



Glad Tidings

Advent/Christmas

December 2007

The Church of the Nativity, Cedarcroft

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Many of us remember the “baby boom” of the late 1940’s and early 1950’s. As a matter of fact, quite a few of us are Baby Boomers ourselves. It was a time when there was significant growth in all of our communities. In the years that followed, schools were full to overflowing. At the same time, so were the churches throughout this nation. Nativity, Cedarcroft is no exception. Those of you who grew up here in the forties, fifties, and sixties remember a time when there were so many families with children that Sunday School classes and youth groups were bulging with classes full of students in every age group. It was a time where the opportunities for Christian Education were limitless. As a Baby Boomer myself, I can remember similar circumstances in the parish in North Carolina where I grew up.

Today we find ourselves in quite a different situation. The immediate community around Nativity is primarily aging. Young families are beginning to come into Cedarcroft and the surrounding neighborhoods, but it is a slow process. We are now a parish in transition. Being able to offer opportunities for Christian Education to people of all ages is now much more challenging than it was a number of years ago. Nativity is blessed with a dedicated group of people who faithfully offer themselves to facilitate our Christian Education. However, it is increasingly difficult when we have classes that sometimes have only one or two students. In some recent years there have been certain age groups where we have had no students at all.

Your Vestry and I have become aware that it is time to begin to look critically at how we do Christian Education and find creative ways to offer Christian formation to the people of all ages at Nativity. To that end, we have invited the Reverend Amy Richter, Missioner for Lifelong Christian Formation for the Diocese of Maryland, to be with us on December 9, 2007. Amy will preach at both of our services on that Sunday. During the Christian Education hour (9:15 to 10:15 a.m.), Amy will lead us in a workshop and dialogue to help us begin to discern how God is leading us, as a parish in transition, to evolve so that we can begin to develop new and challenging ways to re-invigorate and grow Christian education and formation.

I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is that **everyone** at Nativity plan to be a part of this vital discussion. You may say that you don’t have children and you don’t usually participate in Christian Ed. That may be exactly why we need you. You may have just the ideas that will help us begin to feed and nourish even more children and adults. Christian Education is a life-long enterprise. Everyone has something to add to the discussion. The very life of our congregation is at stake. Amy has assured us that our time together will be light and fruitful, and children should be invited to participate as well. We are blessed to have someone with Amy’s gifts on our diocesan staff. She is a wonderful resource and is committed to walking with us as we work together to find creative ways to move forward in ways that will bring excitement and vitality to our offerings. Please plan to join us as we address what is the most important issue that the Church of the Nativity faces for the foreseeable future.

Tom+

World AIDS Struggle Still Staggers

Every December 1, people around the globe fasten red ribbons to shirts, jackets, hats, and other attire. The symbolic gesture serves to commemorate World AIDS Day, the now 19-year occasion that was created to focus attention on the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The numbers continue to stagger. According to the World Health Organization, 39.5 million people were living with HIV in 2006. Every minute, roughly eight people are newly infected with HIV.

Nearly 3 million people died of AIDS in 2006, a rate of 8,000 per day, and more than 25 million people have died of the disease since 1981, when the disease was first recognized.

Despite considerable advances in the medical community's understanding of this disease, the fight against HIV/AIDS remains uphill, especially in low-resource countries, where many people lack accurate information about prevention and treatment options.

For the past six years, a major soldier in this struggle has been JHPIEGO, the Johns Hopkins-affiliated international health organization working in limited-resource settings throughout Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

JHPIEGO's unique contributions to global HIV/AIDS efforts have been to strengthen country and regional capacities to provide high-quality HIV-related health services and bring the latest research to practice. Nativity's Sam Dowding (see article, right) currently is in Africa as part of the JHPIEGO staff in his work-life ministry to combat this disease.

Adapted from "FOCUS," by Greg Rienzi, in *The JHU Gazette*, November 26, 2007, pp. 1 and 6.

