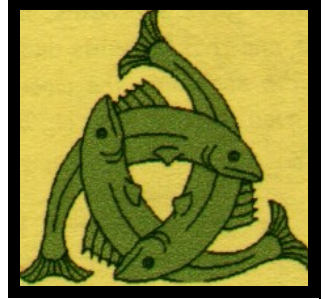


THE TRINITY

NEWS



HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH SOOKE, BC

Vol. 3 No. 1

Our Clergy's Thoughts and Reflections

New Year ... New Decade ... New Ways of BECOMING Holy Trinity: the Anglican parish in Sooke

Perhaps you read the article I wrote in *The Diocesan Post* where I asked the question, how do we want to be source of Light for our town: as a candle or as a light bulb?

The most useful document I received when we arrived 19 months ago was the report by the Rev. John Steele of all the congregations in the diocese between 1992 - 2007 graphing the average number of annual Sunday morning worshipers. With few exceptions, for the last 15 years the 54 places of worship in the diocese showed serious declining figures.

In 2008, only four congregations showed an increase; we were one of the four. Although we did thank God, the giver of increase, this new year should stimulate us in not just better but also new ways of proclaiming God's unconditional love for everyone. If there is one thing we can offer both the spiritual and the religious of our town, it is God's gift of hope. Christmas was the dramatic beginning of God's keeping promises. The prophets announced God's intent; Jesus was the Promise fulfilled. In Jesus God became Word, Truth, Life. If we but listen and believe!

So how do we propose to live our faith in such a way that others, seeing us, will become excited enough to want to join Holy Trinity's fellowship for justice and peace? After giving the matter serious prayer and thought, please let the clergy and/or parish council members know how you perceive God's calling you to be a herald of Good News.

We are in a transition time: year, new decade, new opportunities. With your participation in Sunday worship, stewardship of your time, talent and treasure, we can do even more to offer the light of Christ as a beacon in the midst of the tempest of peoples' lives.

Sincerely,

Alex+/Nancy+

**Let's go beyond attending
Church and concentrate on
BEING Church**

NEW PARISH MINISTRIES

You've noticed! Holy Trinity is growing. So now is a good time to take a look at ourselves and see about expanding our existing ministries.

A number of parishioners have shared what they've experienced in other parishes and have made these suggestions to your clergy and wardens. Check them out:

Hospitality and Newcomers

This Committee welcomes and encourages newcomers, visitors and all parishioners to share in the life of Holy Trinity. It would provide opportunities to experience hospitality, friendship and fellowship. The focus is on growth in our relationship with Christ and our relationships with each other. *(This is like a Parish Life committee which is focused on Newcomers within the life of the "established" parish family)*

Team of Greeters

These individuals greet and welcome all who attend worship services. They identify newcomers and visitors, welcome them with warmth and enthusiasm, and provide information as necessary. In addition they are responsible for getting contact information from them on their first visit. *(Here we can share the wealth—as a team we don't leave it up to a chosen few!)*

Ushers

This ministry is done simultaneously with greeting. Ushers provide worshippers with bulletins, direct seating (as required), collect the offering and count and record attendance. *(Again, with team-ministry the fun is shared.)*

Newcomers' Teas

These casual monthly teas provide newcomers a more intimate environment in which to meet with the rectors and leaders of the Parish Council of our Church. These Teas also provide an excellent atmosphere for newcomers to learn more about the many ministries and opportunities available at Holy Trinity. All newcomers are encouraged to attend.

BLESSINGS ABOUND!

Because our bishop has called for a Diocesan Synod on March 5 - 7, 2010, we need to do two things this month.

On the 10th after Holy Communion we will elect two members of the parish, over the age of 16, to represent us at Synod. The one who receives the most number of votes will be our delegate; the one with the second highest number of votes will be our alternate. The new delegate will also become a member of our Parish Council until the next Synod – usually between 12 and 18 months. Due to the growth of our parish, it is very likely that at the next Synod, we will vote for two delegates and two alternates because by then we hope to have over 100 parish members!

The other event will be our annual Vestry (parish) Meeting which will take place on the 31st after Holy Communion. At this 30 minute meeting, we will thank God for the growth of our parish in 2009 evidenced in the increase in parish members, through affiliation, baptisms (six) and letters of transfer (two). Brad, Tytti and Teija Smith moved to Colwood and we thanked God for Bill Kerruish as our newest saint on March 31. Growth was also evidenced in average Sunday worshippers: in 2007 we were 38; in 2008 we were 47; in 2009 we will be around the mid 50s. We will also end the year with a modest surplus.

