



The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector: Good News Brought by Angels

Christmas is one of the great festivals of the Church. It celebrates the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. The word *Christmas* originally meant the Mass of Christ. This is the Great Festival of the Lord Jesus Christ, of His Incarnation, of God becoming man in the infant Jesus born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. At Christmas we celebrate the reason for our faith as Christians—the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this world, the fullness of the revelation of God to mankind through a man.

At the heart of Christmas lie the infancy narratives of the *Gospels according to St. Matthew* and *St. Luke* and, in a more profound way, the Prologue of the *Gospel according to St. John*. The beautiful figurines of nativity sets and the nativity plays which are performed in some

churches, as well as most Christmas carols, all tend to reflect the accounts of Jesus Christ's birth that we find in *St. Matthew 1:18-2:12* and *St. Luke 2:1-21*. If these infancy narratives had been omitted from the Gospel ac-



counts, we would have lacked the glorious but homely details of the Lord Jesus Christ's birth.

Now one of the functions of these birth narratives in the Gospels is to illustrate the coming of the Son into the humble

circumstances of ordinary people's lives. It was not to King Herod, or to his court, or to the wealthy Sadducees that the angel of the Lord appeared to tell the news of our Savior's birth. Instead, the shepherds keeping watch through the night over the flocks of sheep received this sudden and momentous good news. God knew the shepherds wouldn't react by asking if this was really happening or being skeptical of it. The angel gave them a sign by which they would recognize the baby as the prophesied Christ— He would be wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger (*St. Luke 2:12*).

What is the significance of being wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger? Swaddling clothes, or cloths, were widely used in the ancient Middle East to swaddle newborn babies. The significance of these was

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Good News Brought by Angels

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simply that Jesus was well-cared for by His parents. The sign that the angels referred to was more in the fact that thus well-cared for in swaddling clothes, He would be lying in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. This was really quite unusual, and a sign of there being no room for Jesus and His parents at the inn. From the beginning of His life on earth, Jesus found Himself in humble, ordinary circumstances, unusual for a king. It is this reversal of the circumstances one would expect for the birth of a king or the Messiah that constitutes the sign of which the angel spoke.

The angel's words to the shepherds are followed immediately by the appearance of a multitude of angels ("the heavenly host") singing the praises of God and blessing mankind with peace and goodwill. The Church's "*Gloria in excelsis*" sung or said during the service of Holy Communion is based on the words of their song. After this, the shepherds at once go to Bethlehem to see the wonder of the Savior's birth prophesied to them by the angels. The Good News brought by angels the shepherds receive with joy and obedience, as they act upon it. They in turn, after seeing Mary, Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger, tell everyone the prophetic

words spoken by the angels concerning Jesus Christ. All to whom they give this Good News are filled with wonder at these words. As for the shepherds, their lives are changed, for they return to their fields and flocks "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (*St. Luke 2:20*, KJV). They are bearers of the Good News themselves, sharing the words that the angel told them about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The hymn-writer John Byrom in the eighteenth century wrote the hymn "Christians, awake, salute the happy morn" (Hymn 16, *1940 Hymnal*), in which he alludes to the angelic proclamation to the shepherds. In stanza 1, he writes that with the angels the joyful tidings first began, and in stanza 4, he describes the shepherds as "the earliest heralds of the Saviour's name." In the fifth stanza, John Byrom encourages Christians, "Let us, like these good shepherds, then employ / Our grateful voices to proclaim the joy." The joy is the happiness people should have because of Christ's birth, His first advent in this world, but it is a joy which stirs us not only because of Christ's nativity, but also because of His whole life, passion, death, and resurrection on earth.

