



JANUARY ~ FEBRUARY 2011

The Rev. Richard A. Maxwell, Rector
55 New Park Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06106
860 233-0825 www.gracehartford.org



DEAR
FRIENDS

By The Rev. RICHARD A. MAXWELL
Rector

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We're about to enter the season of Epiphany, which is one of my favorites. 'Epiphany' is a Greek word meaning 'manifestation' . . . and in church usage the word refers to the manifestation, or revelation, of the divine nature of Jesus.

On the Feast of the Epiphany, we hear the Gospel story of the wise men seeking the baby Jesus, because this is considered to be the first story of the manifestation of the divinity of Jesus to the Gentiles (to us!). On the Sundays following, until the beginning of Lent, we will continue to hear Gospel stories about Jesus' life on earth . . . stories that are meant to reveal, and reassure us of, the true nature and identity of Jesus as the Christ. In fact, on the last Sunday of the season, we will hear the story of the Transfiguration, which is the culmination of all the stories that reveal Jesus' divinity to us.

Personally, I like the season of Epiphany so much because I think of it as the season of "Christ with us." The liturgical year begins with Advent, the season during which we prepare for Jesus to come among us. Christmas is, of course, when we celebrate Jesus' birth. Then, during the season of the Epiphany, we hear one miraculous story after another of Jesus' life here on earth, until we begin the walk through Lent leading up to the crucifixion. Epiphany is the time when I reflect most deeply upon God's life among us as a full and complete human being. Epiphany is, in other words, the time when I reflect most deeply upon the Incarnation.

You've all heard me quote St. Teresa of Avila: "Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours, yours are the eyes through which to look out with Christ's compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good, yours are the hands with which he is to bless people now."

I believe this to be completely true. But while this is true for us now, I find it deeply nourishing to contemplate Christ's actual time on earth . . . when he himself went about preaching the Good News, reaching out to heal and bless, when he saw our world, and us, as we truly are . . . and loved us, nevertheless. Epiphany is perhaps the season when I am most strongly reminded, through the model of Christ himself, how I am to live out the Incarnation now.

I find it very reassuring to remember that, while we are quite literally Christ's Body now on earth, we are not alone. Christ is, of course, still with us just as he promised he would be. We may provide the physical bodies needed to do God's work in this world, but the Holy Spirit inspires, guides, and supports us in this work.

And now, during the season of Epiphany, we will have before us one story after another reminding us of how Jesus himself lived out his time on earth, modeling for us how to be His Body now.

May you have a blessed Epiphany . . . the season of Christ is with us!

Max+

GRACE episcopal church

55 New Park Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

www.gracehartford.org

The Rev. Richard Anderson Maxwell, *Rector*

The Rev. Gary Mongillo, *Deacon*

The Rev. Canon Robert G. Carroon, *Senior Associate Priest*

The Rev. Dr. Wayne D. Pokorny, *Associate Priest*

Mr. Dennis Kane, *Verger*

Mr. Kyle Swann, *Choirmaster and Organist*

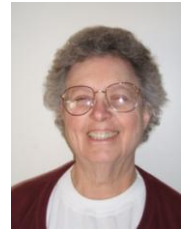


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FINANCIAL CORNER



By ELAINE PHILLIPS
Treasurer

As I write this (in mid-December), the budget process and the pledge process are underway. As usual, the people of Grace, after – I hope – prayerful consideration, are sending in their pledges. Also as usual, the budget numbers, based on diocesan projections and requirements, and expert opinion on energy costs and the like, and our own experience and needs, show – ta dah! – our costs will likely increase next year.

There are some measures we could take to cut some of our costs, but they would likely be unpleasant, and probably harmful to our continued growth and effectiveness in our mission. But we – the Rector, Wardens and Vestry, in consultation with financial experts in our parish – are discussing what we can do to stem the ongoing budget deficits.

This is a conversation that should involve everyone in the parish. It is certainly something that we can discuss at the annual meeting on January 30. I hope to see you all there. (And remember to send in your pledge!)

From Deacon Gary Mongillo

First: I would like to thank all those who helped with the Church Eats Program. Because of you, over seventy people at Bushnell Park were given healthy lunches.

Jesus teaches us that when ever we feed those in need who are our brothers and sisters, we are feeding Him. Thanks again for your time and generosity.

Second: If anyone has coupons from the Sunday paper that you aren't using, please don't discard them. Bring them to Church, and I will give them to the social service department in my town.

