



### Rector's Letter

Dear Friends in Christ:

You will likely read this letter right around the first of the new year...the new *liturgical* year, that is. We begin lectionary year "A" on Sunday, December 1, the First Sunday of Advent.

What will Year A bring us? Many of you know that it is the year of Matthew's gospel, so throughout "ordinary" time, the vast majority of gospel readings will be from Matthew.

Just as Luke wrote with a particular demographic in mind (Gentile Christians), so did Matthew: Jewish Christians – generally those who had been raised Jewish but then converted to Christianity, possibly while maintaining many Jewish customs, rites and traditions, at least at first.

With this group in mind, the Jesus of Matthew's gospel is frequently depicted as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, thereby easing the transition to Christianity for even the most faithful Jews. In Matthew, Jesus is shown as the "new Moses," and he frequently cites passages from the Books of Moses (Genesis – Deuteronomy) in the course of his earthly ministry.

At Christmas time, the gospel "birth narratives" all blend together – like so many crèches, we envision the Wise men arriving on the heels of the shepherds. But in fact, shepherds (and the angels who

sang to them) appear only in Luke, and the Magi appear only in Matthew. Matthew is also the only gospel to feature an anxious, seething King Herod, and the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt for safe keeping until after Herod's death. In Matthew, angels speak to Joseph and the Three Kings in dreams, giving them direction and instructions, while in Luke, angels visit people like Mary and Zechariah in person. Additionally, while Mary is the dominant parental figure to Jesus in Luke, in Matthew, fatherhood – both earthly and heavenly – receives much more attention. As the verses of scripture wash over you throughout this liturgical year, consider how the unique parts of Matthew's gospel might be speaking to you in new or different ways.

December will be an exciting month, with a wide variety of educational, social and worship activities in which to participate. Please read the articles below to learn more, and plan to be with us as often as you can!

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Christopher V. Pyles

**ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM BEGINS SUNDAY, DEC. 1**

This Sunday morning series, which will be held on the four Sundays of Advent (Dec. 1, 8, 15 & 22) at 9:15 a.m. in the rectory, seeks to offer new insight into Mary & Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, addressing the logistics, the terrain, the culture and the people they would have encountered as they traveled. Each session will begin with a 10-15 video (similar to the ones used during Lent), which will focus on a different aspect of the journey each week. By virtually journeying with Mary and Joseph, participants will spend time preparing for the coming of the Christ child. Light refreshments will be served. All are welcome!

**SECOND CHILI COOK-OFF ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6**

Chili cooks, get ready: our second cook-off is almost upon us! The proceeds of the evening will support our pledge to our companion parish, Santo Andre, in Campinas, Brazil. Last year, the competition was fierce among the nine contestants. We hope to have equally strong participation and support this year. Even if you're not a chili cook, there are ways to help – see the sign-up sheets in the back to learn more. Mark your calendar, and plan to be with us between 4 and 7 p.m. on December 6.

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**PRE-CHRISTMAS PARISH POTLUCK ON DECEMBER 15**

On Sunday, December 15, for the second year in a row, we are holding a Pre-Christmas Parish Potluck instead of coffee hour after the 10:00 service. While much time is spent with family and friends from outside the church in the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Years, we thought we would provide an opportunity for fellowship among our church family. Generous donors are providing the meat dishes; macaroni and cheese; and potato and macaroni salads. All that is needed to complete the meal are a few more side dishes and desserts. There are sign-up sheets on the table in the back; please sign up by December 8 to indicate what you can bring. If you can't bring something, come anyway. All are welcome, and there is no charge.