Signs of health are also witnessed by the weekly children's church/study participation. Sincere thanks to Shirley Roodbol for her outstanding coordination, Penny Coates' teaching and Nancy's liturgical education. In December Parish Council hired a child care provider.

On January 17th the annual reports will be available for you to take home, read, study and discuss. On the 31st, there will be opportunity for you to ask questions. Don't wait until then; speak with the clergy or Council members now. We will also thank Pauline Chamberlain and Chris Cadman for their service and elect two new members, each for a three year term.

We will then enjoy a tasty luncheon and each other's company as we thank God for our blessings so generously received during 2009.

~ Alex+

A Faith-full Read...

Recently I read *Keeping Faith*, by Jodi Picoult, a book that poses questions about life, death, faith and the existence of God. I must say I was not inclined to reading it at first, but after so many people recommended it I decided to give it at least a one chapter look. That turned out to be well worth the effort.

Faith White had been an ordinary seven year old living with her parents in a farmhouse in New Hampshire, USA. But the ordinary life shifts dramatically when she and her mother return home one day unexpectedly to discover the dad with another woman. A divorce soon follows.

Faith starts talking to her imaginary friend 'the guard'. Mom eventually takes Faith to a child psychiatrist, who concludes that Faith's 'guard' is God and that their conversations may not be imaginary after all. Further, Faith starts to reveal secrets about people that no-one else knows and she quotes from the New Testament, despite the fact that her mother is nominally Jewish and that Faith has never heard any Christian teaching.

Here in the story enters the self-professed 'tele-atheist' whose production company aims to expose religious visionaries as hoaxes, and therefore disprove the existence of God. He challenges his audience to 'name one thing – other than the existence of God – that we take on blind faith. Initially, he believes that miracles and signs do not exist: 'People believe in God because they don't have any other explanation for things that happen'.

Is Faith really a visionary, or is she just a scared little girl seeking shelter from her parents' divorce? Is her mother using and harming Faith to gain attention for herself? Each character, and ultimately the reader, has to decide for themselves.

Keeping Faith is about family, relationships, divorce and motherhood, but mainly it is about faith. You find you're trying to figure out what this story is saying about faith. Noting that all the adults that examine Faith are expecting a hoax you wonder if indeed that is an accurate portrayal of our culture today.

In this book, *Keeping Faith*, the reader is being asked to decide who God is and whether God exists, according to their needs and circumstances at the time. But is there any way to find out the truth about God?

Scripture tells us that God is real, the creator of our universe. So what we think does not change the truth of God's existence. Scripture also shows that God is not hidden.

Now, in the Season of Epiphany, as we continue to celebrate "God Among Us" I commend this book to your reading. May it also bring insights and clarity to your understanding of faith.

~ Nancy+

IN THANKSGIVING FOR THE ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS LITURGIES

Many thanks go out to all who made our Advent and Christmas Liturgies so beautiful. It began with Worship Committee planning and was carried out by the Musicians and Choir, Altar Guild, Ushers, Liturgical ministers and Clergy.

We were blessed this year to have three baptisms on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Scott Hopkins, Christine Keiser as well as Leah Versteegh were welcomed into our faith community; Alex+ and Joe+ performed the baptisms. Mothers' Union presented banners and a Prayer Card. Each one also received a Baptismal Candle.

THE WHERE, THE WAYS AND THE PLACES OF PRAYER

As Christians we know that prayer should be a central component of our life. The function of prayer is to bring us face-to-face with ourselves. And, of course, it is more than just that. Basically, prayer is a conversation with God. But honest conversation with God is a way to bring to the surface the deepest longings of our hearts. So, if we welcome imagination into our prayers, our spiritual experiences will grow richer, deeper and more personal.



There are many ways to pray. Christians consider praying to be something we are obligated to do. As such, it is sometimes described as part of a spiritual discipline. To be sure, there is value in thinking

of prayer as a requirement for spiritual growth. Thinking of it that way helps us remember to ask for God's help and blessing each day of our lives.

But the danger lies in when we come to think of prayer as one more thing we have to get done, an additional item for our already crowded "to-do list." If we are not careful, prayer may begin to feel like a chore. So we need reminding that there are many ways to pray, some familiar and some not so familiar. We just might try something new.