Thank you, Deacon Gary+

Sunday, January 30, 2011

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Grace Church will take place on Sunday, January 30, 2011, following the 10:30 a.m. mass. Lunch will be provided. This is an important meeting at which the parish conducts its business and hears about the budget. This year the Rector expects that there will be a more detailed discussion of the budget than usual, including, he hopes, a discussion about the long-term future of Grace Church.

Friday, March 4 ~ Sunday, March 6, 2011

Parish Retreat

As always, Grace Church parishioners will go on retreat the weekend before Lent – this year beginning on Friday afternoon, March 4, and continuing through lunch on Sunday, March 6, 2011. They'll be at Holy Cross Monastery again, which is where Fr. Max and Paul Kline were postulants and novices.

Holy Cross is situated in West Park, NY, along the west bank of the Hudson River across from both the Hyde Park mansion of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the mansion designed by the famous architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White for Frederick W. Vanderbilt. “It's a beautiful setting,” says Fr. Max, “and the food is superb – the chef is from the Culinary Institute.” He admits that he doesn't know the focus of the retreat yet, but “one of the monks will be leading the meditations and they're always good.”

Retreat members are invited to take part in the full round of monastic services and meditations, but participation is not required. People may use the time as is best for them. As Fr. Max states, “Over and again, this parish retreat has been found by many to be a wonderful, peaceful way to prepare for Lent.” The cost is \$180.00 per person and is all-inclusive. Some scholarships are available. The Grace Church group is limited to 10 places. A sign-up sheet may be found in Nason Hall.

The Sebastian Chamber Players Perform Here on February 12, 2011

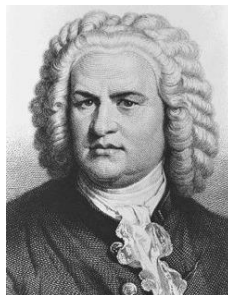
The Parkville Classics music series here at Grace Church will present the Sebastian Chamber Players on Saturday, February 12, 2011. The program is entitled “AN ERA OF REMARKABLE GENIUS” and it features works by C. P. E. Bach, Rameau, Scarlatti, Telemann, Vivaldi, and Zelenka, all of whom were contemporaries of the great Baroque master, Johann Sebastian Bach.

The Sebastians were originally founded in 2001 as a mixed ensemble but were recently reorganized as a Baroque orchestra to perform music composed before 1750 – the date of death of Johann Sebastian Bach – using period instruments with historically-informed styles. The group takes its name from Bach’s middle name.

Its string players are former, current, and prospective members of the Yale Baroque Ensemble, the core of the one-year post-graduate fellowship program in early music at the Yale School of Music. Its woodwind players are drawn from the Juilliard School’s new Historical Performance program.

The group consists of Priscilla Smith on recorder/oboe, Nathan Helgeson on bassoon, Daniel S. Lee on violin, Johanna Novom on violin, Colin Meinecke on viola, Ezra Seltzer on cello, Wen Yang on bass, and Avi Stein on harpsichord.

The Sebastians were recently named as artists-in-residence of a new concert series at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Manchester, CT.



J. S. Bach

Grace “Elves” Toy Ministry

The Saturday before Christmas was the day Barbara Rezner and her team of “elves” distributed books, toys, and clothing for the children of the families served by our Parish Pantry. Here are a few photos depicting the activity.



A church full of toys, etc., awaits the Saturday morning distribution.



Barb Rezner at “Distribution Central”.



A satisfied client.



January



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						The Most Holy 1 Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ New Year's Day
Christmas II 2 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass	3	4	5 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	6 6:00 p.m. Solemn High Mass Potluck Supper	7	8
Epiphany I 9 Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass 12:15 p.m. Vestry Meeting	10 AA	11 5:30 p.m. Healing Mass 7 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group AA	12 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 4:00 Pantry Food Packing 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	13 8:30 a.m. Food Pantry 5:30 p.m. Low Mass	14	15
Epiphany II 16 Martin Luther King 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass	17 Martin Luther King Holiday AA	18 Confession of St. Peter the Apostle 5:30 p.m. Low Mass 7 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group AA	19 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 4:00 Pantry Food Packing 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	20 8:30 a.m. Food Pantry 5:30 p.m. Low Mass	21	22
Epiphany III 23 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass	24 AA	25 Conversion of St. Peter the Apostle 5:30 p.m. Low Mass 7 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group AA	26 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 4:00 Pantry Food Packing 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	27 8:30 a.m. Food Pantry 5:30 p.m. Low Mass	28	29
Epiphany IV 30 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass ANNUAL MEETING	31 AA	January Notes – Happy New Year!!! Feast of the Epiphany (Thursday, 6 th) ~ Mass 6:00 p.m. followed by Potluck Supper Baptism of Our Lord (Sunday, 9 th) Martin Luther King (Sunday, 16 th) Healing Mass (2 nd Tuesday, 11 th 5:30 p.m.) Contemplative Prayer Group (Tuesdays, 7 p.m.) Education Hour (Sundays, 9:45 a.m.) Vestry Meeting (9 th ~ 12:15 p.m. Rector's Office) GRACE CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING ~ SUNDAY, 30th FOLLOWING MASS (Lunch provided)				

2011



February

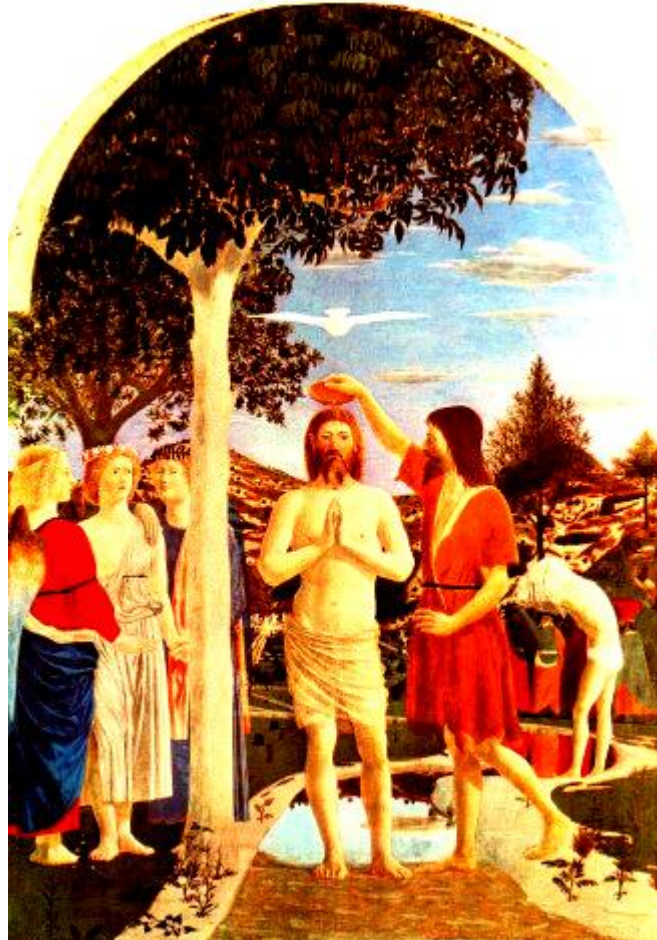


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 5:30 p.m. Low Mass 7 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group AA	The Presentation 2 of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	3 5:30 p.m. Low Mass	4	5
The Presentation 6 of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass	7 AA	8 5:30 p.m. Healing Mass 7 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group AA	9 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 4:00 Pantry Food Packing 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	10 8:30 a.m. Food Pantry 5:30 p.m. Low Mass	11	 12 7:30 p.m. Parkville Classics Sebastian Chamber Players
Epiphany VI 13 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass	14 ♥ Valentines Day ♥ 	15 5:30 p.m. Low Mass 7 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group AA	16 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 4:00 Pantry Food Packing 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	17 8:30 a.m. Food Pantry 5:30 p.m. Low Mass	18	19
Epiphany VII 20 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass 12:15 p.m. Vestry Meeting	21 	22 5:30 p.m. Low Mass 7 p.m. Contemplative Prayer Group AA	23 7:15 a.m. Low Mass and breakfast at Effie's 4:00 Pantry Food Packing 7 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	St. Matthias 24 the Apostle 8:30 a.m. Food Pantry 5:30 p.m. Low Mass 	25	26
Epiphany VIII 27 8 a.m. Low Mass 9:45 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Solemn High Mass	28 AA	February Notes Education Hour (Sundays, 9:45 a.m.) Healing Mass (8 th , 5:30 p.m.) Contemplative Prayer Group (Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m.) Parkville Classics (12 th , 7:30 p.m.): <i>Sebastian Chamber Players</i> Vestry Meeting (20 th ~ 12:15 p.m. Rector's Office)				

2011

The Baptism of Christ (January 9th)

By ELIZABETH MACKIERNAN MIEL



The Baptism of Christ by Piero della Francesca (1448~50).
Tempera on panel. National Gallery, London.