As we meditate on the inspiring events surrounding the birth of the Lord

Jesus Christ as described in the second chapter of the *Gospel according to St. Luke*, we must realize the profound difference that the coming of the Lord has made to our ordinary lives. By our faith in Him and our union with Him in Holy Baptism, we have become His witnesses, and to that end the Holy Spirit empowers and inspires us. The shepherds heard God's prophecy and instruction to go and see the newborn Savior of the world; they received this message with wonder and joy, acting on it immediately; when they had seen the child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, they told everyone the saying of the angels that this was the Savior of the world; they then returned to their fields, glorifying and praising God. If we take these lessons to heart, it means that our sharing of the Gospel with others arises out of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in obeying the Gospel which we have received, and that faith, evangelism, and worship all feed one another and are fed by one another. Out of gratefulness, we are to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and the joy that His life has brought to so many!

If we are to be effective witnesses of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our lives must be infused

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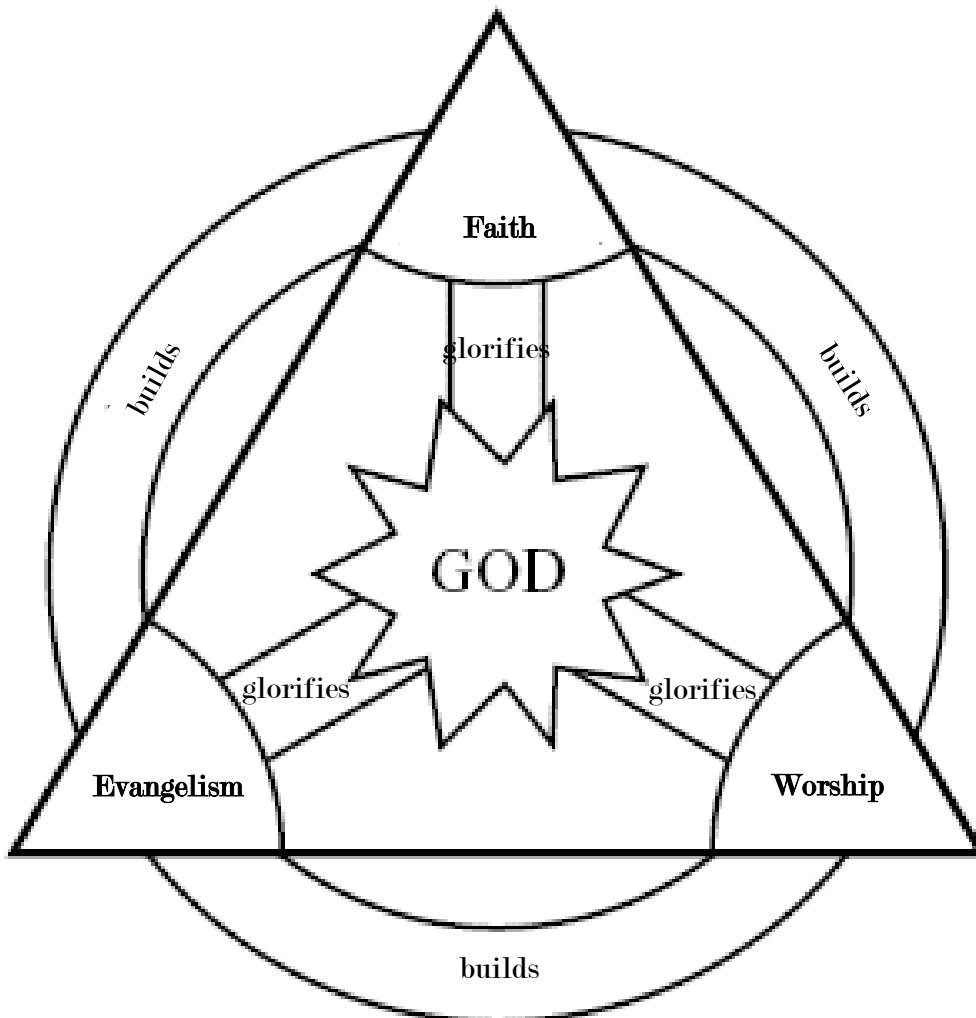
Good News Brought by Angels

(Continued from page 2) with the Gospel and the word of God, and empowered by the Holy Spirit through living daily in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ through prayer, praise, and worship. If our daily struggles and the ordinary business of life dominate

our thoughts and feelings, we easily lose touch with the dynamism of God's life. In a materialistic and secular society, Christians must take care to live in such a way that God remains our first love (*Deuteronomy 6:5*), and that we love others as Christ has loved us (*St.*

John 13:34). Let the account of the angels' singing praises to God at the birth of Christ inspire our faith, our worship, and our witness!

