisphere on the longest night of the year, December 21, many believing that the sun god was sick and weak. Evergreen boughs reminded them of all the green plants that would grow again when the sun god was strong, and summer would return. The ancient Egyptians filled their homes with green palm rushes at the solstice, so that Ra would recover; the Romans honored Saturn, the god of agriculture similarly; as did the Celt Druids and the Vikings of Scandinavia.

Germany introduced us to the Christmas tree tradition in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Martin Luther was the first to add lighted candles to a tree as a way to capture the twinkling stars amidst a forest at night. Apparently, though Pennsylvanian German settlements had community trees as early as 1747, even as late as the 1840s Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not adopted as a festive custom in both Britain and the US until after mid-nineteenth century (when Queen Victoria and her German husband, Prince Albert, were known to include a tree in their Christmas decorations). And the rest is world history, community traditions and family joy!

Whilst the world has always let the evergreen symbolize life and healing, Christians have added Christmas trees in ways that point to the message of good news in this season – Christ turning the world from darkness to light, fear to joy, suffering to peace and bringing love, especially Love, born to us in this season. Evergreen life through all our seasons and for all the world. God bless and keep us all in this coming new year!

- Rev. Helen

Worship

Sunday in-person Rite I
8:30 a.m.

Sunday in-person Rite II
11:00 a.m. (livestreamed)

Wednesday in-person
Healing Service at 12:00 p.m.

Virtual compline services 7:00
p.m. **Sundays, Tuesdays,
and Fridays.**

Livestreamed and pre-
recorded services will be
accessible on [Facebook](#) and
[Vimeo](#).

Senior Warden's Corner

Hello! I'm [Amy Smereck](#), your new Senior Warden. When I was new to the Episcopal Church, that term made me chuckle a bit. It brought to mind the trappings of a prison warden, a big ring of keys for locking and unlocking prison cells. What exactly does the Senior Warden do? There are a few specific duties that fall to the Senior Warden in absence of the Rector, such as chairing Vestry meetings. According to the Episcopal Church glossary, the Senior Warden "serves as a principal liaison between the parish and the rector."

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/wardens-of-a-parish/>

What does that mean? In this era of cell phones and email, Facebook messages, why might a liaison be helpful? Especially in a parish like ours, where our Rector is so accessible? This liaison role is not usually beneficial for one-to-one pastoral care communications between a parishioner and the Rector. The Senior Warden can be an effective go-between for parish organizations. She or he can also be a sounding board for issues that may or may not be worth bothering the Rector about. Not sure whom to direct a comment, question, or complaint? The Senior Warden is a good person to ask. Have an idea for an event or program which could benefit our community? The Senior Warden would like to hear about it.

We are approaching the two-year mark of the pandemic and are still navigating our way back towards some of the parts of church services and church community that we cherish the most. We have started intincting into a common chalice. We have shared meals again. Yet we are still mindful of the risks the pandemic continues to pose.

Having a greater online presence as a result of Covid has allowed more parishioners to participate and those new to our church to find us. Yet it also can give us an option to not participate as fully as we might have if we had shown up in person.

Our presence in person is one of the most valuable things we can give, for our own spiritual health, but also for others in our congregation. Virtual worship has helped us to get by during the ravages of Covid and expanded access, but it isn't as meaningful as actually being in church, sharing the presence of others with Christ at the altar.

St. Raphael had the habit of a lengthy passing of the peace (which was the bane of many a rector and supply clergy over the years.) That has had an extended pause during the pandemic. Will we return to big welcoming hugs and extended nave-wide mingling? As a member of the congregation, you have an impact in how our church continues to evolve as we move through the pandemic and hopefully eventually get past it.

What do you miss most from pre-pandemic? How can we be the church in different ways than before? Your Vestry members (including Sr. Warden) and Rev. Helen too, would like your ideas and input. Let's all work together to make our congregation stronger and better than ever.

