



The Messenger

*The Church of the Incarnation
600 Third Avenue North
Great Falls, MT 59401*

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." - John 1:14

December, 2015



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services

Thursday, December 24th (The Eve of the Nativity)

Festive Holy Eucharist at 6:30 p.m.

Special Christmas Music at 10:30 p.m.

Festive Holy Eucharist at 11:00 p.m.

Friday, December 25th (The Day of the Nativity)

Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.



Happening This Month!

Holy Eucharist is celebrated each week:

Sunday at 8:00 a.m.

Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday at noon

Recovery Service each Saturday at 6:00 p.m.

Clothing Closet is open Thursday and Saturday, 10 a.m-1 p.m.

Wednesday, December 2 - Advent Taize Service, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 5 - Eucharist and Chili Feed in honor of Daughters of the King, Noon

Wednesday, December 9 - Episcopal Church Women's Christmas Luncheon, Parish Hall, 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 12 - St. Andrew's Guild (Andy's Bunch) Breakfast, Perkins Restaurant, 8:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 13 - Home Aloners Christmas Luncheon, Meadow Lark Country Club, 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 19 - Altar Guild Brass Party, 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 24 - Altar Guild Christmas Preparations, 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve Festive Eucharist, 6:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

Friday, December 25 - Christmas Day Holy Eucharist, 10:00 a.m.

Twelve-Step organizations meet in Gilliam Hall each week:

GA - Monday and Friday, 7 p.m. and Saturday, 1 p.m.

GA and Gamanon - Wednesday, 7 p.m.

AA - Wednesday and Saturday, 7:30 p.m.

Men's CODA - Tuesday, noon

CODA - Thursday, noon

Alanon - Friday, 12:15 p.m.



Episcopal Church Women's Christmas Luncheon

Episcopal Church Women will meet at 1:00 o'clock in the Parish Hall on Wednesday, December 9, for a Christmas potluck luncheon. Jeanette Baird and Eddie Wilson will provide the main courses—chicken and meatballs. Members are asked to bring salad or dessert. Jeanette and Eddie will be calling to ascertain what you will bring. If you are not called by the Monday before the meeting, please call Jeanette at 453-8114.

There will be a gift exchange. Please bring a gift of not more than \$10 for the exchange.



Attention Incarnation Choir!

Advent Rehearsal-Saturday, December 5, 1:00-3:00.

Advent Lessons & Carols-Sunday, December 6, 10 a.m. (warmup at 9 a.m.)

Participate in Caroling Party-Sunday, December 20

Christmas Rehearsal-Wednesday, December 23, 7-9 p.m.

Christmas Eve Concert Tribute to Sir David Willcocks- December 24, 10:30 p.m. (warmup at 9:45)

Choir in recess-December 25-January 9

Resume Sunday services-January 10 (warmup at 9 a.m.)

"The Light Still Shines"

**Saints and Holy Days for the
Month of December
Saint Thomas the Apostle;
Saint Stephen, Deacon, and Martyr;
Saint John, the Apostle, and Evangelist;
and Holy Innocents**

We celebrate St. Thomas the Apostle on December 21st. St. Thomas is the patron Saint of architects, builders, and India. He is also referred to as Doubting Thomas, or Didymus (meaning Twin as does “Thomas in Aramaic). St. Thomas was a skilled carpenter and builder by trade. He died December 21, 72 AD by means of the spear, as a form of martyrdom in Mylapore (modern day India).

St. Thomas was perhaps the only Apostle to go outside the Roman Empire to preach the Gospel. He and Bartholomew are believed to have crossed the largest area, including the Parthian Empire as well as India.

St. Thomas is famous for doubting the other disciples when they told him they had seen Jesus after his burial. He said to them, “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Then eight days later Jesus said to Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said unto him, “My Lord and my God.” Jesus then said unto him, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

Another significant event involving St. Thomas is that he is believed to be the only witness to the Assumption of Mary into heaven. After Mary’s first burial he went to her tomb and witnessed her bodily assumption into heaven, when she dropped her girdle. Upon hearing this story the other apostles became skeptical until they saw the empty tomb and the girdle.