**THE SHIPPENSBURG HOME TREE** will soon be up in the back of the church. The Home is an assisted living facility located in Shippensburg, PA. Many of the 36 residents cannot cover the cost of their care so the parishes of the diocese (including St. John's) give their Thanksgiving collections to the home. In addition, the home publishes a list of items needed for the residents' care and to improve their quality of life. Our church has chosen to participate in this endeavor for many years by providing parishioners an opportunity to choose items from a gift tree in the back of the church on the two Sundays after Thanksgiving. You may take a gold ball off the tree with a gift tag which indicates a gift needed. Return the unwrapped gift by Sunday, December 15. This will allow the gifts to be delivered before Christmas Day. Thank you for your generous donations in the past. Additionally, the residents love to have visitors and the home welcomes people who will sponsor and/or lead an activity (game night – bring prizes, simple refreshments), party, etc. If you are so inclined, call Mary Grace Shearer to schedule at 717-532-4612.

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#### **CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE SCHEDULE**

Once again this year, we are delighted to offer a Family Service on Christmas Eve. At 7 P.M., everyone – but especially families with children – will be welcome to join us for a Christmas Pageant offered by the children of our Sunday School, followed by a simple celebration of the Eucharist.

At 10:30 P.M., music of the season will be performed by our choir and a guest woodwind trio. Midnight Mass will follow at 11 P.M.

On Christmas Day, there will be one Mass with no music at 9 A.M. in the church.

**CALLING ALL CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES!**

Bishop Baxter will return to St. John's on February 16 to make his episcopal visitation. This will be his last visit to us as bishop, as he will be retiring in June. It would be wonderful to have a large class of Confirmation candidates to present to him! If you have not been Confirmed, or if you were Confirmed in the Roman Catholic or Lutheran churches (and therefore can be Received into the Episcopal Church by a bishop), please let Father Pyles know. Confirmation classes are normally held in January.

Likewise, the Prayer Book identifies a bishop's visit as a suitable time for baptism. If you, or anyone in your family, would like to be baptized when Bishop Baxter comes, please let Father Pyles know.

**GREAT BAZAAR, EVERYONE!**

A number of exceptionally dedicated people helped make last month's Holiday Bazaar a huge success. Just over \$3,100 was raised – a figure we can all be proud of. EVERYONE who worked hard preparing, sewing, creating, donating, cooking, eating, shopping and buying is deserving of our thanks. Great job!!

Additionally, as of this writing, only four (out of 50) dog calendars remain unsold. Our thanks to Kay Putnam, Deb Cree, and Susan Christy for organizing and executing this hugely successful endeavor.

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**2014 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

We are thrilled to report that, as of Monday, November 25, 43 pledges totaling \$114,200 have been received. Of those 43, 26 (or 60%) are increases over 2013; 4 (or 9%) are decreases; and 13 (or 30%) stayed the same. This is an outstanding total, of which we should all be proud. But more pledge support is needed. If you have not yet had a chance to hand in a pledge card, please do so as quickly as you can. Pledge cards are in every pew in the church, and can also be obtained by phoning the church office at 355-0497. Many thanks!

**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS**

St. John's Altar Guild is receiving contributions to assist in decorating the church for Christmas. Please use this form for making your donations. All forms and donations should be returned to the parish office no later than **Monday, December 23**. Checks should be made payable to **St. John's Episcopal Church** and should be clearly marked **Christmas Decorations** on the memo line. More forms are on the table in the back of the church.



**YOUR NAME:**

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**(PLEASE PRINT)**

**IN MEMORY OF:**

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**IN HONOR OF:**

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**IN THANKSGIVING FOR:**

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LAY MINISTRIES SCHEDULE – DECEMBER 2013

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

	8 a.m.	10 a.m.
December 1 Advent I	Deacon Dyakiw	Deacon Dyakiw Charles Hilderbrand, Jr
December 8 Advent II	Deacon Dyakiw	Deacon Dyakiw Jason Dench
December 15 Advent III	Deacon Dyakiw	Deacon Dyakiw Kathryn Grossman
December 22 Advent IV	Scott Mauger	Deacon Dyakiw Sara Witmer
December 24 Christmas Eve	11 p.m.	Deacon Dyakiw Dave Cree
December 25 Christmas Day	9 a.m.	Deacon Dyakiw
December 29 Christmas I	Deacon Dyakiw	Deacon Dyakiw TBA