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened [schizomenous ‘being torn apart’] and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove and a voice came from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; and with thee I am well pleased. The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.” Mk 1: 9-12

All four Gospels say that Jesus began his ministry by being baptized by John. Hidden in the layers of the Gospel accounts is the puzzlement of the early church: Why should the sinless Son of God undergo a baptism of repentance? Why should Jesus begin his ministry as if a disciple of John? In the Gospel of Matthew, for instance, there is a dialogue between them that partially explains the anomaly.

“John would have prevented him saying: I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? Jesus answered him saying: ...It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Mt. 3:14, 15

The description of Jesus’ baptism in the Gospel of Mark is short and dynamic with little attempt to explain away any of the mystery of it. Mark has a favorite word that he uses many times *euthus* ‘immediately’. Things happen and they happen right away – immediately. Jesus goes into the water; the heavens are torn apart and a dove plunges out of the sky along with the voice from heaven saying words reminiscent of the coronation sentences of the Messianic King:

“The Lord said to me: Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.” Ps. 2:7

John was baptizing with water for repentance, but the One who was to come after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. John’s baptism was a washing for repentance. The subsequent baptism of the church is a rebirth. Christian Baptism is the death of the old nature, the burial in water and the rising up of the newly born spiritual person. As Jesus explains to Nicodemus: To enter the Kingdom of Heaven, you must be born again [born from on high]. You must be born of water and the Spirit.

“Therefore we have been buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Rom. 6:4

The Baptism of Jesus is a favorite subject for icon writers and painters of all sorts. It is an icon of the Trinity in that it represents the voice from heaven as God the Father (sometimes painted as a hand of blessing in the sky), the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending from the clouds and Jesus coming up out of the water, the newly acknowledged Son.

Why should the Spirit take the form of a dove? On the first day of Creation the Spirit of God hovered and brooded over the waters of chaos like a giant bird until by the Word of God the world began to be formed. The dove of the Baptism is also like the messenger dove in the story of Noah who signaled the rebirth of the inhabitable world after the destruction of the flood waters had receded. And now the Dove descends to alight on Jesus, the beginning of the new creation of humanity redeemed.

In the Eastern churches, the feast of the Baptism of Christ is also an occasion for the blessing of waters in the middle of winter. Processions are made to a nearby river. Ice is broken through, a cross is dipped in the water and “all the rivers of the country become the River Jordan”. Sometimes a cross is thrown into the water and some hardy soul volunteers to leap in and fetch it back again.

Icons of the Baptism typically show a rocky landscape of sharp cliffs with the Jordan River running between. John the Baptist stands on one shore and pours water over Jesus’ head. Sometimes the river seems shallow, but the waters in these icons seem to rise up as if boiling to surround the naked body of Jesus.

There is often an almost violent dynamism to the scene. Jesus goes into the water and the heavens are torn open. A cosmic event is occurring, a breaking through of old barriers so that fire and water, heaven and earth are mingled and the beginning of the end of the fallen creation is asserted as the new Kingdom of God comes into being.

In our own baptism, whether we experienced it as a dramatic immersion in a river or whether it was calmly enacted for us as infants at an indoor font while we fussed in our christening dress, we have reentered this timeless event and joined Jesus both in his baptism and in his death.

“The Spirit came down from on high and hallowed the waters by His brooding. In the baptism of John, The Spirit passed by the rest and abode on One: but now He descends and abides on all that are born of the water.” From Ephraim’s Hymn on Baptism (4th century)

“But we, little fishes, after the example of our ΙΧΘΥΣ Jesus Christ, are born in water, nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently abiding in water.” From Tertullian on Baptism (3rd century)



Left: The Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Detail of dome mosaic in the Battistero Neoniano (Orthodox Baptistry) in Ravenna, dating from 451-75.



SENIOR WARDEN'S CORNER

By THOMAS A. PHILLIPS
Senior Warden

Where does the time go? It seems we were just eating ice cream on the lawn of the parish house under a canopy to shade us from the sun. This evening, I'm swathed in a sweatshirt, a vest and a watch cap, as it's cold out side. Someday, I will live in a place where I can wear shorts every day and eat ice cream all the time.