St. Stephen, Deacon, and Martyr is celebrated on December 26th. St. Stephen was the first martyr of Christianity and was also considered a deacon in the early church who aroused a level of discord among some of the members of various synagogues because of his teachings. He was one of the Greek-speaking Hellenistic Jews selected because there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews for a fairer distribution of welfare to the Greek-speaking widows, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

However, St. Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost (also referred to as the Holy Spirit), looking up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. At this point the members of the Sanhedrin (the supreme legal court made up of Jewish elders) became furious with St. Stephen because he bested them in debate and accusing him of preaching against the Temple and the Mosaic Law. Then the members of the Sanhedrin cried out

Then the members of the Sanhedrin cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord. They then cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.

St. Stephen is the patron saint of the Acoma Indian Pueblo; casket makers; Cetona, Italy; deacons; headaches; horses; Kessel, Belgium; masons; Owensboro, Kentucky; Passau, Germany; Serbia; and the Republic of Srpska.

St. John the Apostle and Evangelist is celebrated on December 27th. St. John was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome and brother of James, son of Zebedee, another of the Twelve Apostles. He is believed to be the same person as John the Evangelist, John of Patmos, St. John the Divine, and the Beloved Disciple. He is generally considered to be the author of five books in the New Testament: the Gospel of John, the three Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation.

St. John and his brother James were the cousins of Jesus, and their mother Salome was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. They first were disciples of St. John the Baptist, their second cousin. Jesus referred to the pair collectively as “Boanerges” (translated as the “sons of thunder”). St. John along with St. Peter and St. James also witnessed the Transfiguration. St. John explicitly along with Saints Peter and James the Just were referred to as “pillars of the church.” St. John preached in Asia Minor and settled in Ephesus. St. John is the patron saint of Love, loyalty, friendships, authors, booksellers, burn-victims, poison-victims, art-dealers, editors, papermakers, publishers, scribes, scholars, and theologians.

We celebrate the Holy Innocents on December 28th as a way of remembering and honoring those innocent babies that King Herod had killed in his efforts to ensure that none of them could become a future King of his kingdom. This is also referred to as the “Massacre of the Innocents.” However, this did not work because the Lord in a dream told Joseph to take the baby Jesus into Egypt and to stay there until Joseph is told that it is safe to return to his homeland.

A disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Spero



ADVENT TAIZE SERVICE
Wednesday, December 2
7:00 p.m.

Come, step aside.

Gather in the stillness of quiet song and prayer.

COME!



Home Aloners
Christmas
Luncheon

Home Aloners will meet at the Meadow Lark Country Club at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 13, for a Christmas luncheon hosted by Loraine Roberts.

Reservations are required. Please call Laverne Knowles, 452-6958, by December 10 to let her know you will attend.



A Note
from
Phyllis Viccioni

Thinking of my friends at Incarnation and wishing you all a very Merry and Blessed Christmas season!

At the present time I am in the hospital with shoulder surgery, I am hoping to return to Great Falls at some time in the future. I miss you all.



The deadline for the January *Messenger* is **MONDAY, DECEMBER 28**. Please submit articles to Vi Stahlecker at vstahlecker@bresnan.net, by phone at 452-4209, or by mail at 3304 Arbor Way, Great Falls, MT 59405.

WHO'S WHO

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Dr. C. Franklin Brookhart
Assistant Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Carol J. Gallagher
Rector: The Rev. Timothy M. Ljunggren
Deacon: The Rev. Marcia Lauzon
Verger: Kevin Williams

The Vestry

Senior Warden: Richard Pate
Junior Warden: Gretchen Swift
Treasurer: Beth Baker
Jeff Brainard
Jack Corcino
Geraldine deRooy
Lana Furdell
Nona Munroe
Ed Neste
Andrew Sloan
Kevin Williams

The Staff

Organist/Choir Director: Lana Furdell
Secretary: Becky Workman
Sexton: Doug Pate
The Messenger Editor: Vi Stahlecker



ALTAR GUILD BRASS PARTY

Saturday, December 19 at 1:30 p.m.

