

# St. Philip's Weekly Newsletter

## December 12, 2021

Hello friends and thank you for your patience in allowing me a break from putting the newsletter together. I had a wonderful week in Florida with Lisa and her parents. After getting back, we took a couple more days just to do some fun "couple things" - we visited the Museum of Science & Industry and we attended the Tree Illumination at Morton Arboretum. Thank you for warmly welcoming Mother Carolyn Bavaro, who supplied for me.

There's a fair amount of church news to share and I will get to that in a moment. But first, a pressing question (LOL!): Do we have any card players at St. Philip's? I know a couple of our men have a (monthly?) Poker night. I'm pretty sure a couple of the ladies play Bridge. I ask because I have recently learned to play a really fun game similar to Canasta. Ironically, I just discovered that our former office manager, Diane, is playing this out in Arizona. My future in-laws play it every day in Florida. I wonder if it's a warm weather thing? Ha! Anyway, it's called "Hand, Knee and Foot". If any of you play and would be willing to play with a clergy person, maybe we could get a game going some time at church. Just a thought. Let me know if interested.

Well, from the ridiculous to the sublime:

St. Philip's now has a full complement of counters to help out after Sunday services. I really appreciate the way several people stepped up! I have also been informed that Michelle's appeal for Christmas Eve singers has generated some response. I look forward to the carol singing so much! Remember that the Christmas music begins at 3:30 p.m. on December 24th. The carols are followed by our usual Christmas Eve service with communion. Please invite your friends, neighbors, coworkers and family. St. Philip's WILL have a Christmas Day service, too. It will be at the usual start time of 9:30 a.m. That's a Saturday – and yes, there will be church on Sunday, the 26th too. Normal 9:30 start time. The 26th is the Feast of St. Stephen, deacon and martyr.

I want to thank everyone involved in making our annual holiday party a special affair. Pam Patyk, Bonnie Wigger-Kistner and Ginger Knowles did a superb job. And I believe we even raised a few hundred dollars for the church! Next year, we hope Santa and Mrs. Claus will be back to celebrate with us.

There's another holiday opportunity to tell you about: The Cathedral of St. James in downtown Chicago is holding its annual Festival of Lessons and Carols on December 21st. A group from St. Philip's is planning to attend the 6:30 p.m. service and if you want to be a part of the experience, let the office know. The organ prelude begins at 5:45 p.m. Transportation may be available from Palatine so please reserve a spot if you want to go with the group!

### **Needs, Concerns and Thanksgivings**

If a particular prayer request has been inadvertently "dropped" from this list, please let me know. Also, if there has been an answer to prayer, let me know that too – we want to offer thanks for God's provision! Finally, please remember that this is the comprehensive prayer list for the church. We include everyone made known to us on this list AND in our parish Book of Intentions. The Sunday and Tuesday Prayers of the People are limited to church members and immediate family.

- I invite your continued prayers for Michelle Webb, our music director. Michelle's healing well and a recent fall at church did not do any permanent damage. But Michelle is facing some additional issues and would greatly appreciate your prayers for her.
- We give thanks that Deacon Dan continues to improve. He is using a cane instead of a walker and is now able to climb stairs! Dan is scheduled to be released from the Citadel Rehab center on the 11th and will continue with home PT for six weeks.
- One of our newest members - Dana Modrowski - has asked us to pray for a dear friend of hers. Her name is Lian Tian (pronounced "LeeAnne

Tee-ahn”) and she is hospitalized with a serious colon infection. Please pray that God will meet all of Lian’s needs!

- Give thanks for the wonderful holiday party at church on the 5th. Thank God for the enjoyable time everyone had, for the funds raised and for the volunteers who made the fun even happen!
- Please add Steve Francois to our prayers. Steve has visited St Philips for years every December representing Santa at our Holiday gathering. He was not able to join us this year due to an illness.
- Please pray for my future in-laws: Juan and Eloisa Musante. Juan is supposed to have hernia surgery this month (date is TBD) and my sweetheart, Lisa, is spending the month with her folks to make sure they follow doctors’ orders.
- Pray for Susan Gibbons, wife of Fr. David Gibbons. David is rector of St. Mark’s in Barrington Hills. Susan has been diagnosed with COVID.
- I ask your continued prayers for Fr. Mike Rasicci of Calvary Episcopal in Batavia. Mike lost his wife to Covid last month and is greatly in need of prayers for comfort.
- Give thanks that Karen Notzen is doing much better. We have been praying for her and are grateful for her improvement.
- I ask your prayers for those with ongoing needs and concerns: Jill Hill; Kim McDonald; Linda Purcell; Roberta Butler; Ken and Janie Jenssen; Carrol Hercules; Bill Peterson; Andreas Kistner; Bishop-Elect Paula Hughes; Scott Garske; Molly and her parents - Laura and David; Tracy Grummer; Chris Trotti; Joe and Toni Saladino; Lillian Conway; Christina Guzman; Pam Durkin; Levi Tsu and his Family; Peggy and Don; and Marge.