I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:10b

Sunday: November 25, 2007: I was privileged to attend sung mass at Christ Church, Arcadia in the Diocese of Pretoria, South Africa this morning. Let me share with you how the Lord was exalted.

Christ Church (see photo) is obviously an old church, and like many churches in the worldwide Anglican communion has a preponderance of older members (50 and above). It was therefore very heartening to see the rather large Sunday School class of over 30 kids ranging in age from about 3 to 13. Sunday School presentation of prizes was made, immediately after the Collects, for attendance but as they were evidently also tested on knowledge, first to third prizes were distributed to each age group as well!

Among and after the presentation of prizes, the Sunday School gave us new reason for hope in the growth of the Church, and pleasure in God's gifts.

Led by a soloist, about 5 years old, who sang a tune with the refrain "*Love changes everything...*," the kids gave us beautiful choral renditions of "He's got the whole world in His hands," "Away in a Manger," and "O, Come let us adore

the priest-in-moved to youth the Christ superb in its had great resources to the future!

Lord with Come before joyful songs!



Him." As charge was remark, the showed that Church choir, own right, depths of draw on in *Worship the gladness; him with (Ps. 100:2)*

But I must share the message of the sermon. The preacher's main theme seemed coincidentally similar to the song that the young soloist had sung: *Love changes everything*. He posed the questions to us: "If Jesus is within us, and we in Him, why do we fail to feel His presence? Why do we carry around despair with us? Why do we tend to complain about everything?" Then, like Santa Claus, but also unlike Santa Claus, he pulled from a large sack the following 9 "boxes" that we carry around with us: Anger, Temper, Shame, Disappointment, Jealousy, Hatred, Irritability, Unforgiveness, Envy. How often (perhaps every day?) do we carry around these boxes of despair with us, and inadvertently or deliberately use them to block the Love of God from entering our lives?

The last box that was pulled from the sack was the most colorful, and itself contained a sack. The last box that we carry around with us, but unfortunately use only sparingly, is LOVE. The sack from that box represents the fact that, though small in comparison to the other boxes, the box containing love is sufficient to hold and to overcome all the others: **Love changes everything!**

So in our box of love, let us keep 9 fruits of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. And let us use them everyday to overcome and eliminate the boxes of despair!

Friends, I was moved to share this with you. I pray you are similarly moved by this exaltation of the Lord in all the nations to use the love you carry around and overwhelm the boxes of despair.

Sam Dowding

Join Us for a Perfect Advent Evening with a Palestinian Christian

The Nassar family is one of the last Christian Palestinian families living and working in the fertile hill country south of Bethlehem. Daoud Nassar and his wife Jihan will be in the area from Nov. 26 – December 9, 2007 talking about their life in Palestine, their educational work with their local community, and their determination to preserve the family's 100-acre farm.

The family's farm, Daher's Vineyard, was named for Daher Nassar, who purchased the land in 1924. Daoud is one of eight grandchildren of Daher. The Nassar's farm stands alone, ringed by Jewish settlements and the encroaching Separation Wall, the last holdout in a region marked for annexation by Israel. The Israeli government has offered millions for the land and safe passage out of Palestine, but the family remains steadfast. "This land is our mother," says Daoud. "Our mother is not for sale. Under his leadership, the family has taken the case to establish the family's land rights all the way to the Israeli Supreme Court.

In order to demonstrate their commitment to peace and coexistence, the family has established The Tent of Nations providing arts, drama, and education to the children of the villages and refugee camps of the region.

Daoud and his family have also established a Women's Educational Center in the adjacent Palestinian village of Nahalin, offering classes in computer literacy, English, and leadership training. Volunteers from several countries are a constant presence on the land. The Tent of Nations has received recognition and at least one award from European Union nations. Now is the time to bring the message to the U.S.