Bring your rags, a small pot and old tooth brushes, and come join with us as we shine up the brass in preparation for Christmas

The Messenger is published monthly by the

Church of the Incarnation

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The Rev. Tim Ljunggren, Rector
Vi Stahlecker, Editor

FISH ACTIVITIES

The Town Pump's Matching Program

From the 1st of September through November 30th the Town Pump is matching all donations to FISH, dollar for dollar up to a total \$15,000. We at The Church of the Incarnation raised \$1,010 during this fundraising period. This gives the FISH program a total of \$2,020 due to your efforts. A big thank you; to all of you who helped in raising this large amount of money for FISH.

Herberger's Community Day

On November 11th through the 14th Herberger's had their community day. For this effort The Church of the Incarnation raised \$510.

FISH Sunday

Sunday November 22nd was our FISH Sunday for collecting money for the FISH program, using the fish creel baskets. The money we collected will be matched by the Town Pump dollar for dollar. For this effort we raised \$475 which will be matched by the Town Pump for the FISH program.

Note: The money the FISH program collected from September 1st through November 30th is that which the FISH program uses to operate for the coming year. The only other fundraiser is the Loaves and Fishes Dinner held around the first part of Lent.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

On behalf of FISH, thank you for your kind and generous support. Your love and concern make this worthwhile organization possible. You have been generous to FISH in the following ways:

Buying Herberger's Community Day coupons; supporting the Loaves & Fishes dinner; contributing to the Town Pump challenge; volunteering at FISH when your week is scheduled; donating food; supporting FISH with financial gifts; and praying for our continued success.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of FISH thank you again for all your support and your partnership in the FISH program during 2015. May God bless you during the up-coming holiday season.

FISH Board of Directors

If you would like to give a year end gift, you may mail it to P.O. Box 662, Great Falls MT, 59403-0662.

FISH Data for October 2015

The chart below is a comparison of those serviced by FISH between October 2014 and October 2015. As you can see there have been some changes between the 2014 and 2015 figures. There was an increase in the number of families, singles, adults, children, meals served, and total pounds delivered; we were up 8.9%, 1.4%, 3.4%, 9.9%, 32.0%, and 13.3% respectively. There were no decreases in the number of people served. The YTD numbers increased for families, singles, adults, meals served, and total pounds delivered; we were up 3.0%, 3.5%, 2.0%, 19.3%, and 2.0% respectively. The YTD number for children served decreased by 16.3%. However, FISH still provided about 5.5 tons of emergency food to our community during the month of October 2015 and 44.6 tons (or 4.5 tons per month) YTD for January through October 2015. As you can see there is quite a demand for emergency food here in Great Falls. This demand is met only by your generous donations to FISH and is greatly appreciated by all the recipients.

	September, 2014	2014 YTD`	September, 2015	2015 YTD
Families	90	858	98	884
Singles	73	630	74	652
Adults	236	2,068	244	2,110
Children	121	1,168	133	978
Meals	4,284	38,832	5,655	46,320
Pounds of Food	9,707	87,442	10,998	89,153

Clearly, there is still a demand (in our community) for the emergency food we distribute through FISH. Amen!

Bob Shanks, Member of the FISH Board of Directors, Representing the Church of the Incarnation,

Holy Smoke! On the Use of Incense

Written by Fr. Homer F. Rogers, from a brochure at St. John's Church, Newport, RI. Adapted by the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rosemont, PA, transcribed by Mr. Robert Stephenson, and adapted once more by Fr. Jared Cramer, St. John's Episcopal Church, Grand Haven, MI; edited for use at the Church of the Incarnation, Great Falls, MT, by Andrew Sloan.

Once upon a time, in a far away land, before the days of Air-wick and indoor plumbing, people's houses would get musty, and the odors of cooked cabbage and garlic would cling to the walls and curtains, and on damp days a crowded house might smell like the locker room of a gymnasium. Folks discovered, probably at first by accident, that if they would burn fragrant resins and gums, the smoke would sweeten the air and make life indoors much more pleasant.

However, since these aromatic resins and gums were rare and costly, they were saved for those occasions when company was coming. Thus it came to be that burning incense became a sign of somebody important coming to the house. You walk in, and smell incense and say, "Who is coming?"

Royalty and the aristocracy had incense burned before them on all public occasions. If you wished to honor a friend, you burned incense when he visited you.

Incense was burned in temples and all places of public and private worship in honor of the God who was to visit the temple. It purified the place in anticipation of his visit. The Jews did this and the Christians took over the custom. It is referred to in two of the opening sentences of Daily Prayer in our Book of Common Prayer, a signal of the tradition of its use during Christian worship, including our own Anglican tradition.

? "From the rising of the sun to its setting my Name shall be great among the nations, and in every place incense shall be offered to my Name, and a pure offering: for my Name shall be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts." Malachi 1:11 (Daily Morning Prayer, Rite Two, Book of Common Prayer (BCP), p. 76)

? "Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." Psalm 141:2 (Daily Evening Prayer, Rite Two, BCP, p. 115)

Our Book of Common Prayer also indicates that its use is appropriate during the consecration of an altar (BCP, p. 576) as a symbol of the holiness of this space where God becomes present and as a prelude to its use at

the altar on particularly festive occasions during the church year.

And, of course, incense was among the three gifts brought to the Christ child by the magi, making its use during the principal feast of the Epiphany, the holiday that commemorates that event, particularly appropriate.

It is instructive to notice the places in the Church service at which incense is offered. On the entrance into the sanctuary, at the beginning of Holy Eucharist, the priest "censes" the altar to prepare it for the coming of God on the altar. Then he or she is "censed" by the deacon or thurifer because the priest is to become an instrument through which God acts in the service. The Gospel is censed because through it God still speaks to us.

The bread and wine are "censed" at the offertory, because God is going to visit them and, after that, they become His Body and Blood. Then the congregation is "censed" for they are going to receive their communion—God is going to visit them. Through participation in the sacrament, they also are to become instruments through which God acts in the service. They further are due honor in their own right as the Mystical Body of Christ through which (with the priest) God acts to become present once more.

At the moment of the Consecration, the bread and wine, Christ's Body and Blood now truly Present, are again "censed" by the thurifer in unison with the Sanctus bells, because God becomes present there.

God is really acting through God's priests. God is really present on our altars under the forms of bread and wine. God is really speaking to us through the reading of the Gospel, and finally God is really and actually present in the Christian who receives the Sacraments or hears God's Word.

Incense is not used merely because it is pretty, or because it smells sweet, or because some people may like (or not like!) something that is "high church." It is not about looking fancy or seeming holy, but it is about honoring the sacred mysteries we celebrate presenting God our first fruits and our best. It is the crossroads of stewardship and prayer, of celebrating and honoring the God who loves us. The incense smoke is symbolic of our prayers being brought up to God. It's also representative of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Incense serves as a living link with Christians and Jewish antiquity. It assures us that the early Christians believe, as we believe, when we gather together in his Name, God is in our midst, that we do not merely re-

(Continued on page 7)



Transformation ahead! Join now!

Everyone agrees: churches are changing. This is natural. Church has always been in a process of change, right from the very beginning. Some shifts are small, some larger. In our liturgical church, the service changes slowly, if at all. But like other churches, the roles church plays in our lives, and how we live out our Christian mission, continues to evolve as the world around us changes.

A Great Falls pastor, Dr. Ruth Fletcher of the Disciples of Christ, has written a fascinating book called *Thrive*. During a sabbatical she visited many churches, large and small, of various denominations. She found that churches that were thriving began their journey to renewal with something very simple: prayer. Groups within those churches gathered and prayed for each other and for their parish. To everyone's surprise, this simple change unlocked vast new possibilities for the individuals and for the parishes.

It is clear that Incarnation is undergoing a renewal. Yet in the midst of change, there is always challenge. We deeply need the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Will you help? Will you do this one, simple transformative thing? Will you join with me, with Father Tim and your vestry, in prayer for our parish? This will cost you nothing but your time. The benefits can be huge. Will you join us?

Let's make a bond: at least until Advent 2016 begins, one year from now, we commit to praying daily for our beloved parish. Ask God to guide us, inspire us, and strengthen us to do his work in the world. We can, with God's help.

Beloved God, creator of all that is and all that will be: Guide the people of Incarnation. Strengthen our life together. Inspire us to fulfill your commandments. Give us what we need to do your work. Make us bold in service to our neighbors, joyous in worship, and strong in your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Marcia Lauzon
Deacon

Holy Smoke! (continued from page 6)

member a dead Jew but have Communion with a living Christ, that we do not merely long for a heaven that is "up yonder," or "in the sweet by and by," but adore an Eternal Lord who is "right here and now."

It adds to our service an atmosphere of mystery—and well it might. For it signifies an invasion of the Eternal into time, of the Infinite All Holy into the midst of His people.

As we welcome this addition to one of our worship services at the Church of the Incarnation we hope that it adds a sense of mystery into our lives prompting awe, impressing us with the terrifying fact of the imminent entrance of the Divine who flung the stars into space and who numbers the hairs of our heads, yet whose tender love is concerned with the sparrow's fall, who willed to be laid in a manger and nailed to a cross that you and I might know His love for all eternity.

Because we want all people to be able to share in this unique form of solidarity sharing an ancient experience of worship with incense that has been a part of the worship of the divine for thousands of years, we are very careful at Incarnation. We use the highest quality hypoallergenic charcoal we can procure and we burn only pure hypoallergenic incense. With these, the use of incense in our space produces less particulate matter in the air than do the candles on the altar.

Understanding the ancient meaning of incense as purification before the entrance of an important visitor, incense as the Church uses it is eloquent testimony and a vivid dramatization of the Church's most cherished beliefs and vital experiences: God's coming to humanity, really and actually, in humanity's worship of God.

At the intercession of the Blessed Michael the Archangel who stands at the right hand of the altar of incense, may the Lord graciously accept this fragrant offering to his praise and glory. Amen.



“HOLY ROLLERS”

Helping hands bring the beds to Incarnation for Family Promise Week



ECW VETERANS DAY LUNCHEON



FALL QUIET DAY MEDITATIONS

The Reverend Tim Ljunggren

May these meditations Fr. Tim prepared for Incarnation's Fall Quiet Day be a deep and abiding blessing for you as you read and prayerfully consider them throughout the season of Advent.

MEDITATION #1

Each of the seasons offers a great deal of wisdom for the spiritual journey. Autumn is a season of transition, reminding us that our lives are constantly in flux. Of course change is always with us, but autumn brings us to a deeper awareness that we live in a continual cycle of dying and rising. In the Benedictine tradition, one of the commitments is to conversion. Essentially it means being open to the surprise of God throughout your life and therefore open to change. It means believing that God is far bigger than anything you can ever imagine, and so there will always be more dimensions of the sacred to discover.

Dear God, allow us to notice You in the changes in our lives; allow us to be always mindful of Your mercy and love; open our eyes to the magnificence of Your creation. Amen.

MEDITATION #2

The autumn leaves changing colors are actually reverting to their original hue as chlorophyll is gradually blocked. As the trees begin to pull energy inward for the coming hibernation of winter the chlorophyll in the leaves decreases and the vibrant shades we witness are the tree's true color. As autumn begins, we are called to reflect where we are being invited to surrender our masks and become more truly whom we already are. With fall's energy of release, we are asked to consider the things, habits, beliefs, and attitudes that we are being called to let go of in the coming days.

Dear God, You created us in Your image — allow us to be ever mindful of our beautiful heritage. Help us to live into You with greater fullness, intensity, and dedication, so that we might become our True Selves. Amen.

MEDITATION #3

The autumnal equinox is the day when the sun rests above the equator, and day and night are divided equally. Autumn's gifts reflect this balance between two energies: the invitation to relinquish and to harvest. Autumn is a season of paradox that invites us to consider what we are called to release and surrender — what no longer serves us or what gets in the way of being present to the holiness of each moment. Autumn also invites us to gather in the harvest, to name and celebrate the fruit of the seeds of dreams we planted months ago. In holding these two in tension, we are reminded that in our letting go, we also find abundance.

Dear God, it is in You that we find true abundance and true life. Allow us to look past those things that keep us from You, and allow us to embrace those things that bind us to Your glory. Amen.

MEDITATION #4

The radiant amber light of late afternoon spilling through clouds illuminates autumn branches strung with glittering jewel tones. Crispin Sartwell, in his book *Six Names of Beauty* describes wabi-sabi, a concept from Japanese culture to describe "the beauty of the withered, weathered, tarnished, scarred, intimate, coarse, earthly, evanescent, tentative, ephemeral." Autumn calls us to remember our own fragility and cherish this beauty.

Dear God, in You we find perfection in imperfection; allow us to accept ourselves and others as dynamic, fragile instruments whose purpose is to be filled with Your love. Amen.

MEDITATION #5

In many ways, autumn is also a time of new beginnings. School starts, and while we may no longer be students, we might be teachers or parents or otherwise connected to the academic year. Our Jewish sisters and brothers celebrate their new liturgical year right now, a time of introspection and reflection. May this season offer you a new beginning of your own. Listen for the invitation to open yourself to the surprises God has waiting for you, or to release the mask that hinders you.

Dear God, give us the courage and strength to honor You by becoming our true selves; allow us the opportunity to shine with Your love and gentleness, and to be a beacon to others that draws them nearer to You. Amen.



"Here we come a-caroling!"

**C.C.C. (CHILI / CAROLING / CITY BAR)
JOIN THE FUN ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20!**

Meet in the Parish Hall at 2:00 o'clock.

Head out for caroling around 3:00.

Warm up at the City Bar.

News from the Memorial Foundation

By Gayle Gallik Archey

The Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Church Memorial Foundation held its quarterly meeting on Nov. 12, 2015. The Foundation received its annual distribution from the Montana Community Foundation in the amount of \$1,966.92, which the Foundation transferred to the Vestry. Treasurer Ardelle Watkins announced the Foundation's investments are down due to a decline in the stock market.

Jr. Warden Gretchen Swift presented Foundation members with several bids for the installation of a washer and dryer in the Church's Youth Kitchen, to be used to launder clothing for The Clothing Closet. The Vestry will review the bids, and discuss the washer and dryer project at their upcoming meeting.

Sr. Warden Richard Pate stated the foundation of the Church building is in dire need of repair. Bids for the foundation work have been sought, but none have been received yet.

President Wayne Linnell, will appoint a Nominating Committee to fill three vacancies on the Foundation Board, as the terms of three members will expire the end of the year.



Decorate the Church for Christmas

We welcome your gifts of memorials and thanksgivings for decorating our church for Christmas. Please prayerfully consider sending a contribution soon. You may send your check with a copy of this form to the parish office by December 19. All gifts will be listed in the Christmas bulletin.

Your name _____

Your thanksgiving or memorial message to be included in the Christmas bulletin:

