

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST MESSENGER



Telephone: 514.697.1714 • Email: stjtheb@videotron.ca • www.stjtheb.ca

December 2015



NO ROOM AT THE INN

for the many – the Messiah. Matthew, like the other evangelists, gives us little detail between these first years of Jesus life and his baptism as an adult. Yet, we can imagine Jesus hearing the stories of his people Israel, of their covenant and land, of their history of sin and forgiveness, and

of their hope and promise of redemption and restoration and coming to understand that their story is his story and his destiny will be their destiny. We see how the shape of Jesus's life and mission began even as an infant in the arms of a worried and vulnerable mother, fleeing with her child to protect him.

The story of Jesus and Israel compels us to be present and sensitive to suffering and to learn to be shaped in lowliness, weakness, and vulnerability. If the church is a people formed by the story of Israel and the mission of Jesus, we will come to recognize the call to identify with and care for the refugee, the immigrant, the exile, and the outcast. We will come to understand the importance of place, land, and home and the violence and uncertainty which accompany people forced to relocate or flee to a place which is not their own. We will also glimpse the faithfulness of God in protecting and delivering those who, like Israel and Jesus, are oppressed and wandering.

Michael Burns,
Duke Divinity School Intern

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas Eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung;
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donnd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressd with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then open'd wide the Baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside
And Ceremony doffd his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The Lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of 'post and pair'.
All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

From *Marmion*, Sir Walter Scott



One of the first things we hear about Jesus after his birth is his journey to Egypt. Jesus and his family become refugees, hiding among a people who were not their own, seeking political asylum for the sake of the child.

The joy of Jesus' birth is almost immediately marked by the threat of death and the killing of many other children. So the Holy Family flees to Egypt—recalling perhaps Jacob and his sons, who find refuge from famine in Egypt under Joseph, yet also depicting a perverse inversion, where the Promised Land is filled with death and the place of slavery provides safety. Surely there is no justice in Israel when their own king behaves like the Pharaoh, murdering innocent children in an attempt to eliminate anyone who might threaten his rule. But like Moses before him, Jesus will survive this killing of the innocents and come to lead his people out of bondage.

The opening chapters of Matthew's gospel, from the genealogy and birth narrative to the temptation in the wilderness and baptism in the Jordan, are filled with details and narrative cues which alert the reader to Jesus' identity as Israel. He lives out their story and calling. He is the one

Induction: a sequel

In addition to pictures of Lorne's Induction Service, last month's MESSENGER included excerpts from the sermon preached on that occasion by the Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor. A couple of significant *commentaries* were omitted and, prompted admittedly by the report on the Induction published in the current Montreal Anglican, they are quoted here since they were aimed directly at the members of the Church of Saint John the Baptist.

"I am one of those crazy people who love Synods. We gather together the whole people of God: laity, clergy and bishop. We do not always agree with each other we are certainly not like one another. But we are reminded that we are part of something bigger than ourselves: we are the Church expressed in this Anglican Diocese of Montreal.

You are in conversation with the Church of the Resurrection about journeying together. I don't know what is best, but I do know that if you do join forces, this will call you to be the Church. It's not going to be the Res. coming to the Rescue; it won't be St. John's calling the shots. It won't be business as usual: it can't be. There will be sacrifice and loss as something new is born. There will be new opportunities that will arise, new strength, and new energy: a new call to be Church."

Rev. Moncur later added:

"Anglicans don't normally have our eyes in the clouds we have our eyes in the books. In your website you are very firm about the books you use. You mention BCP, the 1938 Hymn Book and the 1960s era 100 Hymns for Today. I feel I need to say the 1960s are not contemporary any more. I think the challenge for you is to look beyond the books and figure out how Christ is calling you to his mission."

Both statements are significant in the context of the challenges facing us, and more particularly our new incumbent, as he tries to lead this congregation forward at this juncture. The thought of a "kicking and screaming transition" is not a pleasant one to contemplate.

Perhaps we can take some guidance from these comments prefixed at the revision, in 1662, of the Book of Common Prayer, a Preface(*) used by the revisers to justify any changes in the liturgy to be found in that edition.

It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her Public Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and too much easiness in admitting any variation from it. For, as on the one side common experience showeth, that where a change hath been made of things advisedly established (no evident necessity so requiring) sundry inconveniences have thereupon ensued; and those many times more and greater than the evils, that were intended to be remedied by such change: So on the other side, the particular Forms of Divine worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various

exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.

Our general aim therefore in this undertaking was, not to gratify this or that party in any their unreasonable demands; but to do that, which to our best understandings we conceived might most tend to the preservation of Peace and Unity in the Church; the procuring of Reverence, and exciting of Piety and Devotion in the Public Worship of God; and the cutting off occasion from them that seek occasion of cavail or quarrel against the Liturgy of the Church.

