



The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church
Vol. 60 No. 1 Advent 2024

From Our Rector

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ....

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part—
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

In our Advent book study, *Faith Like a Child* by Lacy Finn Borgo, we have enjoyed hearing some lovely children's books that simply illustrate profound truths for our adult ears. If anyone would like a list of those books, please let me know – they'd all make great gifts for the young people in your lives!



Rev. Canon Dr.
Helen Van Koeving

I've recently also found a beautiful picture book called *What can I give Him?* by Debi Gliori. It reflects the well-known carol by Christina Rossetti printed here. The first pictures of this book show a little girl sharing a winter's day with her grandpa: building a snowman, feeding birds, reading by the fire. The second picture is of a little girl working in the stable where Jesus was born, tending the animals, seeing Mary and Joseph with their baby. Neither of these girls has anything to give as a gift. The modern girl gives her grandpa a drawing of the sheep and characters from the Christmas story. You must look closely to see what the girl in Bethlehem has given – she takes off her coat and gives it to the newborn. And as we see the grandpa hug his granddaughter, we can also see on the mantle the Christmas card that shows baby Jesus, warm and happy, wrapped in the stable girl's coat. The conclusion: the time when Jesus was born is very different to the world we live in today in many ways, but the very best gift we can give each other is the same. As the poem says, 'what can I give Him? Give my heart'.

This is the season of giving – to our loved ones, friends, co-workers, pets; to neighbors, charities and our church; even a special treat to ourselves. See our pew card invitations for our Advent and Christmas services and events and think about gifting the invitation and bringing

someone along to St Raphael's during this season. Look at our 'Reverse Advent' list of suggestions for giving to local mission partners – note that the newborn gift listed on December 24th is for Christmas Eve for the children to bring to the altar. Find ways to pass along the Holy Child's gift of love to our world!

With much love and wishing you all a beautiful and merry Christmas!

Rev Helen

Senior Warden's Corner

Happy New Year! Fun facts about the Episcopal Church: the church year begins with the first Sunday of Advent, and the colors of the season are purple and rose, not red and green. In our highly commercial society it's fun to be a little bit counter-cultural. Advent is a time of preparation and getting ready, and there are a several church activities to participate in to individually and collectively prepare for Christ's birth.



Amy Smereck

We are mid-way through the Advent book study of *Faith Like a Child: Embracing Our Lives as Children of God* by Lacy Finn Borgo. We discuss two chapters at a time, considering how our childhood experiences shaped our faith, sharing stories, and enjoying a childlike treat.

The author recommends a children's picture book for each chapter, and Rev. Helen has read these to us. These meetings are a warm and comfortable gathering time and a wonderful opportunity to get to know the other participants. Please consider jumping in if you haven't yet—there is always room for one more.

The Greening of the Church is Saturday November 30th beginning at 9 am. Help with our Advent decorating, including the Chrismon tree and parts of the crèche tucked under the altar. This is a fun intergenerational activity. Following this is a parish luncheon at Ramsey's Zandale location (off Nicholasville Rd.) at 1 pm. They are preparing a fixed price menu for \$32 per person which we must each pay in advance (cash or personal check) as Ramsey's requires one check for our entire party.

The Blue Christmas service is on Wednesday, December 18th at noon. If your heart is heavy this season, consider attending this gentle and contemplative service of healing. It is a comfort to gather with others who feel as you do and to find a quiet touch of peace and healing.

Please continue to attend regular Sunday services in Advent. Christ's birth will be even more meaningful when we have prepared our hearts and minds for the magic of Christ dwelling with us.

In this season of giving, instead of marking the days with a typical Advent calendar with little pictures or chocolates, participate in our Reverse Advent Calendar, where each day we give an item to help a neighbor in need. You can shop all at one go, scavenge for new items from your own pantry, or a combination. Bring items to church on Sundays or to the church office during office hours. On Christmas Eve, newborn gifts are brought to the altar wrapped in white tissue to be given to vulnerable newborns in our community. Find the list of items at church or online at species.org/reverse-advent. Find the schedule of Christmas services in this issue of The Herald.