**ALTAR GUILD SCHEDULE**

November 30 through December 6	James & Peggy Jackson
December 7 through December 13	James & Peggy Jackson
December 14 through December 20	B. Shugert/M. Jones
December 21 through December 27	B. Shugert/M. Jones

**VESTRY COLLECTION COUNTERS**  
Keith Cummings and Jennifer Zeigler



**COFFEE HOUR HOSTS**

December 1 No Coffee Hour – Thanksgiving Wknd  
 December 8 Bette Shugert  
 December 15 Parish Pre-Christmas Pot Luck Lunch  
 December 22 Hanging of the Greens – refreshments  
 in the working sacristy sponsored by Sara Witmer and  
 Blanche Raymond  
 December 29 No Coffee Hour – Holiday Weekend



**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

December	2	-	Lillian North
December	6	-	Kathryn Grossman
December	10	-	Pamela Strouse Thomas Quigley
December	17	-	Carl Meeker Deacon Obourn Jackson Obourn
December	18	-	Jacob David-Scott Lucas
December	19	-	Joanna Lyons
December	23	-	Stuart Hough
December	24	-	David Hilderbrand
December	27	-	Thomas Fitzgerald Ellen Dyakiw
December	30	-	Harrison Holland
December	31	-	Melanie Andrews Stodart



December 2013						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Advent I 7:45 MP 9:15 Adult Ed. 8 Low Mass 10 Sung Mass No Coffee Hour	<b>2</b> 7 Men's Group	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 9:30 Low Mass with healing	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 10 Community Lunch 4-7 Chili Cook-off	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Advent II 7:45 MP 9:15 Adult Ed. 8 Low Mass 10 Sung Mass Coffee Hour	<b>9</b> 7 Men's Group	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:30 Low Mass with healing	<b>12</b> Gardner's Christmas Candy Arrives	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Advent III 7:45 MP 9:15 Adult Ed. 8 Low Mass 10 Sung Mass Pre-Christmas Potluck Lunch	<b>16</b> 7 Men's Group	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 9:30 Low Mass with healing 7:30 Vestry	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Advent IV 7:45 MP 9:15 Adult Ed. 8 Low Mass 10 Sung Mass Hanging of the Greens	<b>23</b> 7 Men's Group	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve – 7 Family Service 10:30 Music of the Season 11 Solemn Mass	<b>25</b> Christmas Day – 9 Low Mass Parish Office Closed	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Christmas I 7:45 MP 8 Low Mass 10 Sung Mass No Coffee Hour	<b>30</b> 7 Men's Group	<b>31</b>	<b>Notes:</b>			

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**120 WEST LAMB STREET**

**BELLEFONTE, PA 16823**

Office: 814.355.0497

Fax: 814.355.3981

Parish Email:

[stjohnsepiscopal@comcast.net](mailto:stjohnsepiscopal@comcast.net)

Parish Website:

[www.stjohnsepiscopal-](http://www.stjohnsepiscopal-)

[bellefonte.org](http://www.stjohnsepiscopal-bellefonte.org)

*St. John's is a parish in the  
Diocese of Central Pennsylvania,  
The Right Reverend Nathan  
Baxter, Bishop*

**PARISH CLERGY**

The Rev. Christopher V. Pyles, Rector  
[cvpyles@aol.com](mailto:cvpyles@aol.com)  
215.870.4809 (cell) (Off Tuesdays)

The Rev. Alex Dyakiw, Deacon  
[deaconalex@gmail.com](mailto:deaconalex@gmail.com)  
814.883.0430 (cell)

**PARISH STAFF**

Sara Witmer, Secretary  
Barbara Roberson, Treasurer  
E. Kay Putnam, Organist/Choir Director  
Terence Riley, Sexton

**LAY LEADERS**

Larry Roberson, Senior Warden  
Mike Fitzgerald, Junior Warden  
Ellen Dyakiw, Director of Sunday School  
Charles E. Maurukas, Acolyte Director

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
120 WEST LAMB STREET  
BELLEFONTE, PA 16823**



**NAME  
STREET ADDRESS  
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE**