

The Evangelist

Epiphany 2023

Epiphany Meditation

using Canticle 11, The Third Song of Isaiah,
selected verses from Isaiah 60

Arise, shine, for your light has come,

Isn't it odd how praying can make you feel "shiny"? It's like lighting a candle wick, isn't it?
and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.

And have you noticed how, during this season, the sky lightens a little earlier each day?

For behold, darkness covers the land; deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.

Yeah, I've felt that way...imprisoned by sadness and fear... y' know what I mean?

But over you the Lord will rise, and his glory will appear upon you.

Can others see my "shininess" when I've been praying? Is it really that obvious?

Nations will stream to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawning.

So, do people actually find that glow appealing and inviting? Are they drawn to it?

Your gates will always be open; by day or night they will never be shut.

Should I leave a light on for them?

They will call you, The City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

When others notice that I arise and shine, will that encourage them to keep their prayers, too?

Violence will no more be heard in your land, ruin or destruction within your borders.

Do you think your floodlight can protect all those within your embrace? Is that even possible?

You will call your walls, Salvation, and all your portals, Praise.

Will the light help me see what to keep out and what to let in?

The sun will no more be your light by day;

Isn't it odd how praying seems to clarify things, even down into the shadows?

by night you will not need the brightness of the moon.

Do you think it's true what they say, that nothing is impossible with God?



Ministry Schedule for January 8 (Epiphany) to March 26 (Lent)

	1/8/23	1/15/23	1/22/23	1/29/23	2/5/23	2/12/23
Celebrant	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+
Preacher	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+
LEM	Leslie	Peter	Gloria	Colette	Leslie	Peter
Organist	Colleen H	Colleen H.	Colleen H.	Colleen H.	Colleen H.	Colleen H.
1st Lesson	Shelly	Gale	Susan S.	Sandy	Bob W.	Shelly
2nd Lesson	Ann H.	Colette	Leslie	Kelly B.	Susan S.	Leslie
Acolyte	Sarah	Stan	Shelly	Val	Sarah	Stan
Ushers	Gisela/Suzanne	Bob & Shelly	Ann & Birdie	Suzanne/Shelly	Ann & Bob	Birdie/Suzanne
Computer	Marc A.	Leslie	Kelly B	Marc A.	Kelly B	Leslie
Camera	Gale	Colette	Bob	Gale	Colette	Bob
Altar Guild	Ann/Val	Ann/Val	Ann/Val	Ann/Val	Gale/Leslie	Gale/Leslie
Counters	Stan/Peter	Stan/Peter	Stan/Peter	Stan/Peter	Val/Colette	Val/Colette
Coffee Hour	Peter	Shelly	LeAnn	NEED	NEED	NEED
St. Pauly Box	Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter	NEED	NEED
	2/19/23	2/26/23	3/5/23	3/12/23	3/19/23	3/26/23
Celebrant	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+
Preacher	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+	Nick+
LEM	Gloria	Colette	Leslie	Peter	Gloria	Colette
Organist	Colleen H	Colleen H.	Colleen H.	Colleen H.	Colleen H.	Colleen H.
1st Lesson	Peter	Gale	Sandy	Bob	Shelly	Ann H.
2nd Lesson	Ann H.	Shelly	Susan S.	Val	Peter	Leslie
Acolyte	Shelly	Val	Sarah	Stan	Shelly	Val
Ushers	Gisela/Birdie	Bob/Shelly	Ann & Shelly	Suzanne/Gisela	Bob/Ann	Birdie/Suzanne
Computer	Marc A.	Leslie	Kelly B	Leslie	Marc A.	Leslie
Camera	Gale	Colette	Bob	Gale	Colette	Bob
Altar Guild	Gale/Leslie	Gale/Leslie	LeAnn/Shelly	LeAnn/Shelly	LeAnn/Shelly	LeAnn/Shelly
Counters	Val/Colette	Val/Colette	Stan/Peter	Stan/Peter	Stan/Peter	Stan/Peter
Coffee Hour	Shelly	Val H.	NEED	NEED	Shelly	NEED
St. Pauly Box	NEED	NEED	Stan	Stan	Stan	Stan

Merry Christmas From



Nick and Gale

Our Parish Prayer List

Roger Wieland
Beth Wieland
Doug Miller
Gerrie Miller
Joan Livingston
Jane Armstrong
Laura Weismore
Birdy Burdick
Grace Livingston
Ann Hodgins
Brian Hodgins
Kathryn Zebrowski
Bill Sherman
Theressia
Tom Campanie
Jerry Aylesworth
Sandy Aylesworth
Becky Lally
Dawn Lanz
Joe Smith
Kelly Thurber
Courtney Daviau

Larry Knipp
Mimi
John
Kathy
Shelia
Butch English
Evelyn Hirst
Ron Hirst
Peter Dwyer
Charlie John Hetterich
Lisa Todd
Mitch
Rose Rinaldo
Fr. Jim Heidt
Jan Whiting
Meghan Hodgins
Kathy Kaidel
Jennifer Wattles
Eden Kulas
Suzanne Clark
Martha Walrath
Zander

Rolf
Dick Williams
Taylor
Baby Harper
Robert
Peg MacMullen
Nicole
Pat Beatty
Christine Sears Franklin
Kathi Hirst
Jessica
Megan Roberts
Bea Angus
Charlotte Collver
Mike Stalemark
Rani
Dan Stilwell
David Dauchy
Nora & Family
Sally Olin
Betty Helmer

Congratulations on Your Retirement



The Hill family once again had a milestone event. Val, after over 30 years of teaching, most recently at E.A. McAllister Elementary.

She says that she is already very busy even though she isn't going to work every day. I guess all those projects you put aside are getting done.

Enjoy your retirement Val!



Lenten Study



If you are interested in a little study during Lent - please join Gloria during Lent.

Mark your calendars! If you need detailed information - Please contact Gloria Wilkinson.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy Birthday!

January

2nd Tom Sears
3rd Ben Highers
11th Laura Weismore
21st Jessica Slaunwhite
Sarah Slaunwhite
25 Barb Arnold
27 Jerry Aylesworth

February

5th Leanne Youngkrans
8th Kim Dwyer
18th Bailey Dwyer
19th Jane Armstrong
26th Jim Dwyer
Gerrie Meeker
27th Karrie Miller
28th Shannon Dwyer

March

1st Peter Slaunwhite
Gisela Campanie
6th Shelly Sears
Joshua Sullivan

March - continued

8th Tom Campanie
Gabriel Stone
14th Kellie Highers
15th Mark Zebrowski
Kathie Hirst
17th Carol Reinhardt
21st Gerald Taylor
24st Megan Dwyer
29th Carol Dwyer

Happy Anniversary!

January

1st Jessica and Frank Slaunwhite

February

No Anniversaries

March

10th Frank and Colette Coppola

A Life Lesson

Author Unknown

My friend handed me a very old metal match box car today. Then he said, "I found this yesterday and it reminded me of a major life lesson." I held it in my hand and looked at it while he talked.

