



The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church
Vol. 59 No. 2 Epiphany

Worship

Sundays

Holy Eucharist Rite I, 8:30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist Rite II with music, 11:00 a.m.

Wednesdays

Eucharist with Healing, Noon

Compline

Tuesdays, and Fridays, 7:00 p.m. online

From Our Rector

Happy New Year all!

We enter the season of Epiphany from January 6 through to Ash Wednesday on February 14. It is well to consider who Jesus was and is as Son of God, Son of Man, Emmanuel, God with us. The One we anticipated as the Light through Advent when we were invited to focus on our human need for hope, peace, joy and love.

Whenever we turn a new page, whether it be a new year or a church season, it is good to remind ourselves of some basics whatever the new learning of a season, chapter or year of our lives brings. The first Sunday of Epiphany reminds us of the baptism of Jesus. We have heard so many times of God's voice declaring the deepest truth of the identity of Jesus, reflected in our own baptisms. 'You are my beloved.



Rev. Canon Dr.
Helen Van Koevering

'With you I am well pleased.' It's always about love and how God loves us.

Love is one of the tenets of the spiritual life that is about our 'being' coming before our 'doing'. Whatever we achieve, whatever we face, on the path ahead, we must not lose the clarity of our values and awareness of whose we are as we journey with others, whoever they are. We must remain grounded in our being, in the truth of our belovedness to God who knows us. Loving others is sometimes easier than loving ourselves – that's where forgiveness and humility come in, as well as our experience and ability to return to God's embrace of love. It is in God, and in the knowledge of God's Son, Emmanuel, that we live and love and have our being.

Sometimes it doesn't feel like that in the stresses of life's ups and downs. We can lose our way in our plans, hopes and dreams for 2024, whether it be in our personal, family, church, neighborhood or national life. We may be starting off on a good path with our energy levels, health, budgets, relationships, but consciously imagining moving forward holding the hand of God will be our anchor. And perhaps the path won't be what we anticipated. Perhaps not as bad or as good as we had wanted. May God in Christ, God with us, be our joy and our strength!

With love and prayers for the journey together,

Rev Helen

Senior Warden's Corner

On Epiphany, Twelfth Night, we hear the story of the wise men from the East who followed the star to Bethlehem and paid homage to the infant Christ with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Collect for Epiphany, January 6, says "O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face..."



Amy Smereck

During the season of Epiphany, our readings highlight stories of Emmanuel, God with Us. Who is Jesus, and what do stories about him and others' reactions to him tell us about the Son of Man? We are created in the image of God, and as heirs of Christ, we might possibly see the glory of God reflected in each other when we practice that skill. That's why I believe in the importance of worship in community. We can't effectively hold up the Christ mirror to each other if we aren't present. We need church. We need others to help us grow to be more like Him and act as the Body of Christ in the world.

We also need to be like the wise men and honor Christ with gifts; lavish gifts like gold, or more practical gifts, as the popular meme states. ("If it had been three Wise Women, they would have asked directions, arrived on time, brought practical gifts, helped deliver the baby, clean the stable, and made a casserole.") Whatever resources we have, they came to us as gifts from God, and we give back to His church in gratitude.

Elsewhere in this issue of the Herald you will hear about our projected shortfall for 2024 based on pledges received, the loss of a tenant, and increases in utilities and other expenses. As people of peace, hope, joy, and love, I believe we can pool our collective resources of time, talents, and treasure and close the gap so we can continue to be the St. Raphael's that we know and love for each other and for others who are searching for a spiritual home just like ours. I pray that when you are asked to be part of this effort, you will say you will, with God's help.

Finance

St. Raphael's 2023 Bounty and 2024 Uneasiness

As we close 2023, it's important to celebrate our successes. Last year, through your generosity in our General Fund, we were right on our overall income budget of \$220,000. Thank you for your continued support of our wonderful church. Your leadership was able to control our expenses to about \$205,000, leaving us a surplus of about \$15,000 for the year. Thanks to all those who were great stewards of the gifts God has provided in 2023.



Dave Sevigny

After coming off several successful years of finances for St Raphael's, your vestry is currently grappling with the 2024 budget. For the first time in an extremely long time, they passed a deficit budget. Our pledges for 2024 are currently \$156,173, which is about 13% less than 2023's

\$179,369. Our biggest tenant-The Lexington Church- who provided upwards of \$12,000 a year, left in 2023 as they found a new location that was better suited for their growing ministry.