Peace,

Amy



**Amy Smereck,
Sr. Warden**

Vestry Members

Amy Smereck, Senior Warden
Mike Booth, Junior Warden
Tim Allen
Janet Morris
Janis Rosebrook
Afsi Davis
John Hazlett
Laurie Daugherty
Dave Sevigny

January 2, 2022, 2 - 7 p.m. and Jan. 5 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Vestry Retreat & Planning. See vestry bios to get to know the members: <https://sreclx.org/vestry/>

A View from the Lew

De-Knot to Delight in the New Year!

The holiday season is the most joyous feel-good time of the year, and for incomparably outstanding Reason! One of the many things I am thankful for is that I have the capacity to feel the joy and share it with all who grace my path—family, friends, and strangers alike.

But sometimes I feel uneasy saying a “Happy Merry.” My work involves helping people in crisis and conflict. Children victimized by parental neglect and abuse, parents suffering addiction, poverty, and illness (both mental and physical), and families conflicted over the care of an elder. Unresolved conflict consumes their every waking moment, haunts their evenings, and robs them of any opportunity for peace, much less the full joy of the season. It just doesn't seem appropriate to give a “Merry Christmas” cheer those so visibly distressed. Encouragement and prayer are about the best I can do. Still, there's got to be a way for them to find some peace amid their problems. This was on my mind one night after receiving a late call from just such a client.

The next morning, I awoke to our first winter's chill. Only my thickest sweatpants would do for this morning's run. I reached in the drawer, pulled out my favorite sweats, and slipped them on. Oh no, the drawstring was knotted up tighter than a tot's fist on Santa's beard. I tried and tried but could not untie it and gave up. After freezing the next few mornings during my jaunts through the neighborhood I'd had enough. I told myself that there is a perfectly great pair of sweats right here if I could only get that knot untied.

I dedicated myself to the task and spent the next half hour focused on freeing the knot, salvaging the sweats, and more importantly, my freezing legs. But first I needed something to pry apart the tightly knotted ball of strands. I scrounged my bathroom drawer, through a hodgepodge of ointments, tweezers, receipts, tags, lapel pins, collar stays, and assorted SWAG collected from my trade shows during my first career in the retail business. Eureka, I

found it, a corkscrew wine opener!

I used the pointy tip of the corkscrew to get in between the strands. At first, nothing. It seemed impossible, but I kept at it. Eventually, a millimeter of space opened. Not much, but enough to start the process. Then I attacked a different strand, got a little space there, but no further. I kept prying, pulling, and loosening until the strands pulled apart—and finally, it was free! I now had the treasure that was there all along but kept captive by the knot that was tying it up.

Then, BOOM, it hit me! Knots of a different sort were tying me up my stressed-out clients and sometimes me and you. Worry, angst, and fear were choking the life right out of them. But just as with the fabric knot, with a little effort, they could be free too. Communication and consultation are the key tools necessary to get at the core of these kinds of knots. Sometimes it is purely a matter of personal awareness, achieving a higher and more accurate assessment of the source of anxiety. Objectivity and mindfulness practice can help put the problems in a more realistic light, open avenues of solution and give hope.

Other times the work will involve reaching out to others who are part of the knot's source. Bridging communication gaps, correcting misunderstandings, making amends, showing, and receiving care, concern, and love.

Ahhh, feel those knots loosen? Now the real you, the real person, the real WE, are free to live, love, experience the fullness of humanity, and the attainment of God's promise of peace which surpasses all understanding.

Wishing you and all a very Happy (and de-knotted) New Year. May 2022 be your best yet!



Richard Dawahare

Another View from the Pew

Another View: O Come Let Us Adore Him

"I was glad when they said to me, let us go in the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1).

On Trinity Sunday 1986 I came through the red door of St. Raphael's for the first time. Bill Reed, the man whose photo is in the narthex, greeted me with a smile. I wondered why he seemed glad I came to church. I sat down near the back and watched. When the acolytes came in carrying candles, I was charmed. When I heard the priest say, "The Gifts of God for the People of God," I knew I wanted those gifts and to be one of those people. Then, as the procession came back down the aisle, the priest looked at me and smiled.