In the wider church, please pray for...

- Episcopal Relief and Development
- Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, Elgin and Fr. Rich Frontjes
- New Life Covenant Church of Palatine and Pastors Joon and Julie Hwang

### **This Week's Quiz...**

...is about the season of Advent. Answers will be at the end of the newsletter.

1. The word "advent" means... (Visitation; Expectation; Arrival or Coming; Hope; Grace)
2. How far did the Blessed Virgin Mary travel to visit her cousin, Elizabeth? (10 miles; 100 miles; 500 miles; 25 miles; 1 mile)
3. What is a "Jesse Tree"? (Another kind of Advent Wreath; An Advent Calendar; A representation of Jesus' family heritage; An Environmentalist Holiday Tradition; The First Step in the "Hanging of the Greens")
4. What does the Hebrew word, "Emmanuel" mean? (God with Us; Hope for the Future; The Messiah Comes; Peace on Earth; The Nations Rejoice)
5. What does the pink Advent candle symbolize? (Peace; Joy; Promise; Salvation; Hope)

## **This Week in Christian History...**

- On December 5th, 1525: Anabaptist leader Hans Schlaffer is arrested by persecutors in Austria. Refusing to recant his opposition to infant baptism, he will subsequently be burned alive.
- On December 6th, 1678: Father Louis Hennepin, visiting the Niagara Falls, draws the first known sketch of the awe-inspiring landmark.
- On December 7th, 521: Birth of Columba, who becomes an Irish monk, educator, bishop, and missionary. He will undertake evangelization in Scotland and Northern England, founding a monastery on the isle of Iona.
- On December 8th, 1854: Pope Pius IX declares that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is now an article of Catholic faith.
- On December 9th, 1896: William Henry Sheppard, an African-American missionary to Africa, writes to supporters at home, promising to prove that he merits the trust they have placed in him. Finding little success as a missionary, he explores the Congo and exposes Belgian atrocities against the native population.
- On December 10th, 1968: Two of the most influential Christians of the 20th century died. – Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, best known for his commentary on Paul's epistle to the Romans and for his stand with the Confessing Church against the Nazis; and Thomas Merton. Merton is the American Trappist monk famed for his devotional writings. He was also an outspoken critic of American involvement in the Vietnam War.
- On December 11th, 1905: Methodist leader Reverdy C. Ransom becomes the first African American to give an address at Faneuil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts, marking the celebration of the William Lloyd Garrison Centennial.

*With thanks to the Christian History Institute*

## News Briefs...

(TOKYO, JAPAN) – Maria Grace Tazu Sasamori, priest of the Diocese of Tokyo in the Nippon Sei Ko Kei (the Anglican Church in Japan), has been elected as the first female bishop in Japan. She was elected as the bishop of Hokkaido at the 80th electoral synod of the Diocese of Hokkaido. She was elected on the 10th ballot with two-thirds of the votes of the houses of clergy and laity on Nov. 3. She accepted the result on Nov. 26 and became bishop-elect of the Diocese of Hokkaido on the same day. Mandy Marshall, director for gender justice at the Anglican Communion Office, said: “I’m excited and pleased to hear the news of the first female bishop. This is a real breakthrough for Japan and will be an encouragement to ordained women everywhere but especially in Japan. Bishop-elect Tazu will need our prayers as she steps into a very male space and has the pressure and holds the hopes of Anglican women in Japan.” She will succeed Bishop Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu, former primate of the Nippon Sei Ko Kei.

The date of her consecration and installation is yet to be determined.