With all that said, if needed, we are willing to use some savings and surplus from previous years to make ends meet in 2024. Our approved 2024 budget has a deficit of \$33,133, so 2025 will be that much harder if we don't get an uptick in members and have some new revenue streams to cover the deficit.

We are currently trying to find a synergistic tenant to help with the shortfall. All of this is hard work and a lot to rest on the shoulders of the leaders at St. Raphael. Please pray for them.

In the first half of 2024, we may try some new things. As we move into the last half of 2024, if the outlook doesn't change, we'll start to make plans for how we can place ourselves on firmer ground in 2025. You might notice those changes later in the year. Some may be disappointing; some may be pleasant surprises. We are just trying to be responsible and work within the funds we have.

Here are a few things you can consider that would be extremely helpful-

1. Please look and compare your giving the last 5 years to St Raphael's and consider your blessings these past 5 years. You can find your historic giving it at <https://engage.suran.com/sreclex/> or send an email to finance@sreclex.org and ask for it.
2. Invite a friend to church-don't make St. Raphael's your personal secret!
3. Share your talent with us-volunteer to do something at our church-engage! There are plenty of things to plug into and some of them really help us lower our expenses.
4. It is never too early to consider a legacy gift to St. Raphael. We now have 2 different endowment funds. Consider making a lasting gift to support our ministry and impact others for decades to come.
5. If you can manage it, consider a one-time gift to help us close the gap in 2024.
6. If you haven't pledged yet for 2024, or would like to update yours, it is not too late. Go to www.sreclex.org/pledge2024 or email finance@sreclex.org

If you have any questions, please feel free to email finance@sreclex.org. We appreciate your patronage and look forward to an uneasy, but courageous 2024!

Dave Sevigny



Music—Alive and Live

Wonder, awe, and amazement are some words which come to mind when contemplating God taking human form as the infant Jesus and the revelations of what his ministry is about that make up our Epiphany readings. Many of the hymns planned for the season express these thoughts and feelings. Here are a few:

“On Jordan’s Bank”

This hymn is a classic accompaniment to the Gospel reading from Mark appointed for the first Sunday after the Epiphany. John the Baptist proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” In verse 4 of this hymn we are asked to imagine for a moment what it would be like to possess His powers:

*To heal the sick stretch out thine hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.*

As Christians who are the Body of Christ, do we have a tiny bit of these powers within us? Can our lights shine to do what we can to restore loveliness on our little corner of earth?

“O love, how deep, how broad, how high”

The words to this hymn date to 1379 or 1380, written by Thomas à Kempis. (Kempen is 15 miles from Düsseldorf, Germany.) From very modest beginnings, he found his way to a convent and learned to read and write, earning his keep by copying manuscripts by hand. He wrote the text used in this hymn, which was translated into English by Benjamin Webb and published in 1852.

*O love, how deep, how broad, how high,
how passing thought and fantasy,
that God, the Son of God, should take
our mortal form for mortals' sake!*

“What wondrous love is this”

The baby Jesus has just been born yet already we are looking ahead toward Easter and the resurrection. We can't pretend we don't know the whole story, can we? “What wondrous love is this” is an American folk hymn from 1835. The melody is in the tenor part, not the usual soprano part, which gives it a haunting quality.

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
to lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
to lay aside his crown for my soul.

The lyrics of many of our hymns are wonderful poetry in their own right. You may find yourself humming or singing these hymns to yourself throughout the week. Enjoy!

Appreciation

Clif Cason, Organist and Choir Director at St. Raphael's since July 2021, accelerated his planned retirement date. His last service with us was Christmas Eve. Clif brought much needed energy and enthusiasm to our music program as we navigated the uncharted territory of post-pandemic church life. In addition to his gifted playing of the organ at 11 am worship, he nurtured and developed the choir, searched out talented Choir Scholars and musicians to enhance our music, oversaw the children's choir and Christmas pageants, and brought the Bach Marathon and other music events to St. Raphael's. He has been a wonderful colleague to Rev. Helen and good friend to many in the congregation. Thank you, Clif! We hope you have a restful and satisfying retirement and we hope to see you again.

Amy Smereck

Crafters Group

Saturday, January 20 at 10 am in the Parish Hall. Bring any sort of hand or machine craft projects or mending, or just join us for coffee or tea and conversation.