Whether it was the smiles, the children with candlelight on their faces, the words of the priest when he elevated the bread and wine, or all three, I came back, and have kept coming back. Through illness and injury, I have come on crutches, in a wheelchair, and now on a cane. I come because I want to come. Most of all I want to go to the altar, kneel with the other worshippers, and receive the Eucharist. Church is the only place I can do that unless I'm sick enough to have it brought to me at home. Even then I've missed being part of the whole service surrounded by other worshippers. The walk to the altar, kneeling together, is, I believe the tie that binds.

So much of Episcopal worship is experienced with our senses: the music, flowers, the candlelight, choir and faces of friends, saying the prayers and responses. In the worst of the Covid time, when we couldn't have in-person services and could only watch on livestream, I felt spiritually malnourished. Isn't being in a room with music better than hearing it on video? Through a slow process, we are now almost but not quite back to "normal" worship. We can sing, the choir can sing, we can have bread and now, wine from a chalice by intinction but not by common chalice yet (carefully prepared by our priest Helen in the most hygienic way possible). We have celebrated Christmas together.

Livestreaming is a blessing for those unable to attend a service. To those who could: we miss you. Come home.

- Rose Canon

If anyone would like to write a 'View from the Pew' for future Heralds (400 words max), let Rev Helen know!

Mission Opportunities

BUILD - Building a United Interfaith Lexington through Direct action

There are 16 of us from St. R's & Christ Church Cathedral who agreed to be Justice Ministry Network members. We would love for you to join us. St. Raphael is one of 26 member congregations in the Lexington area that come together to do justice and powerfully address community problems. Contact Diane Whorley for more information at diane.whorley@outlook.com.

Please continue to support St. Raphael's.

We are now using Engage for online giving. To access Engage and setup your user account, please click [here](#). You can also access this page via the menu on our website at sreclex.org.

Kroger Community Rewards Fundraiser

St. Raphael participates in the Kroger Community Rewards Fundraiser. Find out how to enroll [here](#).

Ministry & Activities

Epiphany Happenings

The midday service on Wednesday, January 5 will be an Epiphany service. Please attend in person if possible. It will also be recorded. Families and shut-ins have received Epiphany packets with devotions and chalk to mark a doorway blessing. Please let Sister Becky know if you would like a packet or if she can arrange an Epiphany marking of your home doorway during this season. Email her at sroffice@sreclex.org.

Parish Bible Study

Starting in January: The Prison Letters of Paul

Sages will meet Thursday, January 20 at 11:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall for a pot-luck lunch. Please bring a dish to share. Direct questions to Paula Brockman at (859) 494-3902.

Women's Quiet Day Saturday, January 22, 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at St. Raphael

Has the hustle and bustle of the holiday season left you depleted? Maybe you are feeling a need to be more in tune with the winter season of the "seed which sleeps unseen," conserving energy and preparing for springtime renewal. Women are invited to join Rev. Helen and Dawn Runyon of Lexington Church for a day of quiet, contemplative activities designed to leave you refreshed and at peace. A light lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Sister Becky at sroffice@sreclex.org.



ECW Planning Meeting January 30, after the 11:00 a.m. service

Sister Becky, ECW President for 2022, invites all women of our parish to a planning meeting after the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday, January 30. What special projects can the ECW take on this year to make a difference in our congregation and community? What traditions do we want to renew, and what new ideas you have to share? Come share your thoughts and provide feedback for others.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Long term prayer list: Art & Bonnie, Hilda, Lee, Mary Jane, Roy, Joan, Martha Helen, Pat Dinsmore, Steve & Ginger, Sonya, Don, Annette, and Mary.

Currently in need of prayer: Kenneth, Seth, Anisa, Phoenix, Amber, and Sarah.

Pray for the victims of the tornadoes in western Kentucky and our neighboring states.

Pray especially for Bowling Green, Mayfield, Dawson Springs, and all the communities affected. Pray for our churches and their work in supporting the bereaved and those in need.

Pray for the people of Afghanistan, the military, and all who are in harm's way.

Please keep in your prayers all who have fallen ill from Covid-19. Please stay safe and find ways to stay connected and express love for one another while following recommended health guidelines.

Please contact Rev. Helen for prayer list changes.

Music Notes

A NEW YEAR AND A NEW CHOIR!