A unique thing about biblical faith is the central affirmation that God speaks. God spoke, and all of creation was born. Think of all the characters in the Bible, from Moses to Mary to Paul and beyond, who hear the voice of God and are never quite the same again. If prayer is a means of communication with God, it follows that much of our praying ought to involve listening for what God has to say. Indeed, the entire order of Benedictine monks is built on the notion of prayer as listening. The very first word in the Rule of St. Benedict



Brother David Steindl-Rast, himself a Benedictine monk, has written these remarkable words: "By listening deeply to the message of any given moment I shall be able to tap the very Source of Meaning and to realize the unfolding meaning of my life."

If we think of listening as a special form of prayer, it can transform our approach to this essential aspect of the spiritual life. Listening prayer is an attitude of the heart that we can take with us into the world of everyday experience.



It is an attitude of openness, of readiness to receive. On city streets, in coffee shops, in waiting rooms of dentists and doctors, in airline terminals and any other commonplace environment we may, by



listening deeply, hear the voice of God - not above the din but within it.

This is praying by paying attention to the world around us.

Traditional forms of prayer, whether corporate

or personal, are a treasure we cannot do without. But there are many ways to pray. It has been said that the image of God in us, which no other living things possess, is our capacity for imagination. This unique gift of imagination can enliven our conversations with God. Don't hold back; discover anew that there are many ways to pray. ~ Nancy+



SLOW down and relax!

Start off 2010 with a plan to Slow Down and Relax. And one way you can achieve this is by considering gardening. Further, to keep that from being a “chore” consider Friends In The Garden!

That’s right, one day a week day in Holy Trinity’s Garden. After all, we live in a year round growing season with our mild climate, and the added benefit of this location is its opportunity to meditate as you work.



There are many plants mentioned in the Bible, ones that grow in the area surrounding the Mediterranean and likely some of those can and perhaps are already in our Garden. Well, not the wheat,

barley, figs, pomegranates, dates, olives, and grapes...no cedars of Lebanon either. But what is there are plants which have something that will also inspire meditations. Certainly the flowers, which bloom nearly every month, would remind us of the “lilies of the fields”.



But, back to the original thought. Gardening is a wonderful way to exercise and we all know that exercise is the enemy of stress! Just ask any of our parishioners who have worked in a garden what stress-relieving effects it has! Additionally, working in

the garden for 45 minutes can burn the same number of calories as 30 minutes of jogging or aerobics.

Consider speaking to our Landscape Gardener, Elizabeth Tanner for the times and days Friends In The Garden meet. Join them for a rewarding time to relax, slow down and meditate as you beautify the garden with friends!



A Story worth repeating

The following story comes from the Arab mystic, Sa’ di:

The story is told of a man, who while walking in the forest, noted a fox that had lost its legs.

“I wonder”, thought the man, “how does that fox manage to live?” Soon, he saw a tiger come so he hid himself behind a tree. The tiger had a deer in his mouth, and after the tiger had eaten his fill, left the remains for the fox.

The following day, God fed the fox by means of the same tiger. At this the man began to marvel at God’s goodness saying to himself, “I too shall just rest in a corner with full trust that God will provide me with all that I need.”

However, after many days of doing this with nothing happening at all, the man was nearly at death’s door with hunger when he heard a voice say, “O you who are in the path of error, open your eyes to the truth! Follow the example of the tiger and stop imitating the disabled fox.”

This story has a counter story for today: On the street I saw a naked child, hungry and shivering in the cold. I became angry and said to God, “Why do you permit this? Why don’t You do something?”

For a while God said nothing. That night, however, God replied quite suddenly, “I certainly did do something...I created you!”

Adapted from:

“The Song of the Bird” by Anthony de Mello

A DIFFERENT KIND OF RESOLUTIONS FOR KIDS

Hey, kids, you are old enough to know that it is a tradition, when the New Year begins, to make **New Year Resolutions**. Those are “reminders” to ourselves that we resolve (a promise to ourselves) to do something new or different in the coming year.



Usually it is something different than the way we have been in the past. One thing you are NOT likely to hear is someone say is, “I resolve in this New Year to be sure to LIE, CHEAT, DRINK, SWEAR and STEAL more than I did last year”.



WHAT??

You read that right. Because if you turned it around it could be a positive thing to strive for after all. Check it out...what do you think?

LIE back and relax -



don't let yourself fall into the “stress trap”.

Learn to manage your time so you can enjoy more of what life has for you without all the worry. *(I will do my best not to get into situations that upset me. If I work hard to study and do my homework then I will not be stressed out when tests come.)*

SWEAR to do your best. That is the best you can ever do! *(I will always try and have an attitude of giving each situation my best and my all.)*

CHEAT failure. That's right, cheat failure. Do not be afraid! Try new things and don't worry if you fail. *(Each time I try something new and do not get it right I have just discovered another way NOT TO DO IT!)*

DRINK from the fountain of knowledge.