*Episcopal News Service*

(VATICAN CITY) – Pope Francis says there are plans for a possible second meeting with the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, after their historic 2016 encounter in Cuba became a landmark in mending relations severed by the 1,000-year-old schism that divided Christianity.

The Holy Father said he planned to meet next week with the Russian church's foreign envoy "to agree on a possible meeting" with Patriarch Kirill. The pontiff noted that Kirill is due to travel in the coming weeks, but Francis said he was also "ready to go to Moscow" even if diplomatic protocols weren't yet in place. "Because talking with a brother, there are no protocols," Francis told reporters as he traveled home from Greece. "We are brothers. We say things to each other's face like brothers." The two churches split during the Great Schism of 1054 and have remained estranged over a host of issues, including the primacy of the pope and Russian Orthodox accusations that the Catholic Church is poaching converts in former Soviet lands. Francis made the comments after meeting with two prominent figures in Christian Orthodoxy, the heads of the Orthodox Churches in Cyprus and Greece during his five-day trip to those two nations. Meeting this weekend with Archbishop Ieronymos, the head of Greece's Orthodox Church, Francis issued a sweeping apology for all the mistakes Catholics had made against the Orthodox, echoing the apology offered by St. John Paul II in Greece in 2001. The foreign minister of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, says a new meeting between Kirill and the pope would be announced shortly before it occurred.

*Associated Press*

(TEHRAN, IRAN) – Currently at least 20 Christians are jailed in Iran because their faith was deemed a threat to the Islamic republic's national security. According to Christianity Today magazine, of the more than 100 Iranian believers imprisoned since 2012, all have faced similar charges. But a recent decision by a Supreme Court justice gives hope to them all. "Merely preaching Christianity ... through family gatherings [house churches] is not a manifestation of gathering and collusion to disrupt the security of the country, whether internally or externally," stated Seyed-Ali Eizadpanah. "The promotion of Christianity and the formation of a house church is not criminalized in law." Two years ago, nine converts from the non-Trinitarian Church of Iran in Rasht, 200 miles northeast of Tehran near the Caspian Sea, were arrested in raids on their homes and church. Sentenced to a five-year prison term in October 2019, Abdolreza Ali Haghnejad, Shahrooz Eslamdoust, Behnam Akhlaghi, Babak Hosseinzadeh, Mehdi Khatibi, Khalil Dehghanpour, Hossein Kadivar, Kamal Naamanian, and Mohammad Vafadar are now eligible for release. Eizadpanah's ruling, announced November 24, is "unprecedented," according to multiple Iranian Christians and international advocates. "The judge's main argument is what we have been saying for years," said Mansour Borji, advocacy director for Article 18, a UK-based organization promoting freedom of religion in Iran that tallied the cases noted above from available public records. "But it astonished us to hear it at such a high level." It also cuts against the grain of international understanding. The US State Department's latest religious freedom report on Iran described proselytization and conversion as punishable by death. Reza Esfandiari, an Iranian independent analyst also based in the UK, said execution would not be a normal punishment but efforts of

local pastors to convert Muslims were “definitely illegal.” “The ruling simply reflects that private belief is not a public or political issue,” he said, drawing attention to Article 23 of Iran’s constitution, “and that the state should not concern itself with house church worship and preaching.” Public witness, he said, is not permitted. Borji disputes this interpretation. Iran is signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which protect the freedom to propagate one’s faith.

*Christianity Today*

That’s it for this week, my friends. God bless each and every one of you!

## **Quiz Answers:**

1. Advent means “arrival” or “coming”.
2. Mary traveled an impressive 100 miles to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth is believed to have lived in Hebron — following a direct line, it’s 81 miles from Mary’s home town of Nazareth. Our Lady’s journey would have been much longer, however, given the mountains and roads of the time. The journey would probably have been quite dangerous.
3. Many Christians make “Jesse Trees” during Advent to recognize and honor the family lineage of Jesus. The Bible promises that the Messiah would come from the line of Jesse.
4. Emmanuel (sometimes rendered “Immanuel”) means “God with us”.
5. The pink candle on the Advent wreath is the candle of joy. Historically, Advent was considered to be a mini-Lent and a time of repentance and fasting. The “joy candle” represented the moment in Advent when we were to turn from sorrow over our sins to rejoicing for the forgiveness Christ brings. More recently, however, the entire season of Advent has been regarded as a period of joyful anticipation.