Welcome to our new Vestry members!

Tony LoBianco

Tony and his wife Amy have been members of St. Raphael's since 2003. Tony has served two previous terms on Vestry and was Sr. Warden in 2019. Tony was a former member of the Diocesan Commission of Ministry and has served as a lector, leader of the book group, and on the Search Committee for a rector. He graduated from Education for Ministry (EFM) in 2018.

Tony does research in disability and education at the University of Kentucky. He enjoys reading, playing chess, and incoherently rambling about philosophy and theology. He is a former member of a Toastmasters club and the ManKind Project. His son, John, is a senior at Dunbar High School.



Alison Clendenen

Alison was born in Connecticut, grew up in Virginia and ultimately served in the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. She holds a B.A. in art from Roanoke College and a M.Ed. in Catholic School Administration from Marymount University. She met her husband Chris and stepson Matt, at Roanoke Catholic School (K-12) where she taught art and later worked in marketing, publications and public relations in the development office. After relocating to Lexington in 2004, she founded the art department at Seton Catholic School, (K-8), and assisted with marketing and art acquisition. At Pax Christi she served as a Eucharistic Minister. Later she was Expressive Programs Director with Employment Solutions, Inc., a local job, arts and wellness provider to adults having intellectual and/or physical challenges. Currently Alison custom frames art and memorabilia at Hobby Lobby, Brannon Crossing. She enjoys music, art, museums, history, reading, gardening, travel, nature's beauty, shows and movies, spending time with friends, family, and co-workers, and SREC! Alison acknowledges the abundance of offerings for spiritual growth and fellowship within a kind and gently welcoming, peaceful and joyous community. She thanks everyone for the opportunity to serve on Vestry.



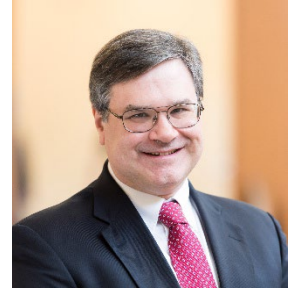
Derek Phelps

Derek was born in Laurel County, Kentucky. He has been married to his high school sweetheart, Terri for the past 50 years. They have three daughters, Cherice Phelps, Jaclyn Gowan and Lauren Phelps and two grandchildren, Lilli Wharton and Cooper Gowan. He graduated from Laurel County High School, Sue Bennett Junior College, and Eastern Kentucky University. Derek worked for the Farm Credit System from 1977 to 1989 and went on to a career in the insurance industry in which he is still active. An active Freemason and musician and in his spare time, he also collects antique clocks. A little over a year ago Derek and Terri began visiting several local churches before finding a home here at St. Raphael. Both Derek and Terri felt the warmth and kindness of the members of St. Raphael along with the message of Christ's mission. They look forward to their continued journey in the path of Christ's love and helping serve St. Raphael Episcopal Church.



Chris Bollinger

Chris Bollinger finds God in the oddest of places, or so he's told. Euclid's proof that there is no largest prime and Cantor's work on infinite sets are just the beginning. He will wax poetic about the Laws of Large numbers and especially the Central Limit Theorem if given to a captive audience. His two children (Beth and Thomas) will no longer accompany him to science museums that have a Galton board. Chris, and his wife Amy, first arrived at St. Raphael's in the spring of 1999 with a precocious 4-year-old daughter and another one (a son it turned out) on the way. He credits St. Raphael as the extended family that helped raise two magnificent people, and he is deeply grateful for the love and support he has found here. Chris has ushered, taught 5th grade Sunday school, led three J2A groups, led Wired Word (adult Sunday School), co-chaired a capital campaign, co-chaired a nominating committee (to call a rector), served on vestry and the finance committee, and now chooses to abuse his friends in the congregation by singing tenor in the choir. Chris's hobbies include racing sailboats, playing at guitar, grand strategy computer games, travel (especially if it involves pubs) and reading (history, historical fiction, science fiction). He also loves a good documentary (helps with napping). In his spare time, Chris is a University and Gatton Professor of Economics at the University of Kentucky, he is the Executive Director of the Kentucky Research Data Center, serves on the State of Kentucky Consensus Forecast Group, serves on the Executive Committee of the Federal Statistical Research Data System, and is a vice-president of the Southern Economic Association. Despite recent criticism, he still maintains that non-commutative algebras are fun.