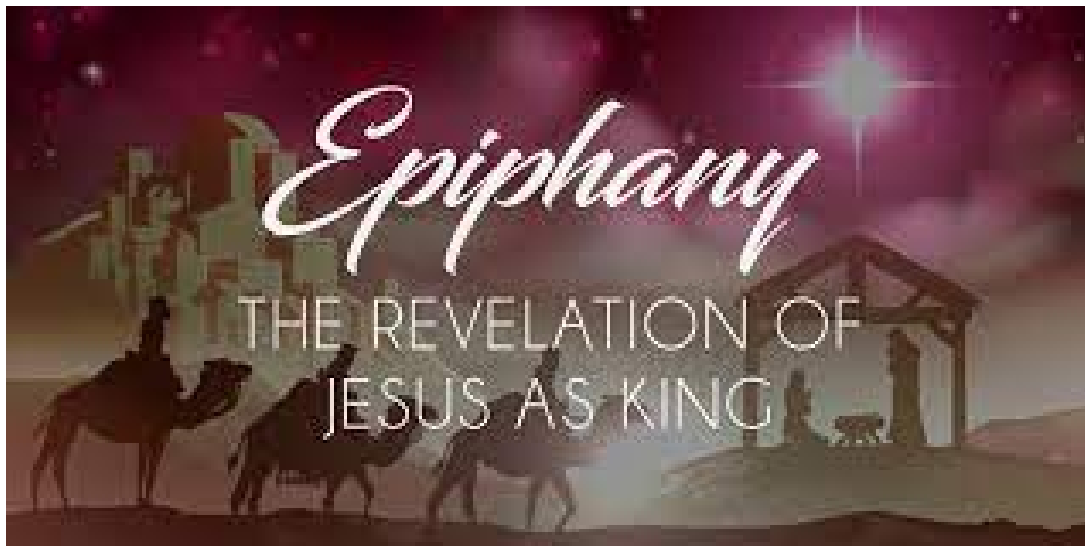
He said, "when I was in elementary school, we did a Secret Santa in my classroom at school. All the kids drew a name and then we exchanged presents the last day before Christmas break". He said, "my parents went out and bought me a nice new toy to give to the child I had drawn. My mom wrapped it up and the kid who received the present loved it."

He then said, "I found my present from a boy in my class that I didn't really know. It looked like it had been wrapped with newspaper. I opened it and it was that little car you are holding in your hand." He said, "... but when he gave it to me it was dirty and looked well played with. I was mad I had given such a nice gift and he had put so little effort into his. I felt cheated."

He said, "but later I learned the kid lived in a very run-down shack. His mom was sick and his daddy had left them years before. They barely had enough money to have heat and food."

He said "when I realized he had given me one of his only few toys, I felt ashamed for the way I treated him when I got the gift. I only learned how poor he was after he quit coming to school and we were told his mom had died and he had been sent to foster care. I never saw him again. I kept this little car all these years because I know it was the best present I have ever gotten."

I thought about this story and looked at that little car sitting in my hand and I cried. How many times in my life have I been given something from someone and not appreciated its TRUE value. This kid had given with his heart when he had so little and it made me realize I need to remember to never judge anything on the surface and always look deeper.



THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

I'd like to thank everyone who stated and helped with the greening of the church on Advent 4. We Also like to thank the Livingstons for the greens. Thank you Peter for getting the greens for us.

We were wonderfully serenaded by Leanne's grandchildren. As you'll note - I don't have any pictures of me hanging the greens but that's okay - I like taking the pictures.

Colette Coppola



Of course there would have been women there that night

By Jo McAndrews (Submitted by Gale Smith)

Of course there would have been women there in Bethlehem that night. There is rarely a baby born alone in the world when there is a free woman nearby. I imagine that the first was the inn keeper's wife, let's call her the other innkeeper. She would have been dashing from the stove to the bar when she heard her husband turning that couple away. Maybe he was a good man and disappointed them kindly, but she saw the huge belly, recognised the low-down posture of a baby about to drop into the world. She would have put down the plates she was carrying and laid her hand on the small of that poor tired woman's back. Warmth and understanding relieving the ache, in that tiny profound gesture.

It would have been that other innkeeper who led the couple to the barn, made a clear cozy refuge and brought blankets to make beds on the straw. Maybe she settled them, then went back to the inn and called the kitchen girls to make extra stew, it was going to be a long night. Then maybe she called on the old midwife, the woman who had caught nearly the whole town in her gentle hands as they had each arrived. The old woman would have summoned her daughter, called her away from her own children to come and help her greet this new baby, receive this new life into safety.

They would have made their calm and smoothly urgent way to the innkeepers' barn, wondering if there was time to move this young about-to-be mother to their own small house, or one of their neighbors'. They would have knocked on a few doors as they went, asking for blankets, sheets, water, lamps for when the darkness fell. There would have been bustling and excitement, laughing and calling as the women dropped their usual busy activity to turn towards the arrival of new life in their midst. At least one of them would have offered to make up a bed. Maybe they arrived at the barn and realized that none of them could offer anywhere more comfortable than this spacious shelter. Or maybe it was just too late to move this young woman already shouting with labor pains.

The old midwife would have looked into her eyes, that frightened the traveler, and told her that everything was going to be fine, that she was there and would help her bring this baby safely to birth. She would have relaxed, Mary, the only one whose name we know, the only woman recorded to be at the birth of Christ. Even a miracle needs a mother in the story.

I imagine the women settling in for the long and busy wait, sending the older children on errands for more food and drink, another jug of water for the laboring mother. They would have shared their memories in the quieter moments, of the many babies they had birthed and helped to birth. The midwife would have reminded them of their own stories, the one who came out backwards, the one who arrived before she could even get there. Silent exchanges of looks and murmured blessings as they remembered the ones who arrived cold or whose mothers did not make it through. Only the cheerful stories out loud tonight to offer reassurance through fearful moments. Grief has its own time.

Maybe Joseph was there cradling his wife's head and humming tender sounds to soothe her. Or maybe he was passing the anxious time in the crowded bar of the inn, being treated to drinks and slapped on the back, or perhaps he was pacing backwards and forwards though the familiar town of his own birth, thinking about his mother and wishing she was there to see him become a father.

Maybe she was there. She could have even been the midwife herself. How can we know except through our imagining of this bit of the story that was never written and has long disappeared?

Anyway, in the barn, I imagine the group of women growing in number as the word gets around town. A traveler arrived tonight and was about to give birth, needing company as her own family are far away. I can hear them singing quietly or raucously depending on the changing needs of the moment; gentling, encouraging, reviving her exhausted spirits. Our innkeeper would have brought the hot stew and warm cakes from the oven, in her element, caring for those far from home and needing hospitality. Her good husband would have taken on her other work for the night, calling on his brothers to help. Something special was happening and everyone wanted to be part of it.

I imagine that tiny and most welcome baby arriving just after dawn, as the sun rose high enough to send its rays through the gaps in the barn walls, illuminating the floating straw dust in a halo of shining light. The birth of the sun of life, the birth of the son of God, meeting in that holy moment of wonder. New healthy life, slippery and warm, squalling with surprise at the shock of air into his lungs for the first ever time. His first breath and the whole company sighing with relief. This ordinary, extraordinary miracle that accompanies every new child of God as we arrive in danger, blood, pain and amazement. Of course they wouldn't have put him in a manger, why would they when there were so many eager arms and Mary's warm breast waiting for his first suckling?

I can imagine the star that had shone surprisingly brightly through the night, still twinkling in the early morning sky, making the miracle visible for many hundreds of miles. We are told it summoned kings. Gold, frankincense and myrrh. Rich gifts indeed. But the gift of those women is beyond royal reach. Those women who dropped everything to bring company, practical care and love for a stranger who was not a stranger; a woman giving birth is known and held by all mothers. We each have a nativity story, even those of us who have never been recognised as sacred.

Of course there would have been women in Bethlehem that night. How would the world be if we had never forgotten that? Let us remember now.



Upcoming Issues of Evangelist

February 17th

Deadline for articles will be two days prior to these dates. We appreciate all of the articles that were given to us and look forward to the many more that will be shared in the future. If you see little stories, jokes, etc that you'd like to share. Please send them at any time to Colette in her email. Please write in the subject area that it is for the newsletter.

ENJOY!! Colette Coppola and Colleen Kahler—Co-Editors

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Rector: The Very Rev. Arthur "Nick" Smith
Office Manager: Kelly Brown
Parish Administrator: Leslie Zebrowski

Treasurer: Jack MacMullen
Clerk of the Vestry: Valerie Hill
Senior Warden: Peter Slaunwhite
Junior Warden: Gloria Wilkins

Sandra Aylesworth
Ann Hodgins

Sheila Aylesworth
Kellie Highers

Vestry Members
Suzanne Bauer
Leanne Youngkrans

Valerie Hill
Bob Wilkins

Garry Hirst

Loving God, by your grace you have gathered us from many walks of life to become a loving family at St. John's. Help us to sustain the miraculous love within this parish, and guide us in sharing this love with our neighbors. All this we ask through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.