Besides the courageous, unique, and inspiring example of nonviolent resistance to the Israeli Occupation represented by this family, which makes it a worthy cause in its own right, the survival of this Palestinian farm holds great significance for the dignity and survival of the people of Palestine and for the nonviolent struggle for human rights everywhere.

As we prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace, we welcome Daoud, who has the courage to be a peacemaker.

The local hosts for this presentation have visited the Nassar farm and Palestinian village with Daoud. We are eager to share his world and work!



Date: Thursday, December 6, 2007
Time: 7:00 p.m.–9:30 p.m.
Place: Mission Helper Center—
Corner of Chestnut & West
Joppa Road

To register (and for directions), call 410-823-8585, ext. 241

Refreshments will be served. Free and open to the public. Any goodwill offering will be accepted for Daoud's peace projects.

By Caritas Kennedy
via Fr. Charles Cloughen and Neal Baroody
for Interfaith Peace Partners

Ghreyba

These butter cookies are traditional at Palestinian engagement parties and weddings.

1 cup clarified butter, 1 cup powdered sugar, 2 to 2½ cups flour, and ½ cup blanched almonds or pine nuts

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Beat the butter and sugar thoroughly in a mixer until fluffy. Add flour gradually by hand. The dough will be very thick. Cut into egg-sized pieces and roll into ropes about 5 inches long. Form each cookie into an "S" shape. Place on a cookie sheet with an almond or pine nut in the middle of each cookie. Bake 20–25 minutes. Avoid browning.

Honey Cake

This cake is popular at Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

1 cup strong coffee, 1 cup peanut oil, 1 cup sugar, 1 lb. honey, 4 eggs, 2½ cups sifted flour, 3 tsp. baking powder, 2 cups walnuts, chopped into large pieces

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Mix coffee with 1 tsp. baking powder. Blend coffee, oil, sugar, honey, and eggs with spoon. Combine in separate bowl the remaining 2 tsp. baking powder with flour and walnuts. Alternate pouring the flour/nut mixture and the honey/egg mixture into a 13½ x 9 x 2" glass baking dish. Bake for 50–60 minutes.

From *Palestinian and Jewish Recipes for Peace*, compiled by the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group of San Mateo County, California, and reprinted in *Trinity News*, vol 54, no. 2, 2007: Special Issue—Is religion worth killing for?



**Mite
Boxes**

Sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem to benefit children of the Holy Land, mite boxes are available for filling during Advent and Christmastide, with return on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany.

Parish Outreach Activities

Ascension Homes Christmas Party

Where: Great Hall, Nativity
When: Sunday, December 16
Time: 4:30-6 p.m.

Come, join in the refreshments, fellowship, singing, and sharing the Christmas spirit with the residents of Ascension Homes. See you there!

Seafarers Ministry

Over 20 shoeboxes were assembled on December 2nd at the Church of the Nativity for distribution to visiting seafarers in the port of Baltimore during the Christmas season. A regular assembly line of volunteers packed, wrapped, and wrote notes for each gift.

In addition, Betty Hall contributed several coats and clothing, and Craig Hart gave sweaters, sweatshirts, long-sleeved shirts, and coats.

Our thanks to all who contributed to this holiday remembrance of our visitors, many of whom come from warm climates, ill-prepared for the winter weather of ports such as Baltimore.

Nativity to Host BIHN Families

Where: Church of the Nativity
When: 5 p.m., Sunday, December 23 to 8:30 a.m., Sunday, December 30, 2007

Lots of opportunities to join together as we prepare and open our Nativity home to Homeless Families. Please indicate on the sign-up board in the lower lobby how you can be a part of this heartwarming and valuable ministry.

Contact: Debby Tupper at 410-215-5819 or d.tupper@verizon.net.

Report on the BIHN Fundraiser

Baltimore Inner Harbor Night was great! Everyone had a wonderful time, enjoyed the music and dancing, and was caught up in the silent auction. Our BIHN guests enjoyed themselves as well. The goal for the fundraiser was \$19,500. We don't have the final figures yet, but it looks like we not only met our goal but may be over it a little. Thanks to everyone who was a part of this worthwhile endeavor.

