

 **Mail Bag**

Dear Bette, Thank you for your recent contribution to RAMP and believing that art does make a difference in our community. Thanks for the support from Immanuel!

*Best, Robert McBride, Director,
Rockingham Arts & Museum Project*

Dear Neighbor, The staff and Trustees of Rockingham Public Library would like to express our sincere appreciation for your donation to our silent auction, of two concert two concert tickets. Your donation will support the mission of the Library, which is to serve the community as an educational, recreational and cultural center for all ages.

Sincerely, Céline Houlné, Library Director

Dear Friends, There is much to celebrate at the Vermont Nurse Association and Hospice and despite these difficult economic times, we feel optimistic. Focusing on the strength of our core programs while strategically investing

in areas of community need, we continue to serve those who depend on us—the sickest babies, struggling families, fragile seniors, patients of all ages who seek to die with dignity, at home. Our programs provide compassionate, cost-effective care, health education and prevention to more than 6,000 people each year. *Thank you again for your generous gift, Gaye LaCasce, VP of Development and Community Relations*

Dear Stone Church Arts, The staff of SEVCA would like to express their sincere appreciation for your donation of two concert tickets for Miche Fambro, valued at \$36, for our annual Flea Market, Raffle and Silent Auction. *Sincerely, Stephen Geller, Executive Director, SEVCA*

Dear Rector, Thank you for the continuing support of your parish for the Episcopal Hospital Chaplaincy. Your donation will help us maintain our important ministry to over 500 Episcopal patients annually. *Bob Straus, Chairman of the Board*

**THE HERALD**

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**THE HERALD****December 2009****Priestly Ponderings**

Dear Friends--

The church year takes us through the Christian story of salvation. We start in Advent with the promise of Jesus. At Christmas we find God in the form of a helpless, vulnerable infant. At Epiphany, the light shines out to the world. In Lent we enter into the mystery of suffering by remembering Jesus' suffering and death; then at Easter we celebrate his victory – our victory – over death. The Spirit gives birth to the church at Pentecost, and we spend the summer following Jesus along with his Apostles and first disciples. Then, on the last Sunday before Advent, we celebrate Jesus as ruler of all creation.

And then we come round to Advent once more, and it is a time to quiet ourselves down so that we can be touched again by the Child in the manger.

We will get very little help with this from the culture around us, which starts celebrating Christmas before Halloween and steadily raises the volume throughout November and December. The point all along the way is to raise our energy level, to convince us that the “perfect Christmas” we’re all striving for is just one purchase or one holiday party away.

If we’re not careful, that can be all we take from this season.

But Advent has a different aim. Instead of trying to work us up into a Christmas frenzy, Advent’s point is to open us to the Christmas miracle.

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark street shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

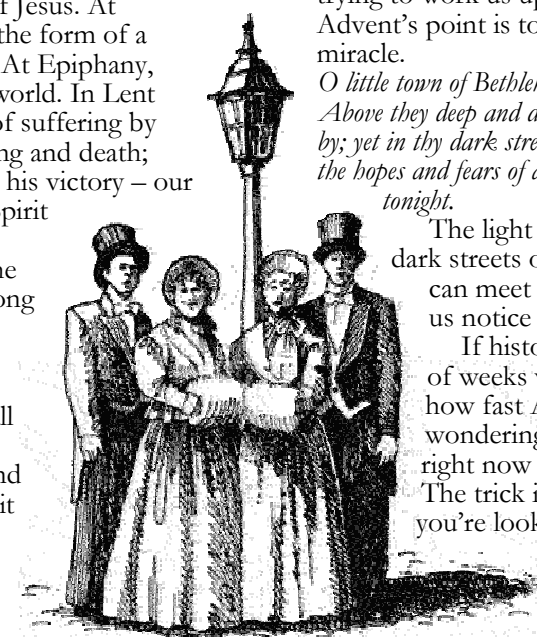
The light is already shining in the dark streets of our hearts, where hope can meet our fears. Advent can help us notice it.

If history is any guide, in a couple of weeks we’ll all be talking about how fast Advent flew by, and wondering how we missed it. But right now it’s almost all before us. The trick is to pay attention. If you’re looking for ways to mark this time, here are a few that are close at hand:

➤ **Volunteer at our Community Supper**

on Monday nights. Feeding hungry people is a good way to travel the road to Bethlehem, and Mary Haas can always use the help. Or look around – there are lots of ways to help people in need, and being in need can be felt particularly strongly at this time of year.

(continued)



➤ **Pray as You Go** is an online resource, a ten minute long guided prayer with music and scripture. You can download the daily audio to an MP3 player if you use one, or just listen at your computer. It's at <http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/>. A text-only online prayer assist is available at **Sacred Space** (<http://sacredspace.ie/>).

➤ **Come to Morning Prayer**, or pray it at home. We pray it every weekday morning at 8:30 in church. Sitting in the holy darkness by candlelight is a good way to start looking for the coming of the light in each new day. We're also celebrating Holy Communion on Tuesday evenings at 6:30.