Bits and Pieces

This is the Stewardship season. Our Stewardship Chairman, Mark Lacedonia has sent us all a letter setting forth the facts. We need every pledge to increase. I hope we all take it to heart and give more, not until it hurts, but until it feels better.

It was a joy to sing in the service of Lessons and Carols early in December. It's one of my favorite services, and the fellowship after the service is nice, too.

Place of Grace

The Pantry is running at full steam. We served over 250 families these past few weeks. We can always use more volunteers to help pack on Wednesday evening and to help with the distribution on Thursday morning. It is a well received and vital ministry to the community. Please consider helping out. We have volunteers from many Churches in the diocese. It's truly a community effort.

One more thing...

I hope you all have had a very Merry Christmas and that the New Year is Happy. When you are traveling by car during the Season, please drive carefully.



By BILL PASCUCCI
Junior Warden

JUNIOR WARDEN'S CORNER

It is the Junior Warden's responsibility to ensure that the properties owned by the parish, including the Church and Nason Hall on 55 New Park Avenue and the Rectory at 42 Rumford Street in West Hartford, are properly maintained and operating as intended. This is no easy task since our buildings are older. Although we are a small parish, we face the same type of mechanical failures, repairs and damages as larger parishes. Due to our size and limited budget, we are unable to retain a maintenance staff. However, through the efforts of Bethany-Anne Bouchard, our sexton, who keeps the Church and Hall clean and operable, we are able to serve our many missions.

The Church Property

We have had a great fall. No mechanical problems. The winter snow removal contract is in place and Trent Landscaping showed up early on Sunday, December 12, ahead of the light snow and freezing temperatures, to make sure ice would not form on our walks.

The Memorial Garden Transformation

In previous Grace Notes issues, calls for help in the Memorial Garden had been requested. Our calls for help have been answered ...and already implemented. Chances are you have already noticed changes to the Memorial Garden.

Mark and Jane Lacedonia have generously stepped up to adopt the Memorial Garden as an additional pledge of time and talent and probably some treasure too. We are extremely pleased with the makeover that is in process.

Special thanks are also extended to Tom Phillips for his assistance on this project. Tom cut down the three large evergreens that were blocking the church windows and growing into the roof. Tom single-handedly removed the root balls for these trees and let the Junior Warden accept credit for the act. Thank you, Tom.

Please remember to extend your thanks to the Lacedonias. They have done a great job of clearing the garden of overgrown plants, cutting back the salvageable plants, and for the planning and planting they will complete in the spring. Mark and Jane also donated a permanent bench for anyone who may want to sit and reflect in the Memorial Garden.

In the last edition of Grace Notes, I thanked Celeste Bouchard for her assistance in cleaning the basement of Nason Hall. I would like to correct myself as her name is Celeste Rodriguez. Thanks again Celeste!

Lastly, you may have noticed that the doors of the church have been painted and they look great. We will get the brass hinges polished and reinstalled soon.

The Rectory

The Rectory is in good shape as of the date of this writing and with a bit of luck, will remain problem free over the winter months.

It is the goal of the Junior Warden to ensure that catastrophes are avoided through a comprehensive program of repair, replacement and regular maintenance of all church property. Should you notice some item that needs attention, please bring it to my attention or drop me a note at bill@amteccorp.com.

Should any readers wish to join the Buildings Committee or participate in a project, please let me know and we will make good use of your talent.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks to Tori Burns, Cornelia Hamilton, Elizabeth MacKiernan Miel, Fr. Richard Maxwell, Deacon Gary Mongillo, Bill Pascucci, Tom Phillips, and Elaine Phillips for their help and suggestions with this issue of "Grace Notes." Contributions from others are always welcome and may be sent at any time to klemonskie@aol.com.

EDWARD S. KLEMONSKI, Editor.

GRACE
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH



55 NEW PARK AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106

www.gracehartford.org
gracehartford@sbcglobal.net

If you are receiving this newsletter in error or wish to be taken off the mailing list, please notify the Church office.

PARKVILLE CLASSICALS

All concerts are on Saturday evenings in the church. They are free and start at 7:30 p.m. Seating is limited and on a first-come basis. A reception in the Parish Hall to meet the musicians follows each concert.

FEBRUARY 12, 2011 ~ THE SEBASTIAN CHAMBER PLAYERS

APRIL 2, 2011 ~ THE ADASKIN TRIO PLUS OBOE

JUNE 18, 2011 ~ MUSICAL FRIENDS