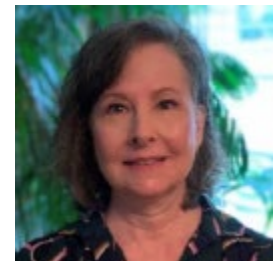
Property Committee

The following projects were completed this summer:

- Restoration of gravel walking path and kiosk for Tobit's Trace thanks to funds from the Lexington Parks Equity Accelerator. The new kiosk information is in both English and Spanish.
- Installation of a security system and door access equipment thanks to funds from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The following projects will be completed soon:

- Installation of a new mailbox.
- Repair of our Organ.



Laurie Daugherty

Crafters will not meet in December

A Musical Note



Dr. Vicki Bell

St. Raphael follows the Episcopal tradition in our use of choral scholars, a program that invites young and gifted musicians to participate in our choirs. We are fortunate to have four choral scholars in our choir. Following is a brief introduction to our scholars, whom you've both seen and heard this fall.

Soprano Celia Wallace hails from Lakeside Park, KY. Celia attended Dixie Heights High School, and claims Faith Presbyterian as her home church. She is a first-year student at the University of Kentucky, where she majors in digital media design. Her plan is to become a graphic designer as she continues to pursue involvement in the arts. Celia's dream job is to be a Disney princess at Disney World.

Alto Ella Clark grew up in Independence, KY. She attended Dixie Heights High School and served as a choral scholar for Christ Church United in Fort Thomas, KY. Ella has classically trained as a singer for nine years. She is a first-year student at the University of Kentucky, where she double majors in vocal performance and music education. Ella's long-term goal is to travel the world and perform as a classical singer, after which she plans to settle down and work as a choir teacher. Ella loves to run, and she is an avid hiker.

Tenor Brandon Honnerlaw is from Fort Mitchell, KY. Brandon attended Dixie Heights High School. His home church is Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. Brandon is a first-year student at the University of Kentucky, where he plans to study kinesiology; his goal is to serve as a physical therapist with a specialization in oncology. Brandon is a guitarist who has six siblings, three of whom are "adopted, like me!"

Bass Seth Dossa grew up in Crescent Springs, KY. Seth attended Dixie Heights High School, where he was a member of both the football and wrestling teams. Seth is a first-year student at the University of Kentucky, where he plans to pursue a music performance degree in tuba as well as studies in law and justice. Seth hopes to attend law school after the completion of his undergraduate degree. He loves to both play and listen to music, and he is a member of the UK pep band.

Children's Ministry

GODLY PLAY

Godly Play has been awesome this year for both children and adults. Beginning in the fall we retold the Sacred Stories of Abraham and Sarah, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. Setting up the props and studying the scripts brought the richness of each story alive for the team to share with our children.

During the Season of Advent, we'll travel back to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph. We'll focus on the prophets: "the ones who came so close to God, and God came so close to them," that they understood what was most sacred and important. They'll lead the way as we make the difficult journey with the Holy Family. We'll feel the trembling of the shepherds as they encounter angels, and finally await the visit of the Magi at the birth of Baby Jesus. Again, we'll reflect on the great mystery which is Christmas and prepare for the arrival of the One whose light brought hope, peace, joy & love into our world.

--The Godly Play Team (Janis, Amanda, Diane & our newest member, Lisa)



A View from the Pew

Our Sixth Rector

We come now to our sixth rector, the Rev. Canon Johnnie Ross, who served us 2008-2016, and frankly, I'm finding it hard to write. Not because I don't have enough to say, but I have so much, it's hard to choose. Many of you remember him well. You have your own stories to tell. So let us just look at some of the structural changes.

