

SOUNDINGS

Vol. XI, No. 12

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church of Chatham, Massachusetts

Dec.-Jan., 2016

Clinging to the Cosmic Christ



The Rev. Brian W. McGurk
Rector

I am writing to you in the wake of the evil atrocities unleashed in Paris, and in anticipation of Thanksgiving Day, which will be followed a few days later by the season of Advent—a time of anticipation, watchfulness, preparation and waiting for the Advent, the coming (the Latin “Adventus” means “coming”) of Christ both

as the Baby born in Bethlehem and as the glorious Cosmic Christ.

So we are waiting. Waiting for Christ. Waiting for some explanation and answers to the questions of violence, hatred, suffering. Struggling, once again, with the age-old question of why God—the Mystery of Unconditional Love—allows evil to erupt in places like Paris.

There is no real answer. Evil simply “is.” T. S. Eliot acknowledges this sad fact:

*The world turns and the world changes
But one thing does not change
However you disguise it, this one thing does not change
The perpetual struggle of good and evil.*

Yet, God is not the source of evil. Listen to Dostoyevsky:

It is not God I do not accept, but the world he has created.

Human beings create evil and hell on earth; war and violence are humanity's creation! And God's great sorrow! So let's not make God our scapegoat! We will never understand or comprehend the mystery of evil, violence and suffering. We can only endure it. Prayer, the power of community, acts of compassion, and love are some courses of action we can take as we wait—patiently and painfully—for Christ to one day make it all complete and perfect.

But at times like these, “clinging” may be the only way to endure such suffering. This is how Dietrich Bonhoeffer explains it:

Christ did not come into the world so that we might comprehend him, but so that we might cling to him, so that we might let him simply pull us into the tremendous story of the resurrection. He came so that we might simply let him tell us in total incomprehensibility: You are dead—and yet you have risen! You are in the dark—and yet you are in the light. You are afraid—and yet you can rejoice. These totally incompatible things are side by side only a hair's breadth apart. Just like the two worlds, our world and God's world, they are side by side only a hair's breadth apart.

Clinging sounds like an act of desperation. And it would be if not for the fact that we cling to the ultimate source and power of the cosmos—God's love. Once again the hope of Bonhoeffer:

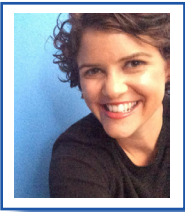
*No tear flows in vain
and no sigh goes unheard;
no pain is disparaged and
no jubilation is lost. The
visible world brutally and
heartlessly and violently
marches over all of that.
But out of grace and mercy
and great love, God gathers
up our burning, blazing
life.... Our true life is
hidden—but it is solidly
[clung to God] in eternity.*

In times of trouble like these, may we cling to you, O Christ of infinite mercy, love, and strength!



Madonna and Child, Sibley Chapel

Advent Journey: Understanding Race



Natalie Finstad
Minister for
Community Life

During Advent, we remember the stillness and the darkness experienced by the people of Israel as they waited for the promised messiah. Advent is a time in which we join their waiting by reflecting on the dark places in our current context and turn towards God's promised light.

Over the last two years our country has experienced a resurgence of racial awareness as a result of the loss of life experienced by the black community. The mass shooting in Charleston, along with the independent deaths of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Eric Gardner and Trayvon Martin are leading us to examine race concepts and relationships in a way that has been ignored for some time now. The context can feel confusing as we try to figure out how to find a path forward.

The truth is that race, and as a result, race relations, are concepts that are largely unexplored. There is significant scientific and historical information that can lead us to a deeper understanding of race. This information helps us respond to the situation in a way that promotes healing. Jesus's example showed us how

to build diverse, accepting and Beloved Community in all contexts. As followers in that faith tradition it is essential that we know how to do the same, in our own time.



This Advent, St. Christopher's is exploring the questions surrounding race through our advent program Advent Journey: Understanding Race. This program will take place on three Mondays in Advent: Dec. 7, 14 and 21 from 4 to 6 pm. The format for the program will be video/speaker and then small group discussion. To sign up for the program, please e-mail Natalie Finstad, Minister for Community Life, at nefinstad@gmail.com, or call the church office.