Plans are being made to start a Children's Choir here at St. Raphael's. The four students who sing in our adult choir – Audrey Weber, Dory McDonald, Mason Franklin and Sarah Wiseman - will share in leading the choir under Clif Cason's supervision. All four students are seniors at Lafayette High School and plan to pursue degrees in music in the Fall of 2022. If you have a family member or know of children ages 6-11 who would like to sing in the choir, please encourage them to attend the first rehearsal which will be on Wednesday, January 12, at 5:00pm.

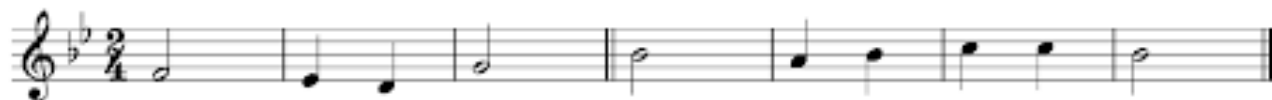
The enthusiasm and beautiful voices of the Lafayette youth will be a positive experience for the children. They hope the children will come sing with them.

For more information you can contact Clif by email: clif.cason@gmail.com.

PSALMS IN WORSHIP

You may have read an article this past summer where I wrote about singing the Psalms in worship. It is my hope that the congregation will participate in the Psalms, either by joining in on a refrain after the verses have been sung or by singing the Psalms in the Anglican tradition. The latter is especially challenging so I have made a copy of the example which will be in the January 16 bulletin.

Psalm 36:5-10



5. Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, and your faithful -ness to the clouds.

6. Your righteousness great ___ deep; you save man and beast, O Lord.
is like the strong both
mountains, your
justice like the

7. How priceless love, O God! you give them sha - dow of your wings.
is your drink from the

8. They feast your people
upon the a - bundance of your house; take refuge river of your de - lights.
under the

9. For with well of life, and in your light ___ we see light.
you is the

10. Continue your those who know you, and your those who are true of heart.
loving-kindness to favor to

Here are some basic instructions for this music example.

Several words can be grouped together on one note. For example, in verse 5 the congregation sings "Your love, O Lord" on the first note. That is typical also for the note after the double bar (see verse 7 , "you give them drink from the...").

Multiple syllables can be sung on one note. Sometimes they are an entire word, such as "reaches" on the second note in verse 1. At other times it might be part of a word. In verse 1 the word "faithfulness" is broken up over two notes. I have underscored those instances to make it easier for you to know when to group multiple syllables together with one note.

Two words can be sung to one note. Similar to using an underscore for multi-syllables, I also underscore when there are two words for one note.

There are instances when one word will be sung over two notes. In verse 6, the word "great" is followed by an underline mark which means that it is to be sung over two notes.

There are some further instructions you will want to know about but these four guidelines are the basics of Psalm singing using Anglican chant.

Through Epiphany, I will reset the same tune with new words when the Psalm is six verses or less. Bulletin space does not allow me to do more than six verses at a time. When we don't sing Anglican chant, a cantor or the choir will sing the verses and the congregation will join in singing a refrain.

There is a learning curve to anything new. It will take time to feel comfortable with singing Psalms using Anglican chant but I am confident we can learn to sing the Psalms in the style of the Episcopalian tradition.

- *Olif*

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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 day with you! Contact SRoffice@sreclx.org.

BIRTHDAYS

January 5: Mike Booth
January 13: Amanda Vance
January 14: Carol Summers
January 15: Patty Bond Supplee
January 19: Michael Summers
January 26: Laura Vance
January 27: Kylie Van Koevinger
January 28: Drew Anderson
January 29: Sonja Gaitskill
January 29: Trevor Krolak
January 31: Melissa Booth
January 31: Heather Matics

ANNIVERSARIES

January 1: Don and Victoria Colliver

IN MEMORIAM

Robert Perkins Fletcher, III

DioLex

Diocesan News

Subscribe to the Diocesan email newsletter using the form found at <http://diolink.org/diolex/index.php/newsandevents/>.

DIOCESAN VISION PRAYER

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*.

- REMINDER -

Articles and information for February must be submitted by **January 20, 2021**, to Afsi Davis at afsileigh@gmail.com.



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