Speaking of Monday nights, please don't forget that we'll be celebrating the 20th anniversary of our Community Suppers at 5pm on Monday, December 7th. Twenty years – that's more than 1000 meals -- of this important ministry of our church. Please come celebrate with us on the 7th!

Peace,
Fr. Mark.

Please pray with us:

* * **For healing in the lives of** Katharine K., Gerda C., Isaac C., Ruth Ann G., Bettie K., Peter G., David & Jackee M., Walter L., Frank H.

Vestry Notes Nov 10, 2009

New Vestry members: *Motion to appoint Barbara Plumley as our new vestry member made by Bette, seconded by Marien, all approved. Motion that Steve Fuller be appointed Treasurer made by Bette, seconded by LeAnn, all approved.*

Treasurers Report: Pledges and Church Use are up this year. Boys and Girls Club is caught up on their utilities and rent. Advertising costs and Office expenses Office expenses are up as expected. The Wilkes Fund is down this

month after a good comeback over the last six to eight months.



Stone Church Arts: Concerts are going well this year and donations at intermission are increasing.

Sexton's Report: John is raking up leaves before the snow flies. He has help three days each week. Maurice, an older adult who is learning new skills, is also helping. The rectory gate and fence is complete. The Boilers in all three buildings have been cleaned and readied for winter. John plans to paint the red doors, fix the floor in the cage area, work on drainage outside chapel, and paint the chapel.

Church Boiler: James & James has had two engineers come out & evaluate our heating system. They suggest we replace our current boiler (near the end of its life) with two smaller ones which will put out more heat and use a lot less fuel.

Community Kitchen: The 20th anniversary of the Monday night supper is Dec. 4. On Monday, Dec. 7 we will celebrate during the 5 pm supper. Please join us; there will be cake!

2010 Budget: The Budget Subcommittee has met. They went through next year's budget with a fine tooth comb, had some good ideas and will meet again.

Winter Eucharist Location: Because out attendance is up (we don't all fit in the Chapel) and because of H1N1, a larger space will be better. We will meet in the church through the winter.

Worship Committee: The next Children's Choir is December 6th with a St. Nicholas event after church. There will be two services on Christmas Eve: a 5 pm Children's service and a Christmas Eve Eucharist at 8 pm.

Leadership Team Discernment: the Leadership Team of the church (Vestry, MST and Worship Committee) meet on Sunday Nov. 29 to begin discerning our way forward toward what our ministry will look like after the interim years.

What's Happening?

ONGOING

Sundays: Quiet Eucharist, Church, 8:00 am, begins 9/27.
Sundays: Choral Eucharist, Church, 9:30 am.
Sundays: Sunday School, 9:30 am.
Sundays: A. A., Undercroft, 8 pm.
Mon-Fri: Morning Prayer, 8:30 am.
Mondays: Community Supper, 5 pm.
2nd Monday: Vestry, Office, 6:30 pm.
Tuesdays: Holy Eucharist (in Advent), Chapel, 6:30pm
Tuesdays: Priests, Office, 5 pm.
1st & 3rd Tuesdays: MST, Office, 5:30 pm.
4th Tuesdays: Worship Committee & Preachers, Office, 5:30 pm
Tuesdays: TOPS, Undercroft, 7 pm.
Thurs: Wt. Watchers, Undercroft, 6:30 pm.

DECEMBER 2009

Sun 12/6: St. Nicholas Day celebration: children's choir during church and a party after!
Sat 12/5: SCA Concert, Peter Blanchette, archguitars, and Alexandra Ludwig, alto, *Early Music from the British Isles*, Church, 7:30 pm.
Monday 12/7: *Community Supper 20th Anniversary Celebration*, Undercroft, 5 pm.
Wed 12/12: *Anonymous Nonsense* marionette show, Chapel, 2 & 4 pm.
Sat 12/24: Children's Christmas Eve service, Church, 5 pm.
Sat 12/24: Christmas Eve Eucharist, Church, 8 pm.
Mon 12/21: NEWSLETTER DEADLINE



Two Christmas Eve Services

This year we will celebrate the birth of Jesus on Thursday, Dec. 24 with two services.

At 5 pm there will be a children's presentation for all ages.

At 8 pm we offer a more traditional Christmas Eve Eucharist.

Hear the familiar prophecies and Christmas readings, sing carols, and celebrate communion to welcome this feast.

STONE CHURCH ARTS

7:30 PM, SAT, DEC 5

Early Music from the British Isles

Peter Blanchette, archguitars and Alexandra Ludwig, alto

This show will feature Strathspeys, Rants, Jigs, Airs, and more from four sources of early music of the British Isles: The Gow Collection of Scottish Dance Music, O'Neill's Music of Ireland, The Playford Dance Master, and The Collected Lute Songs of John Dowland. The first three collections make up the Bible for British Isles fiddlers, the Dowland is a jewel in the crown of Elizabethan music and one of the highpoints of Renaissance repertoire.



2 & 4 PM, SAT, DEC 12

Anonymous Nonsense, Marionette Show with Music



We will present the marionette show "Anonymous Nonsense". A lively musical marionette show for all ages based on anonymous nonsense poetry put to music by Donald Saaf and performed by the Little Hope String Band. **Tickets**

are \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door for all ages.