– The Reverend
Christopher Parrish



Our Chapel Family Prayer List

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that Thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for Thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all



*Hear my prayer, O Lord,
give ear to my supplications:
in Thy faithfulness answer me,
and in Thy righteousness.*

Psalm 143:1

who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to Thy fatherly goodness:

Archbishop Beach;
Bishop Ilgenfritz;
Dean Penfield,
our Vicar-General;
Father Parrish;

Deacon Vogel; and
Deacon Bracken;
as well as all those who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; especially those for whom our prayers are desired:

the soldiers, sailors,
marines, airmen,
police officers,
firefighters, and pilots
who protect us every day;
our persecuted Christian
brothers and sisters
throughout the world;

Estelle Wilson;
Julia McNeely;
Claudia Schott;
Joya de Rossett;
Louise Xavier;
Sharon De Souza;

Debbie;
Scott;

Brittany;
Don Cottam;
Joy Ware;

Tanya Theiler;
Christian McKagan
and his parents;

Lois Martins;
Dale Quinn;

Lisa;
Ben;

Marion;
Max;

Samar and her family;
Bishop Don and Pat
Miles;

Bishop Richard Boyce;
Heidi;
Dorian;
Kate Ward;

Lane and the
Handwerker Family;
Kendra Pack;
Tim Slattery;
Ernst Hernandez;
Helen Vanderberg;
Joseph Abreu
and his family;

and for all those
who are in our hearts,
that it may please Thee to
comfort and relieve them,
according to their several
necessities; giving them
patience under their suf-
ferings, and a happy issue
out of all their afflictions.
And this we beg for Jesus
Christ's sake. Amen.

Please note: This prayer
list was current as of
December 4h. Please
contact Father Parrish
to make corrections.

When We are Called to the Lord's Table

Our Lord is a God of order, so it is meet and right for us to conduct ourselves in a respectful and orderly fashion in His house. Because our Chapel is a former one-room schoolhouse, we have limited space to move about. I suggest that we all adopt the following plan when we are called to the Lord's Table for Communion:

1. Starting from the first pew in front, communicants sitting on the **Epistle** side of the church should go to the Altar Rail first. At the first step to the Altar Rail, each person will break off and go left or right toward the flags. This will allow the Altar Rail to be filled from the outside in, towards the center, so that everyone can avoid tripping and stepping over

the legs and feet of those who are kneeling. It will also allow those in the pews to better gauge how many people can fit at the Altar Rail at one time.

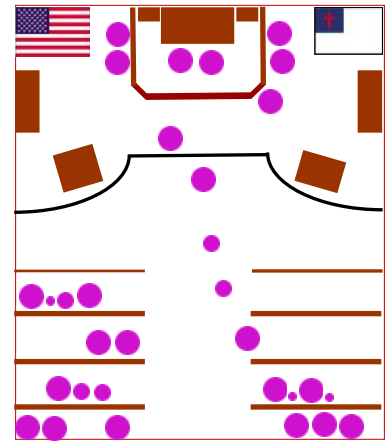
2. After the first group has communed and the blessing is given to depart, they will leave the Altar in the same order as they came forward.
3. Depending on the attendance, if the Altar Rail is full, the process of coming to the rail will be paused and people are to remain in the pews until the blessing for the previous group of communicants is given and they have returned to their seats. This will avoid crowding in the aisle and ensure a safe return for every-

one into the pews.

4. Then the congregants sitting on the **Gospel** side should do the same as the **Epistle** side. Communicants awaiting their turn at the Lord's Table should wait in their pews, not in the aisle.
5. It is the responsibility of the Lay Reader or Ushers to guide communicants to the Altar Rail in an orderly fashion.