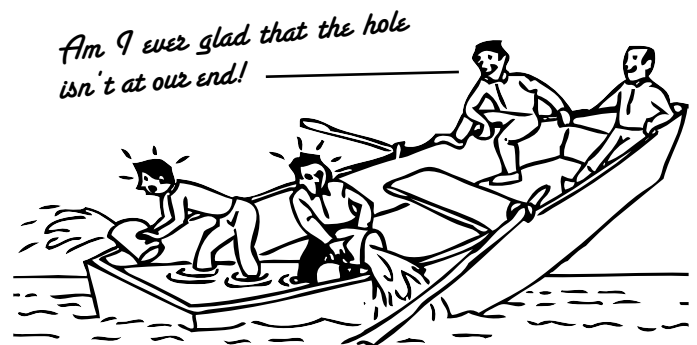
Accordingly we find, that in the Reigns of several Princes of blessed memory since the Reformation, the Church, upon just and weighty considerations her thereunto moving, hath yielded to make such alterations in some particulars, as in their respective times were thought convenient: Yet so, as that the main Body and Essentials of it (as well in the chiefest materials, as in the frame and order thereof) have still continued the same unto this day, and do yet stand firm and unshaken, notwithstanding all the vain attempts and impetuous assaults made against it, by such men as are given to change, and have always discovered a greater regard to their own private fancies and interests, than to that duty they owe to the public.

The above would appear to offer solace to both BCP or BAS camps or to those who find that they must choose one camp or the other. Members of the Steering Committee can, perhaps, be encouraged by the preface's conclusion.

And having thus endeavoured to discharge our duties in this weighty affair, as in the sight of God, and to approve our sincerity therein (so far as lay in us) to the consciences of all men; although we know it impossible (in such variety of apprehensions, humours and interests, as are in the world) to please all; nor can expect that men of factious, peevish, and perverse spirits should be satisfied with any thing that can be done in this kind by any other than themselves: Yet we have good hope, that what is here presented, and hath been by the Convocations of both Provinces with great diligence examined and approved, will be also well accepted and approved by all sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious Sons of the Church of England.

* For entire Preface, see Page 719 of the Book of Common Prayer, 1959, Canada (a.k.a. 'our Burgundy Book of Common Prayer')

David L. Paterson, Editor



Shock, Sorrow, Love and Loss

At the end of September last, Margaret and I spent a few days in Paris. Our hotel was in a small side-street on the edge of the Place de la République, a square which we crossed every day on our way to the Métro station from where each day's 'trek' would begin. We could not have imagined the horrors which would unfold several weeks later only a few blocks from our hotel.

The Paris attacks loom as a spark which drew us all into a deeper awareness of a hateful conflict and a need to comprehend how its fallout can affect ordinary citizens elsewhere. Life seems to have become much more complicated since then although I suspect that this is due



to political events here in Canada and, not least, sorrow and concern about the plight of refugees, some of whom may soon be living among us.

Perhaps for the first time, we have been forced to confront the role played by "religion", simultaneously laying blame while apologizing to the "less religious" in our communities, those looking for an easy scapegoat, whether Islamic or, indeed, Christian. GOD, in whatever manifestation, is not to blame and the attempt to relate cause and effect to any religious FAITH is misguided.

Conspiracy theorists have had a field day. They tell us that ISIS is invading Europe with swarms of refugees. Of course there is the risk that there will be some who intend to cause harm and who travel under the guise of refugees; nevertheless, one thing is certain, most are fleeing in desperation from Islamic State and its agenda of terror.

We can – and should – empathize with the citizens of Paris. However, Christians have a more important identity for we are members of a family which is worldwide and which includes people of every colour and walk of life. Most of those do not belong to Anglican churches – which matters little in the present circumstance.

In times of great sorrow, people often turn to the DIVINE for comfort, strength and for a reminder that good will always conquer evil. When Rabbi Menachem Creditor of Berkeley, California was asked what it means when we say "terror won't win", he answered with the following:

"It means that we are commanded to live every second to its fullest, to devour with delight the marrow of life, to allow the sun to reach us through closed, grateful eyes, to see the light in each other's Divine Image, to urge the



world one millimeter closer to fairness and justice, and to banish despair from our souls. Most of all, our response to something we experience as an attack on civilization must spur us to deepen our personal and communal commitments to build the world from Love faster than anyone can tear it down."

In part, Zainab Chaudry, a Muslim, responded to the same question:

"Our fractured world is in turmoil. Mother Earth gathered all of her children into the folds of her embrace to wipe away tears... Dear God of infinite mercy and wisdom, we are all Your people so help us know one another. Give us courage to conquer our fears, faith to lay to rest our doubts, and strength to defeat the forces of hatred and evil that seek to divide and pit us against one another."

A Christian teacher offered the following prayer:

"Dear Jesus, we know you understand evil, because you stared it in the face as you were terrorized on the cross. Give us your courage to choose love. Show us a 'third way' that is neither submission nor assault, neither passivity nor war. Help us to oppose evil without mirroring it. Help us resist our oppressors without emulating them. We pray for all the victims of this recent violence, but we also pray for those who are responsible for these atrocities. Give us the faith to believe they can be freed from their violence and hatred."

Or in the words of Justin Welby,

"We choose life and hope, to overcome ISIS' hate with the power of God's love. In solidarity across all faiths and none, and with all human beings, rather than in the victimization of any, we will find the way to defeat the demonic curse of terrorism. Christians are called, like Jesus, to stand with the suffering and broken and to oppose evil and fear with all their strength."

Wherever there is such wickedness Christ suffers afresh in the suffering of every human being. In solidarity let us be the source of consolation."

Vicar's Vignette

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

An Adapted Story

Mr. & Mrs. James (Jim) and Della Dillingham Young were not very prosperous. They lived in a furnished flat at \$8 per week. Jim's once \$30 per week income had shrunk to \$20, and twenty dollars a week doesn't go very far.

Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and Della had been planning for something nice for Jim. She had been saving every penny she could for months, but \$1.87 was all she could save.

There were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took great pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's beautiful hair, hair that rippled and shined like a cascade of brown waters as it fell around her slender body reaching below her knee.

Now, that morning as Della stood in front of the mirror looking at her beautiful hair a thought suddenly came to her, and with little hesitation she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Along the street she went until she stopped in front of a sign that read, "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." She went in and asked, "Will you buy my her?"

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take your hat off and let's have a look at it." Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand. "Give it to me quick," said Della.

Then with money in hand Della was off ransacking the stores for Jim's present. Within two hours she had found what she was looking for. It was a platinum watch chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone. It was like Jim. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents.

As she waited for Jim she said a silent prayer. "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in his eyes fixing on Della. "Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again – you won't mind, will you?"

Jim enfolded Della in his arms and said, "I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut that could make me like my girl any less." Then he drew a package from his overcoat pocket and placed it upon the table.

When Della unwrapped the package, a scream of joy quickly changed to tears. She gazed upon a beautiful set of combs that she had long worshipped in a Broadway window, without the least hope of possession.

Della looking up with dim eyes and a smile said: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"



(continued overleaf)



The Twelve Days of Christmas

It is not unusual for people to be oblivious to the words of songs which are familiar; this is particularly true when the songs are familiar – and made doubly so by interminable repetition as is the case with Christmas music. That this seasonal "muzak" often begins not long after Hallowe'en certainly doesn't help.

So what do we know about the quazi-Christian lyrics of "The Twelve Days of Christmas". For example, can you list the twelve "characters" mentioned in each of the repeating couplets? Not too difficult – but have you any idea of what they may symbolize?

*The best known English version of this Christmas rhyme was first printed in English in 1780 in a little book intended for children, **Mirth without Mischief**, as a Twelfth Night "memories-and-forfeits" game, in which a leader recited a verse, each of the players repeated the verse, the leader added another verse, and so on until one of the players made a mistake, with the player who erred having to pay a penalty, such as offering up a kiss or a sweet.*

"The Twelve days of Christmas" was adapted from similar New Years' or spring French carols, of which at least three are known, all featuring a partridge, (perdriz or perdrìole), as the first gift. The pear tree appears in only the English version, but this could also indicate a French origin. Cecil Sharp, founding father of the folk-song revival in England in the early 20th century observed that "from the constancy in English, French, and Languedoc versions of the 'merry little partridge,' I suspect that 'pear-tree' is really perdriz (Old French pertriz) carried into England"; and "juniper tree" in some English versions may have been "joli perdriz". Sharp also suggests the adjective "French" in "three French hens", probably simply means "foreign".

(continued on last page)

Lest Time Hang Heavy This Christmastide...

Test your Christmas knowledge

1. What's the name of the period leading up to Christmas?
.....
2. How many Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus?
.....
3. What were the names of the Wise Men?
.....
4. How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas?
.....
5. What was the name of John the Baptist's Mother?
.....
6. Who brings presents to children in Holland on the 5th/6th December?
.....
7. Who was Gitchi Manitou?
.....
8. In what town was Jesus born?
.....
9. How many presents were given **in total** in the "12 Days of Christmas"?
.....
10. In which European capital would you find Wenceslas Square?
.....
11. To which country did the Holy Family escape?
.....
12. What country did Christmas Trees originate from?
.....
13. Who was the king who ordered the babies to be killed?
.....
14. On which Saint's Day does Boxing Day fall?
.....
15. What was Joseph's job?
.....
16. Who started the custom of Wassailing?
.....
17. Who were first people to visit the baby Jesus?
.....
18. Who composed the "Christmas Oratorio"?
.....
19. What Angel visited Mary?
.....
20. Where did the baby Jesus sleep?
.....

Find the Carols hidden in these anagrams

LET THINGS IN
.....

DEADLIEST FEES
.....

WEARY MAN AGAIN
.....

HERSELF WILT NOT
.....

SO ACKNOWLEDGE SIGN
.....

LAUNCHER OH ROT
.....

HYMN HINDERING GOOD GIRL
.....

WHERE I'M KIND IN BATTLE
.....

TOOTHY JEW LORD
.....

DIVINE DAINTY COSY CAROL
.....



("Gift of the Magi" continued)

Then she eagerly gave Jim his present. "Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. Give me your watch. I want to see how the chain looks on it."

Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled. "Dell," he said, "I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs."

The magi may have been wise men who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. But Jim and Della sacrificed for each other their greatest possessions. Of all who give gifts they may be the wisest.

May the Spirit of Christmas bring you Joy and Peace



Yours in Christ, Lorne



NEWS • from the Parish Council

Rectory sold

During discussion at the November meeting, it was announced that a buyer had been found for the Rectory. That offer was accepted by the Corporation and transfer of ownership has been completed, signified by a cheque for \$340,000.00 being deposited. According to Diocesan regulation, this capital deposit was made to the Anglican Fund, in trust for the Church of Saint John the Baptist. No monies can be withdrawn from the capital except for a 'capital' expenditure which would need to be approved by the Diocese. Interest on the investment, however, can be used and will be applied to the cost of the Housing Allowance for our Incumbent

New dishwasher purchased

A new Hobart dishwasher has been found and will be installed in the near future. The new machine will fit in the space occupied by the old Hobart which has not been functioning for several months. The price of the machine is \$4593.00, not counting the costs for electrical installation (240 volts) which are estimated in the range of an additional \$500.00. The cycle time – two to three minutes – for the new machine is similar to other industrial models. Detergent is added automatically from a reservoir and sterilization will be accomplished by hot water (180°) as was the case with the older unit.



(“The Twelve Days of Christmas” continued)

In 1979, a Canadian hymnologist, Hugh D. McKellar, published an article, “How to Decode The Twelve Days of Christmas”, claiming that “The Twelve Days of Christmas” lyrics were intended as a catechism song to help young Catholics learn their faith, at a time when practising Catholicism was criminalized in England (1558 until 1829). McKellar offered no evidence for his claim and subsequently admitted that the purported associations were his own invention.

What seems clear, however, is that the ‘twelve’ days of Christmas refer to the eight days of the Christmas Octave from December 25th to New Year’s Day, and the four additional days up to and including the eve of January 6, the traditional date of the Epiphany. Beyond what is written above, there appears to be no conclusive historical evidence to prove this origin of the song. Nevertheless, the tradi-

tional association between the gifts mentioned in the song and various spiritual gifts has moved it from the secular realm closer to a religious one. Here is one interpretation of the symbols which ties correlates to McKellar’s “Catholic” thesis.

Partridge in a pear tree

Jesus Christ, symbolized as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from helpless nestlings.

Two turtle doves

Old & New Testaments

Three French Hens

Faith, hope, charity

Four Calling birds

The Four Gospels

Five Golden Rings

The Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy)

Six geese a laying

Six days of creation

Seven Swans a swimming

Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Eight maids a-milking

Eight Beatitudes

Nine Ladies Dancing

Nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Ten Lords a-leaping

Ten Commandments

Eleven pipers piping

The eleven faithful disciples

Twelve drummers drumming

Twelve articles of the Apostles Creed

Wikipedia / DLP

Christmas Services

Now in the season of Advent with Christmas to follow, the following important dates should be noted.

Sunday, 13th December, 10.00 a.m.: White Gift Sunday.

Sunday, 20th December, 10.00 a.m.

Service of Lessons and Carols

Thursday, 24th December, Christmas Eve, 4.00 p.m.

Holy Communion and Pageant

Thursday, 24th December, Christmas Eve, 10.30 p.m.

Choral Eucharist

Friday, 25th December, Christmas Eve, 10.30 a.m.

Holy Communion in the Chapel