



The Angelus

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral • Kansas City, Missouri

Vol.73, No.12 • December 2004

From the Dean

Advent is a wreath of green and the light of four small candles that does not blink, does not chase itself, and does not slowly fade from one color to another. Advent is the Light from Light that shines in the darkness, which no darkness can overcome.

Advent is the chant that cuts through the synthesized bells extolling the heroism of the most famous reindeer of all, distracting our focus ever so slightly. O Come, O Come Emmanuel,

*Advent is a time of
narrowing down,
focusing in.*

and ransom captive Israel, in lonely exile, in desperate need of a Savior.

Advent is the savory cutting through the shopping season's excessive sweetness. Advent's expectation and hope hang in the air like

rosemary, a hearty lingering fragrance that cannot be sugarcoated or dipped in chocolate.

Advent points beyond the sure and certain return of the gift-giver dressed all in fur from his head to his foot, to the sure and certain return of the Long-Expected One: Lo, He comes with clouds descending. Alleluia! Christ the Lord returns to reign.

Advent does not bombard us with promises of the perfect gift at low, low prices, but promises crooked places made straight, that which is rough made smooth, valleys and voids in our life filled in.

In Advent, peace is found where peace was created: And his name shall be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

"Advent," Isabel Anders writes in *Awaiting the Child*, "is a time of narrowing down, focusing in. I feel it's coming in my bones, with the inevitability of the shorter, darkening days. Our worship takes on the character of the season—not somber, but sober. It is a time of reflection and quiet seriousness, not of frivolity. Narrowing down, focusing in, has something to do with identifying with our Lord in his first coming. We believe that to forget God is to forget ourselves, our nature, and our relationship to him. We neglect to praise, decline to enter the mystery, at our own peril."

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come in glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen. Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

Yours in Hope and Expectation,

Terry+

The Twelve Days of Christmas at the Cathedral

DECEMBER 25 • THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist *with organ and carols*

DECEMBER 26 • FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
10:15 a.m. Lessons and Carols and Holy Eucharist
(note: this is the only liturgy today)

DECEMBER 27 • THIRD DAY OF CHRISTMAS
Offices and Buildings Closed
No weekday services today

DECEMBER 28 • FEAST OF ST. JOHN *(transferred)*
MP 8:30 a.m., Eucharist 12:05p.m., EP 5:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 29 • FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS
(transferred)
MP 8:30 a.m., Eucharist 12:05p.m., EP 5:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 30 • SIXTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS
MP 8:30 a.m., Eucharist 12:05p.m., EP 5:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 31 • EVE OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS
MP 8:30 a.m., Eucharist 12:05p.m., EP 5:30 p.m.

JANUARY 1 • FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS
10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist

JANUARY 2 • SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
8 a.m. Holy Eucharist
9:15 a.m. Formation for all ages
10:15 a.m. Children's Chapel
Holy Eucharist
5 p.m. Order for Evening and Holy Eucharist

JANUARY 3 • TENTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS
MP 8:30 a.m., Eucharist 12:05p.m., EP 5:30 p.m.

JANUARY 4 • ELEVENTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS
MP 8:30 a.m., Eucharist 12:05p.m., EP 5:30 p.m.

JANUARY 5 • TWELFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS
MP 8:30 a.m., Eucharist 12:05p.m., EP 5:30 p.m.

JANUARY 6 • THE EPIPHANY
MP 8:30 a.m., 12:05 Eucharist,
7 p.m. Choral Evensong

On Christian meditation

One day last month I spent two hours watching a series of lectures on video about *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The lectures, despite being videotaped and my watching them in a warm room while reclined on a couch, were very interesting. The lecturer was a Trappist Monk named William Meninger who has spent a great deal of time (which is just about all Trappist Monks really have, after all) thinking about, studying, and most importantly, praying according to *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

The Cloud, as it seems to be known by its followers, is a fourteenth century work by, somewhat appropriately, an unknown author. According to Meninger—and this is why I'm excited about reading it—The Cloud is an authentic, orthodox, Christian means of mystical approach to God.

Having been a Christian for only the past thirteen years or so, I am not personally shocked or disturbed at the amazing recent popularity of Zen, Buddhism, and other Eastern mystical practices and forms of meditation. Not even when they are practiced by dedicated Christians.

The Cathedral held a workshop on Tai Chi Chuan just a couple months ago, taught by members of our congregation.

In my humble opinion, the popularity of Eastern meditation

practices has a lot to do with a general need in our society, and even, if not particularly so, among Christians in mainline denominations, for a practice of prayer that goes beyond the simple asking God for favors that we usually provide for in our liturgies.

I experience this need myself. I've never been completely comfortable praying in such a way that I'm telling God what I need (or more likely, what I want), how I'd like certain situations to turn out, or even saying thanks for things I'm pleased with lately. Not that any of these things are bad. Prayers of intercession and thanksgiving are an integral part of the liturgy I love.

However, asking God for anything, particularly when I'm praying by myself, conflicts with primary idea I have about God. Namely this: God already knows what I need, what I want, and what's best for me, and that those three things are nearly always not the same. Therefore, what business do I have speaking to God at all? Shouldn't I rather just sit qui-

etly and see if I can hear what God has to say? Enter Eastern meditation.

I like Eastern meditation practices myself. In particular, I'm a big fan of the Tao Te Ching (inexplicably pronounced Dow Day Jing). This collection of seemingly simple and practical advice moves me spiritually whenever I ponder a verse or two. I see no problem adopting Eastern (or even Middle-Eastern, gasp!) religious practices into a predominantly Christian spirituality.

That being said, there is a problem with adopting the religious practices of other religions/philosophies/etc. The problem is that they aren't mine. No matter how much study, reading, or practice I devote to Zen Buddhism, I will still be a white boy raised in semi-rural Washington State, U.S.A. Even if I did achieve a certain level of authentic Zen practice, could I ever find enough time to achieve that with another practice? And what time does that leave for Christianity, which is my practice?

We invited a Rabbi/Cantor to our church a couple years ago, to lead a Seder meal on the Wednesday before Holy Week. At a planning meeting he said that while he was in favor of interfaith activities such as we had planned, it was most important to know your own story well. "How can I share my story with you if you don't know how it fits

into your own story? You can't share with me unless you know your own story," he said.

For me, this is true. I love interfaith and interdenominational conversation. However, what I always take away from these experiences is a renewed sense that my own religious tradition has more to offer me if only I would dig deeper. I get from faithful people of other faiths perspective on my own faith that leaves me more inspired.

Hence, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, which is an authentic and orthodox Christian mystical prayer tradition. Zen meditation and pondering the verses of the Tao create in me a desire for quiet, listening prayer. They make me want to be mystical, to seek to hear from God in prayer, not the other way around. I want non-outward prayer, non-corporate prayer, quiet, dark, mysterious prayer.

According to my video taped monk, *The Cloud* has exactly that to offer. I'll let you know.

—by *The Rev. Benjamin J. Newland*,
Associate Priest

*God already knows what I need,
what I want, and what's best for
me, and that those three things are
nearly always not the same.
Therefore, what business do I
have speaking to God at all?*

STEWARDSHIP

UPDATE

Traditionally, stewardship campaigns have ended at the beginning of Advent. I suppose the justification for this tradition stems from the belief that stewardship focuses on giving, while the Advent season focuses on receiving God's grace through the birth of Jesus.

However, to my way of thinking, stewardship and the Advent season share many common themes—preparation, anticipation, reflection, prayer and joy—as well as giving and receiving. At its core, stewardship is our response to God's grace and presence in our lives, and we are keenly reminded of God's grace and presence during the Advent season.

For these reasons, we are going to extend the stewardship campaign into the Advent season, which will culminate with the Blessing of the Pledges at the 10:15 a.m. service December 19.

Please turn your pledge card in so you can participate in the joy of our Cathedral's mission.

—by *Steve Moore*,
Stewardship Chairman

The Angelus

*A laypersons' newspaper published in the interest
of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral.*

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Submissions from parishioners and small groups are welcome and encouraged. All entries are requested by the 15th day of the month prior to publication via fax: (816) 474-5856 or e-mail: communications@ghtc-kc.org

Cathedral members honored at diocesan gathering and convention

At the 2nd annual gathering and 115th annual convention of the Diocese of West Missouri, a Cathedral member was awarded with the Bishop's Shield.