Lots of kids and adults have gone before you...learn from them and the mistakes they made. *(Be aware of what others have done and how it worked, or didn't work for them. Be original and pay attention.)*



STEAL a little time for God. God should get a part of your day, everyday! *(If you want a friend you spend time with them...God wants to be your friend too. And when it is for good it is “giving time” not stealing it!! You knew that.)*

So, if you lie, cheat, drink, swear and steal just a little more in 2010 you will have a really good life to reflect on by the end of this year! Give it a try!

Let us pray:



Dear Jesus, help me in this new year to become a better friend to you and to all people. Help me to learn new ways of being the best person I can be and I will help other kids to learn about you and how you are a real good friend to have.

BUT DID YOU KNOW...

the background to that song you've been singing these last weeks?

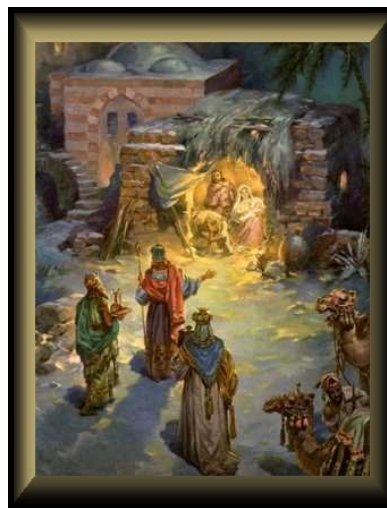
The Twelve Days of Christmas

The 12 Days of Christmas run from Christmas Day until January 6th, and the Carol has its roots in 18th century England. One theory connects the carol to the era when Catholicism was outlawed from 1558 -1829. The lyrics were to teach Catholics "the tenets of their faith," since they were not allowed to openly practice in Anglican society. And, while many still believe this to be a coded hymn, there isn't much in the way of hard evidence to bare it out.

The symbolism behind the Twelve Days of Christmas Song:

- 1 - Jesus Christ
- 2 - The Old and New Testaments
- 3 - The three virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity
- 4 - Four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
- 5 - First five books of the Old Testament
- 6 - Six days of creation before God's rest on the seventh day
- 7 - Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 8 - Eight Beatitudes
- 9 - Nine fruits of the Holy Spirit
- 10 - Ten Commandments
- 11 - Eleven faithful disciples
- 12 - Twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed

January 6th celebrates the Epiphany, when the manifestation of Jesus is celebrated. The term *epiphany* means "to show" or "to make known" or even "to reveal." In Western churches, it remembers the coming of the wise men bringing gifts to visit the Christ child, who by so doing "reveal" Jesus to the world.



A Prayer for this Epiphany Season:

In this season of Epiphany, we pray especially for those who are suffering as a result of this time of economic crisis, for those who have lost homes and jobs. Lord, have mercy.

In this season of giving, may we remember how You, Jesus, gave so greatly two thousand years ago. May we also be generous in our giving, not only to those we love and who are close to us, but to all around us who are in need.

VITAL VITTLES CELEBRATES

This was a wonderful Christmas Season for our guests at Vital Vittles. Over 110 persons enjoyed the Christmas dinner and each guest had a warm piece of clothing to take with them, as well as personal hygiene items. Thanks to our volunteers, to Holy Trinity and to the wider community of Sooke which makes all of this possible!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- Jan 3 Epiphany celebrated
Jan 9 9 am Men's Breakfast @ Reading Room
Jan 10 10 am Holy Communion- Elect Synod Delegate / Alternate (at 11 am)
Jan 20 1:45 pm Mothers' Union @ Church
Jan 27 11:45 am Women's Journey; Noon Men's Luncheon @ Castle
Jan 31 Diocesan Day Of Prayer for Diocesan Synod (March 5-7, 2010)
10 am Holy Communion—Annual Vestry Meeting and Luncheon

SPECIAL EVENTS: *On January 10th:* Elect one each Delegate and Alternate for Synod. The Delegate becomes a member of Parish Council.

On January 31st: Elect two Parish Council Members for a three year term.

Every Monday: Morning Prayer —9:15 am; Friends in the Garden—9:30-11:30 am

Every Wednesday: Holy Communion—10 am

Every Friday: Vital Vittles — 11:30-1:00 pm



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CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays



- 3 Janice Knutson**
15 Brynna Leigh Ford (First!)
19 Connie Isherwood
23 Suzanne Smith
24 Alex+
26 Beth Van Ek