Friendship Ministry

As we rapidly come to the end of a successful season of caring, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people: Suzanne Windsor, Pat Kimmel, Mary Gardner, Betty Hoatson, Judy Jones, Susan Brookman, Priscilla Vaughan, Leona Carter, Barbara Weldon, and Bill Hallam for their caring effort in mailing out greeting cards for birthdays and anniversaries, as well as thinking-of-you cards for the past year. Also, a special thanks to Bob Norwood for his generosity in donating cards.

Many people have mentioned how much they enjoyed receiving mail from their Church family because it comes with love that is 24/7.

In planning for the future, now is the time to let me know if you would like to continue for another year or if you would like to join our effort as a new member. Further, if you have ideas for additional outreach to our Church Family, we would love to hear from you.

Mary Beth Willett, Chair

Poinsettias



Orders are now being taken for poinsettias to grace our Christmas altar.

Price: \$15.00 each

Deadline: December 16, 2007

Please provide name of donor and other names of those being memorialized or honored.

Remembering Those in Uniform

Patrick A. Carter
ACo/2-327 IN, 1 BCT, 101 ABN
DIV FOB Brassfield-Mora
APO, AE 09393

Mark Hollis
HHC BDE 4th BDE 10th MTN
Unit #41546
FOB Loyalty
APO, AE 09390-1546

When you are addressing your Christmas cards this year, you may want to include one for the following:

A Recovering American Soldier
Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20307-5001

Doug Knowles

YAC Times



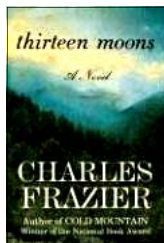
The YACs held the first of two youth services for 2007–2008 on November 18th. The sermon was given by Sarah Kanwisher. Zoraa Gbeintor and Kathleen Van DeWille provided music for this service.

The second youth service is planned for January, when Laura Elseroad will be the preacher. Stay tuned for more details.

For more information, please contact the YACs through Justin Dowding (917-693-1854) or email yacnativity@gmail.com.

Justin Dowding

Nativity Book Club



Thirteen Moons is the selection chosen by the Nativity Book Club for their next meeting on January 20th at the home of Sarah Knowles. This second novel by National Book Award winner Charles Frazier, author of *Cold Mountain*, is historical fiction, following the near-century-length life of fictional Will Cooper, loosely based on the real life of William Holland Thomas. For those interested in the epic history of the Cherokee Nation and the mountains of North Carolina, this likely

will be a must read. Frazier is winning high acclaim for working with the Cherokees to revitalize their nearly extinct language. Make plans now to join us at the Knowles' home on January 20th at 2:30 p.m. to discuss this interesting book.

Walk-Abouts

In an effort to allow people throughout the diocese to meet the nominees for bishop, four sites have been selected for meet-and-greet sessions commonly known as Walk-Abouts. The specifics have yet to be finalized; however, the anticipated format is small group question-and-answer sessions. The amount of time with each nominee is estimated at 20 minutes, but could change depending on the final number of nominees.

March 8 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 5:30 p.m., Trinity Church, Towson, will be the Walk-About location closest to the Church of the Nativity.

Parish Work Day



December 8, 2007
9:00 a.m. to Whenever

Bring your lunch, roll up your sleeves, and enjoy fellowship as we work together to make our church beautiful.

Lee Smith, Junior Warden

Seeking a Shepherd for the Diocese of Maryland Curriculum

Thanks to the Rev. Amy Richter, Missioner for Life-long Christian Formation, we have an adapted version of a curriculum which originated in the Diocese of California during their recent bishop search. It is a useful learning tool and is available on the Diocese's web resource page. Parishes are encouraged to use it as a parish-wide or small group study. It is also appropriate with youth. Specific sections of the curriculum would make excellent devotional material for vestry or other parish leadership meetings.