"Resolved, that in recognition of her faithful service to her community, the Church, and the Diocese of West Missouri, past, present, and still to come, Betty Phillips be awarded the Bishop's Shield."

Cathedral member since 1975 and sacristan since 1976, Betty's devotion to the Cathedral and diocese was recognized with this award.

The Rev. Bryan England, deacon at the Cathedral, was also recognized for his service through the police chaplaincy.

Alexandra Connors, Cathedral member and youth representative to the Province Seven Youth Network from the Diocese of West Missouri, was given the opportunity to address delegates at the convention. Below is her address.



Alexandra Connors

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I am the West Missouri youth representative to the Province Seven Youth Network and have held this position for two years. I am very interested, but yet concerned about the youth ministries and programs in our diocese.

I can infer that *almost* everyone, if not everyone, in the room agrees that youth and youth programs etc. are one of the most important aspects of the church today. In a survey of the members at GHTC about the programs and ministries this fact held true.

Pretty much everyone agrees. Right? Isn't one of the most overused sayings in the church, "Youth aren't the church of the fu-

ture, they are the church of today?" Here is where I ask you a very serious question. If we all agree about the importance of youth in the church, why aren't the programs given the attention and support that they deserve?

Now, I don't intend to ask such a touchy question without backing my position. So get ready for some facts. By participating in the many provincial and multi-diocesan events that I have, I have seen how other dioceses run things and have learned much about events and support in other dioceses. May I say quite honestly that I feel that West Missouri is lacking.

Overall, West Missouri has one all diocese youth event per year: Missionpalooza. For those who are not familiar with this event, Missionpalooza is a week-long mission trip, without the trip. A very large group of high schoolers, myself included, gather for mission, fellowship, learning, and growing. We stay at St. Paul's downtown and do mission work all around the metro area. This last year we had approximately 70 participants.

It is my favorite diocesan event, and sadly, our only. Yes, we have had Happenings; but I must say that they are poorly organized and many times Happenings have been scheduled and then fall through at the last minute due to improper support and planning.

From my interaction with other dioceses I have learned of many other events that we could and should be utilizing. For example, a

short list of events that West Missouri could be hosting are: Miqra, Food Fast, retreats, lock-ins, Happenings. Why aren't we?

Also, I feel quite strongly about the fact that the few programs that our diocese does have going aren't, for lack of a better word, "talked-up."

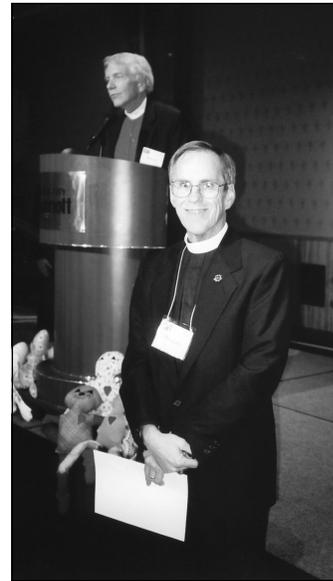
How do we expect for people to participate or pri-

marily, even have an interest if they are not promoted? Our diocese has many publications and communication resources. To my disappointment, the youth do not seem to have a place in any of them. Rarely is there anything regarding youth in the diocesan publication.

For those who frequently visit the diocesan website, you might notice that a certain link is missing. Where there was once a youth link, there is now an empty space. How does

that reflect on our diocese as a whole?

Now, as much as I don't like to compare, I must bring up the state of our neighboring diocese, Kansas. The diocese of Kansas has a thriving youth program full of excitement and support. Their events are well organized and well attended, not to mention the fact that they have so many. They have a devoted and dy-



The Rev. Bryan England, Cathedral deacon, was recognized for his work as a police chaplain.

amic youth coordinator who has raised the Diocese of Kansas programs to, not to be cliché, a level of greatness. Maybe we should use our neighbor as a template for our own ministries.

Now, after all the "problems," I offer a solution. I think that a full-time youth coordinator would offer much needed direction and growth for our diocesan youth ministries. We need someone who will promote our growth and help it along. We need someone who is not afraid to be dynamic and make changes. Mainly, we need someone will make sure our events are well organized and promoted. West Missouri has all the tools; we just need someone to use them.