Ministry

St. Raphael's Children's Chapel is alive and well. We are pleased to welcome a cadre of new children and families, and even a new Godly Play team member.

Advent saw the children make Christmas ornaments with their photo inside the keepsake. They wrapped in gift themselves and were excited to give their precious gifts.

Godly Play continues weekly with stories about the Ark and the Flood, the 10 commandments, the Exile from Egypt lead by Moses (we all agreed that when the Red Sea closed, the horses survived), the Building of the New Temple (some children liked the part of animal sacrifices, others not so much!), and the story of Jonah and the Whale.

We began our preparations for Christmas with Advent activities and a well-received Pageant.

As we move forward during Epiphany and Lent, the team is discussing with Rev. Helen how we might customize our program for the older children. We have access to various age-appropriate videos about faith formation, and fun games to increase their knowledge of the Bible and the Episcopal Church.

We are pleased to have Tim Allen back in the teaching rotation, and to schedule Dave Sevigny with his incredibly busy calendar.

Thank you for entrusting your children to our team. We love every single one of them.

Janis Rosebrook
Diane Whorley
Amanda Whorley
Tim Allen
Dave Sevigny

Sages & Friends

Thursday, January 18 at 11:30 am at Ramsey's, Masterson Station,
112 Lucille Drive, Lexington. The facility is handicap accessible. This
month's host is Leslee Roberts. Please RSVP to her
at lesleeclaire@aol.com.

A View from the Pew

Our Second Rector: Dr. Ronald Summers



Rev. Summers

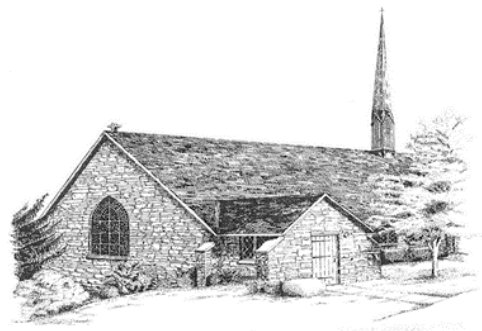
St. Raphael's first rector, Dr. Willard Page, died of a heart attack on Halloween 1975. The bishop chose as next rector the Rev. Ronald Summers, who was, like Page, pastor of Everybody's Church. He was ordained in the Christian Church. Bishops seem to have exercised more authority in calling rectors than they do now, but not even a bishop can tap someone on the shoulder and say he's a priest. Ronald Summers was a graduate of Henry Clay High School, the University of Kentucky, and the Episcopal Theological Seminary (masters in divinity) but he still had to go through the ordination process before he could become rector. The Rev. Edgar Newlin served as interim rector until Fr. Ron was ordained August, 1976.

In the Seventies what might be called a sea change occurred in St. Raphael's, the national church, and secular society. It was Rev. Summers's challenge to guide St. Raphael's through controversies that worshippers today might wonder what all the fuss was about. Both the Prayerbook (1979) and the Hymnal (1982) were revised. The new Prayerbook profoundly affected the Sunday worship services. There were two Eucharistic Rites, where there had been only one. Rite One retained the Elizabethan language, but Rite Two used more modern English and had a choice of prayers. Most important, the Eucharist was to be celebrated every Sunday, whereas before, the church had Morning Prayer some Sundays and the Eucharist perhaps once a month. It was too much change for some. It is recorded that a faithful member took one look at the new Prayerbook and threw it across the room. As for the hymnal, it left out somebody's favorite hymn.

Equally significant for the future of the Church was the changing role of women. Women who had not been able to be lectors, chalice bearers, or acolytes now could. In 1976 the General Convention passed an ordinance permitting bishops to ordain women priests in their diocese. Bishop Moody's successor in the Diocese of Lexington, the Rt. Rev. Addison Hosea, was a conservative who wouldn't ordain women. The Rt. Rev. Don Wimberly succeeded Hosea in 1985 and ordained the first woman priest in the diocese in 1986.

Rev. Summers believed in meeting people where they were. To accommodate Rite One advocates, he celebrated Rite One at the early service and Rite Two at the later service. The church still does this. He served St. Raphael's for eight years and resigned in 1984 to accept a call to St. Andrews, Fort Thomas, where he would serve until he retired. He was fondly remembered by older members of St. Raphael's.

Rose Canon



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