The Call to the Altar should not be rushed. It is a reverent and respectful action. While at the Altar, worshippers are in prayer and thoughtful contemplation. It is my hope that conducting the Call in the way I have described will avoid unnecessary distractions and encourage everyone to be in Communion with the Lord together.

– Julia McNeely



Parish Postings

The seasonal Ember Days are Wednesday, December 14th, and Friday and Saturday, December 16th and 17th. Please devote these days of prayer and fasting to seeking God's provision and equipping of His ministers..



Please note that the following are all happening on Sunday, December 18th, the Fourth Sunday in Advent:

- It is the tradition of our Chapel Family to

offer poinsettias in memory of our loved ones to decorate the Sanctuary during Christmastide. If you would like to offer poinsettias, the Altar Guild asks for a donation of \$15; please
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Parish Postings

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make your donations and provide your memorial intentions to Father Parrish by December 18th. Thank you!

- It is also our custom to thank our local firefighters with homemade holiday cookies and other treats. Kindly set aside some of your goodies as you do your baking, and bring your contributions to church with you on December 18th. Thank you!
- There will be a Christmas Carol Sing-along in the Sanctuary on December 18th, at noon. Please join us!



There will be a candle-light Holy Communion service on Saturday, December 24th, to celebrate Christmas Eve. The service will begin at 11:15 PM. All are welcome!



Come celebrate the birthday of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25th, with Holy Communion at 10:00 AM! (Please note that there will be no noon worship service on this feast day.)



Sunday Morning Bible Study will not meet in December or on January 1st. Class will resume on Sunday, January 8th, at 9:15 AM with the study of *Joel*.



Ladies, please note that there will be no meeting of Joanna's Circle this month. Instead, please plan to join us in January.



The Vestry will meet on Sunday, January 15th, immediately following the worship service.



Our Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Sunday, February 5th, immediately following the worship service.



The position of Church Organist is now vacant. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. Please contact Father Parrish.



Lay Readers are needed to assist at worship services. Any confirmed parishioner is eligible to serve, and training will be provided. Please see Father Parrish.



The Vestry has selected replacing our steeple lights as the fourth-quarter Community Missions Project. The cost is estimated at \$4,000. If you wish to donate to this project, please make a note on your check memo line or offertory envelope. Thank you!

God bless us,
every one!

Upcoming Events

Sunday, December 4th

The Second Sunday in Advent

Emergency Food Pantry Collection Day

Holy Communion with Healing Service

10:00 AM

Sunday, December 11th

The Third Sunday in Advent

Office of Daily Morning Prayer

10:00 AM

Holy Communion

noon

Sunday, December 18th

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Poinsettia Donations and Intentions Deadline

Cookies for Firefighters Collection Day

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Christmas Carol Sing-along

Noon

Saturday, December 24th

Christmas Eve

Holy Communion

11:15 PM

Sunday, December 25th

The Nativity of Our Lord,
or the Birthday of Christ,
commonly called Christmas Day

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Sunday, January 1st

Feast of the Circumcision of Christ

The Sunday after Christmas Day

New Year's Day

Emergency Food Pantry Collection Day

Holy Communion with Healing Service

10:00 AM





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A PUBLICATION OF
ST. LUKE'S CHAPEL IN THE HILLS
ANGLICAN CHURCH

A PARISH OF
THE CONVOCATION OF THE WEST,
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Worship Schedule

St.

Luke's Chapel in the Hills is a traditional Anglican parish which uses the 1928 edition *Book of Common Prayer*. We invite you to join us for worship soon!

*"A place
where the Bible is taught."*



*Biblical in teaching.
Liturgical in worship.
Loving in practice.*

First Sunday of each month

Holy Communion with Healing Service
10:00 AM

Second and fourth Sundays each month

Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Said Holy Communion
noon

Please note that both services on Feast Days occurring on these Sundays will be Holy Communion.

Third and fifth Sunday each month and Feast Days

Holy Communion
10:00 AM