For all of the amazing things that the diocese has going for it, there is room for improvement in our youth programs. Since we all agree that youth are important and are a priority, do your part and promote growth. Growth depends on a dynamic leader. Give youth programs the respect and attention they deserve.



photos by Jan Frizzle

Dean White with Harold and Betty Phillips at the Convention of the Diocese of West Missouri. Betty was awarded the Bishop's Shield for her diligent work for the Cathedral as the head of the Altar Guild and her work with the flower ministry.

Hats, gloves and socks for KCCK

The north wind doth blow, and we shall have snow according to the old Mother Goose rhyme. And the weather forecasters concur. The bitter winter weather can find the guests who eat in Kansas City Community Kitchen without the warmth of gloves, hats and socks. It has been our tradition to provide these items to be distributed in the KCCK as needed.

On Sunday, December 12, we will celebrate the spirit of Saint Nicholas, who was Bishop of Myra, and became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love

for children and his concern for sailors and ships. Several activities will be offered concerning St. Nicholas during the education hour at 9:15 a.m.

To share both the spirit of St. Nicholas and our concern for our guests, please bring socks, hats and/or gloves on December 12. We need these items for men, women and children, with the majority of those eating in the kitchen being men.

Please warm your heart by warming the heads, hands and feet of those who need our help. — *by The Rev. Linda Yeager, Deacon*

Grief, loss and Christmas

One side of the Christmas season not often talked about is how to deal with loss and grief even as so much of the world around seems to be happy and carefree. No matter how much time has elapsed, we miss those we have shared past Christmases with, and naturally wish to find a way to acknowledge how life has changed.

The first Christmas following the death of a loved one, or after a marriage or significant relationship has ended, especially demands that we change in some way how we celebrate.

Have reasonable expectations. There will be times of great sadness, times when you prefer to be alone, and times when you very much need the company of others.

Do not try and do all the things you have done in the past. Baking, decorating, writing cards, and shopping can be too much in the best of times. Be aware of the energy you have, and allow yourself to do things differently.

At special gatherings, name your loss in a healthy way, and talk about those you miss. Some families offer a special toast to those who have died and now live in the nearer presence of Christ. This is a powerful time to share tears and fond remembrances. You put yourself and those around you at ease when you speak of those you miss.

You may wish to begin a new tradition, such as reaching out to a lonely neighbor, taking gifts to a shelter or food to the local fire station. In years to come, this tradition becomes known as, "What we began doing the Christmas after N. died." This celebrates the life of your loved one.

Pay special attention to children who can be overlooked in the grieving process. More toys will not give comfort and hope. They need to know they are not alone in their sorrow, that adults, too, miss departed loved ones. Assure them of God's special care in the days ahead, that the Christ Child will be with them.

Be regular in worshipping God and receiving the Eucharist. There is no greater comfort in sorrow than the presence of the Risen Christ.

Hold fast to the promise in St. John's Gospel for Christmas Day: "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness shall not over come it."

— *by The Very Rev. Terry A. White*

A catalog and a tree

December is a time of giving. Naturally there are the gifts under the Christmas tree at home. Most importantly, there is the gift that God gave to us all through the birth of Jesus Christ.

Thankfully, there also seems to be an even stronger drive than usual for people to give of themselves to those who are in need. The question is how to channel that drive.

This Advent season, the Social Outreach Committee is going to assist — with a catalog and a tree.

The catalog is a gift from Episcopal Social Services to our Diocese — and in turn to the community. In 32 pages, they provide more than 128 ways of giving back to the community and to those in need.

And best of all, this is within anyone's budget, with most gift requests amounting to \$50 or less (but as little as \$1).

All of these are for local service agencies, and they are typically for agencies that depend on individual donations the most. Best of all, the do-



nations go to the service provider(s) you designate, to be used for the purpose(s) you designate. The percentage going to administration is zero.

In addition to the catalog, a Giving Tree at the Cathedral will provide an opportunity for gifting various services provided by and at the Cathedral. Please look for the Giving Tree and consider how you may help those in need at this time.