He made the area at the right of the altar into an open chapel by getting a friend to build a small altar. We use the space for small services during the week and for overflow seating as needed.

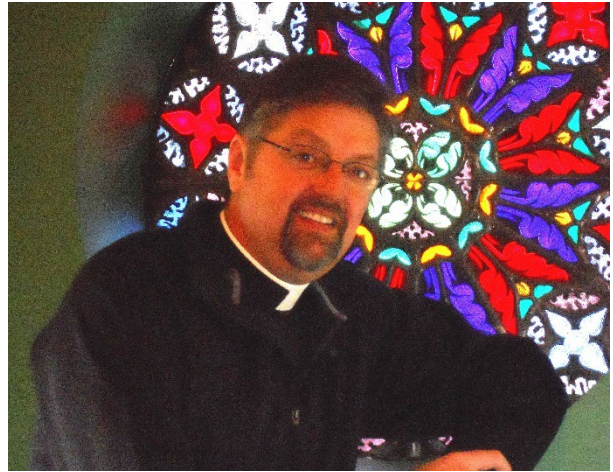
He had the choir room and the conference room exchange places. This move gave the choir more space to practice and a place to keep a practice piano and other supplies.

Johnnie was a gardener. He planned an expansion and design of the gardens as they are today. He got workers to help him plan, design, plant, and care for the gardens in front and back. He got the vestry to appropriate money. He brought plants from his garden at his former home. He himself planted the pollinators garden behind the columbarium.

And then a winter storm caused leaking that damaged the lower level, and here began our second, long overdue renovation. Instead of using only insurance money for repairs, we began a fund-raising campaign for an expanded renovation upstairs and down. The original red carpet in the nave was replaced with blue. Walls were painted.

It was of course a time of disruption. The pews were moved out of the church while the floor was redone. We sat on folding chairs a few Sundays. The floor around the altar was refinished. This work was done in time for Easter services. When Johnnie left for Rochester, he gave Dave Sevigny the responsibility for completing the renovations. Need I say, if you know Dave, it was well done.

I end with a story that I don't think many of you have heard because it didn't involve the church but tells you a lot about the priest. Late one night, when he thought he was in for the day, he received a phone call from a priest in another state. This priest said that his brother was under arrest in a jail in Northern Kentucky. He was distraught and wanted to speak to a priest. His brother called the only priest he knew in Kentucky. Maybe he didn't know how far Lexington is from there. Johnnie dressed, got in the car, and drove there. He went to the jail and counselled this man whom he didn't know, not a sheep of his flock, whom he would probably never see again. He came home, and the next morning got up and went to work as usual. I don't know how many priests would have done this. I know he did.



--Rose Canon



Good News of Great Joy for All People! Luke 2:10

Nov 30: Greening of the church 9am & parish lunch at Ramsey's, Nicholasville 1pm

Dec 1, 8 & 15: Eucharist Services at 8:30 and 11 am

Dec 18: midday *Blue Christmas* Eucharist

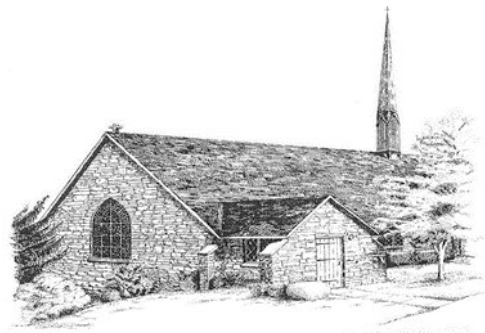
Dec 22: 11 am Children Pageant + Eucharist

Dec 24: 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Family Service
9.30 pm Carols & 10 pm Eucharist

Dec 25: 10 am Christmas Day Service

Dec 29: Readings & Carols 11 am

Come home for Advent & Christmas with us!



St. Raphael Episcopal Church
1891 Parkers Mill Road
Lexington, KY 40504

Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering
Phone: (859) 255-4987
Email: revhelen@sreclx.org
Website: sreclx.org

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