It is hoped that parishioners will be able to use these materials as a springboard for developing a shared understanding of the role of bishop and to foster broad diocesan participation in the Walk-About events in March. May we all proceed with prepared hearts and minds.

Refer to http://www.ang-md.org/christian_formation/seeking_a_shepherd.pdf to read through the curriculum.

Nativity's November Baptisms



Nathan Kyle Marchant, son of Peter John Marchant and Kimberly Ann (Clayton) Marchant, was baptized on November 11, 2007. Born September 4, 2007, in York, Pennsylvania, Nathan is the great-grand-son of Lovejoy Clayton. The family live in Stewartstown, Pennsylvania.



Kali Ayoka Brown, daughter of Richard and Aminatu (Dr.) Brown, was baptized November 25, 2007. Born January 26, 2007, in Torrance, California, Kali is the granddaughter of Roseda Marshall-Ochillo. The family live in Los Angeles, California. Also shown above is Kali's aunt, Dayo Marshall.

Bishop Claggett Center

Youth Programs

Winter Jubilee, December 28-30, 2007 for youth in grades 6-12. "Journey to Middle Earth—The Call to Act for the Good of All."

Kids' Kaleidoscope, January 4-6, 2008 for youth in grades 3-6.

Necrology (Amended)

The name of Marilyn Morrissey was inadvertently left off the list of those from Nativity who had departed this life since All Saints Day 2006 as published in the November 2007 issue of *Glad Tidings*. The office and editor sincerely apologize for this omission. The corrected list appears below.

Charles E. Dimling	06/06/1943—02/19/2007
Frederick J. Ladd	02/14/1926—03/12/2007
Jean L. von Briesen	08/28/1938—04/13/2007
Thomas W. Johnson	11/18/1919—05/06/2007
Sally Stuart Goldsborough	12/01/1925—05/22/2007
Katherine Elnora Fox	06/21/1930—05/29/2007
Marilyn Morrissey	11/06/19??— 6/07/2007
John Butler Patton	12/24/1957—08/24/2007

May their souls and those of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

Red Cross Seeks Blood Donors

The American Red Cross will be holding a blood drive on December 11 and 12 at Johns Hopkins Hospital in the Turner Concourse of the Ross Building from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on both days. You may schedule an appointment by sending an e-mail to krumbly@jhsp.edu with your name, date and time you would like to donate, e-mail address, and phone number. All participants will receive an American Red Cross Miracle Worker t-shirt and a JHH Blood Drive travel mug.

United Thank Offering News

[ENS] The United Thank Offering's 2009 grant criteria and awards will reflect its new vision focusing on projects that implement significant change toward alleviating profound human suffering that directly impacts the lives of women and children.

Elizabeth Beach-Hacking, newly appointed UTO coordinator, expressed excitement about the new vision. "The idea of significantly impacting the lives of women and children is so important because when you touch a woman's life, you touch the whole family, the whole community, and ultimately a whole nation," she said.

The grants are intended to support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), established by the 75th General Convention as a mission priority for the Episcopal Church.

"Although Jesus did say 'the poor will always be among us,' it's how we treat our brothers and sisters in Christ every single day that's really important. It's how we can give thanks for the blessings in our own lives by giving blessings to others through our giving to others."

A Song of the Saints of God

By Virginia "Wendy" Riggs Lyons, Suffield, Connecticut

My father died on Saturday, December 22, 2001. The next day after Church, I drove around half-heartedly looking for a Christmas tree. I was ambivalent about having a tree that year, but decided to make the effort in deference to Christmas Past. However, all of the nearby tree farms were closed, and the remaining pre-cut trees, repeatedly rejected since Thanksgiving, were a sorry lot. The next day was Christmas Eve and I awoke still thinking about the tree.

Retrieving the "Thrifty Reminder" from last week's trash, I scanned its advertisements, then called a place in South Windsor and listened to its recorded announcement: "Trees on sale till December 24th." The message did not actually say, "We're *open* on December 24th," but I thought there was a chance so I pulled a map from the computer and was on my way. After what seemed a long time, and after a few wrong turns, I reached the outer boundary of Dzen Farms, with acres and acres of evergreens. How would I ever make a choice among so many? Finally I came to the entrance—CLOSED! And not a soul in sight. My eyes filled with tears, but another sign indicated that Dzen Farms also ran a Christmas shop down the road, and I determined that if there were someone at the shop I would plead my case, and they would find it in their hearts to let me enter the field and cut myself a tree. I drove on slowly, looking from left to right, but no Christmas shop came into view. Just as I was about to give up, a sign appeared at an ordinary looking house: "CHRISTMAS TREES—PRECUT OR CUT YOUR OWN."

I turned into the driveway and asked tentatively, unwilling to get my hopes up, "Are you really open?" "Oh, yes," was the reply, "would you like a tree that's already cut? They're on sale." "I'd rather cut my own, if that's all right," I said, and it was all right, and I took my time, as I always do, searching for the perfect tree. There were plenty to choose from, though not the overwhelming number I had surveyed from a distance at Dzen Farms. Eventually I selected and cut down a lovely spruce, and brought it back to the car. A slim, smiling woman came out of the house. "Well, you must have everything ready for Christmas and be saving the tree for last," she greeted me. I burst into tears. "No," I said, "nothing's ready. My father died on Saturday, but my sister's coming tomorrow, and I decided we should have a tree." She took me in her arms and said, "That's just what your Dad would have wanted you to do." I thanked her from the bot-

tom of my heart and told her how everywhere I had looked it was too late to get a tree till I came upon her house. "We're always open on Christmas Eve," she said. "But if you come sooner, before school vacation, call first because I teach and sometimes there's no one here."

Getting from my home in Suffield to Old Orchard Farm, as the place is called, is confusing and inconvenient, but I vowed that as long as Christmas trees were sold there, I would manage to find them. The next year, I literally had to retrace my steps, using the map to Dzen Farms in order to locate Old Orchard. This time a young man waited on me and accepted my check. I asked him if he lived there, and finding that he did, I told him that a woman I assumed was his mother had been very kind to me the year before when my father had just died, and I asked him to convey my thanks to her again.



On Christmas morning the phone rang. "Virginia?" queried the voice on the other end. "Yes." I answered, puzzled, since anyone who really knows me calls me Wendy. "This is Mrs. Slejda at the Christmas tree farm. I just called to let you know I was thinking about you. How are you doing this Christmas?"

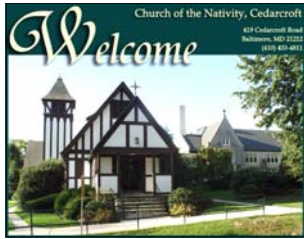
The check, I remembered later. That must be how she knew my name and phone number, after her son reminded her of the scene the previous year. But how many people would have paused to consider that this might be another difficult Christmas, and then taken the time to call and acknowledge that?

You can meet them in shops, or in trains, or at tea, ... or on cold Christmas Eves, when you're buying a tree! ... Yes, The world is bright with the joyous saints who love to do Jesus' will.

And it's important to notice them, and to keep them alive in our hearts, for they protect us against the seduction of cynicism, and remind us that "the Light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it."

Reprinted with permission from *The Anglican Digest*, Advent A.D. 2007, pp. 36-37.

Editor's Note: I, too, lost my father on December 22 (1993) and find in the story a call to remember others who may be hurting this Christmas even as we celebrate the birth of Our Lord.



The mission of the Church of the Nativity is to faithfully love and serve Jesus Christ by embracing all people through worship, outreach, and fellowship in His name.



**Advent/Christmas
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