In a very unique way we will be providing an opportunity for gifting for various services provided by and at the Cathedral, in a way to be complimentary to the Sharper Outreach Catalog.

We hope that this, too, will become a new Christmas tradition for you and your family.

— *by John Hornbeck*



A holiday tradition continues! On December 12, the Cathedral will host its annual caroling party, gathering in Founders' Hall at 6:00 p.m. It will be a wonderful evening of fellowship, food, and fun. Dinner and drink will be provided but people are encouraged to bring appetizers and desserts. Everyone is welcome and baby-sitting will be provided throughout the evening. Keep your eyes open for more details.

— *by Robin Rusconi*

Holiday stress

The annual celebration of the Word made Flesh is often, unfortunately, a time of significant tension and anxiety for many people. Preparation for Christmas and the holiday itself presents us with multiple tasks: gifts to buy and wrap, decorations to be placed, meals to be cooked, and parties to be hosted or attended.

For parish leaders, both clergy and lay, there are many liturgies and special events to be planned and celebrated. A 2001 survey conducted by *Dateline NBC* and *Prevention Magazine* found 41% of respondents stating that they find the holidays to be at least as stressful as asking the boss for a raise.

Four rather obvious sources of holiday stress are having too many things to do, the disruption of ordinary routines, financial worries, and difficult relationships. These sources can become particularly stressful for people who are working hard to grow and change, who are planning to visit or be visited by difficult family members. Consider these suggestions if you are in this situation.

If it's dangerous, don't go. Our families and our culture imply that one must be with one's family during the holidays. This is simply not true. The only person whose presence is a

necessity for Christmas is the Holy Spirit. If you are considering visiting, or allowing to visit, family members who have a history of physically, emotionally, or spiritually abusing you, it is fine to change your plans.

When you've got it, don't flaunt it. After having worked hard to gain insight into your own behavior or that of your family, it is natural to want to share your new awareness. In general, it is a good idea to resist this temptation. Your growth and change may seem threatening to some members of the family because it changes the family dynamic.

Try not to let old patterns upset you. Family members relate to each other according to patterns, rather like a dance. Each family has its own dance, which gets repeated regularly. When you change your behavior, you change the dance. It is natural for others in the family to ask you to get back in step with the family dance. The best response to a "change back" message is to establish a healthy boundary with a clear "yes," or "no," and as little reactivity as possible. Striving to attain this response is, of course, something which all growing people do for most of their lives.

Stop wishing they'll be different. The most common way that people undermine their desire for a happy holiday is to spend time wishing that their family would be different than it is. For example, if Dad and Great Aunt Sarah have an intense and public conflict each year, then it's a safe bet they will have that fight again this year; particularly if neither of them has worked on his or her own growth during the past year. To spend a great deal of energy wishing that this annual event not occur is to spend a great deal of energy setting yourself up for a disappointment. The only person whom you can change is you.

—by *The Very Rev. Terry White, Dean*

Celebrating the Birth of Christ

WEDNESDAYS IN ADVENT

7:00 p.m. • Advent Series
8:15 p.m. • Compline

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

9:15 a.m. • New Beginnings
Intergenerational Activities: The Nativity, presented by the Paul Mesner Puppets

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

9:15 a.m. • New Beginnings
Intergenerational Activities: The Spirit of Saint Nicholas
6:00 p.m. • Caroling Party

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

9:15 a.m. • New Beginnings
Intergenerational Activities: The Jesse Tree and A December Visit with Harold Ivan Smith

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 p.m. • Holy Eucharist and Christmas Pageant
10:00 p.m. • A Prelude of Christmas Music
10:30 p.m. • Festival Eucharist

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY

10:15 a.m. • Holy Eucharist with organ and carols

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

(only one service this day)
10:15 a.m. • Holy Eucharist and A Service of Lessons and Carols followed by wassail and cookies

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6 EPIPHANY

12:05 p.m. • Holy Eucharist
7:00 p.m. • Choral Evensong



Music of G. F. Handel Saturday • December 18, 2004 • 5:00 p.m.

Messiah

JACK ERGO, CONDUCTOR SINGALONG

Admission is free.
THE AUDIENCE SINGS THE CHORUSES!
Bring your score or purchase one at the door.

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral
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