A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

THE NOTEABLES

a four-part harmony singing group

Friday, December 11 at 4:00 p.m.

St. Christopher's Church

625 Main Street

Chatham

To benefit projects in Africa

\$15.00

Tickets available at the door

Gratitude in Giving – 2016 Stewardship Report

The 2016 Stewardship Team is pleased to report that after eight weeks the total amount pledged for 2016 is \$368,886, which is 72 percent of our \$510,000 goal. To date 137 pledge families have responded to the stewardship campaign. This figure includes 6 pledge families who have not pledged in recent history but have pledged for 2016.

The net we have cast to solicit pledges includes a mailing list of 325 households. To obtain our objective it is essential that we significantly improve our participation rate. Last year 217 families supported stewardship for a participation rate of 67 percent. All pledges are welcome no matter the amount.

In my own journey, I have learned that gratitude in giving is a source of joy. I'm heartened by what my giving can do for the mission and ministry here at St. Christopher's, and I'm equally heartened by what it can do for me! Each time I give with gratitude, I release the grip of fear and attitude of scarcity that resides in my heart and mind; an attitude that is reinforced by a culture that tells us "there is not enough." Jesus calls us to walk trusting in the abundance and blessing of God. Each time we take a step in faith, we can trust in God's provision.

The following are responses and reminders to common concerns I have heard along the way:

1. All pledge amounts are strictly confidential. Once you submit your pledge card, only the

Stewardship Chair is privy to this information. As the pledges are processed, only two additional associates know the details.

2. To pledge does not mean you need to contribute your monies immediately. Pledging is your commitment to support the 2016 operating budget and payments can be made weekly (in envelopes), monthly, quarterly, or yearly. Some members elect to



prepay their 2016 pledge by making a single payment prior to the start of 2016. How and when you satisfy your pledge is entirely up to you.

3. In some past years the Congress has permitted direct donations to non-profits (such as St. Christopher's) from IRAs without early withdrawal penalties, and eligible parishioners who might be considering this vehicle for their 2016 stewardship pledge are urged to consult with their tax advisors in December.

Satisfying the \$510,000 stewardship goal for 2016 is critical to a financially secure and sound 2016. We are a church of individuals and families with diverse backgrounds, experiences and financial capabilities. If we all do our part we will succeed. If you have already made your prayerful and thoughtful pledge, I sincerely thank you. If you have yet to pledge I encourage you to consider all that St. Christopher's means to you and your family and make your pledge in a timely manner so together we can achieve our goal.

On behalf of the Stewardship Team, thank you for your generosity and faithfulness in taking the next step in discipleship. We are grateful to share in the journey of following Jesus with you—one step and one day at a time with a sense of gratitude in giving.

~ Peter Hughes, Stewardship Chair

Wish List

Goll Farm Community
Elementary School, Liberia

- 50 new student chairs, at \$20 each.
- 3 iron exterior security doors for Wreh home, at \$150 each.

To grant a wish, contact Steve Keenan or Jean Greenough via the church office.

Children, Youth, and Families



Kerén Castro
*Director of
Children, Youth,
and Families*

During the month of November, CYF ministries teamed up with Martha and Ted Miller, the managers of the Chatham Food Pantry, to collect food for the needy in our area during the holiday season. With the help from our church community as well as The Laurel School in Brewster, we are pleased to announce that we collected 206 food items! Thank you

to everyone who helped make this such an amazing success.

Family Faith Formation is held on the first Tuesday of every month, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. December's FFF, on the first of the month, will include the making of family advent wreaths. As always, dinner will be included. I encourage everyone who would like to join in this fellowship with our families to attend.



Finally, the youth will participate in selling noisemakers at First Night in Chatham. The proceeds from this will be split evenly between the youth mission trip fund and the Chatham Children's Fund of Monomoy Community Services, which helps children in our community stay warm with hats, gloves, scarves, mittens and boots. If you attend First Night, please support our youth in this endeavor.



Above: Rector McGurk blesses the food items collected by the children and youth. Below left and right: scenes from Sunday School.



Music



Maury A. Castro
*Organist &
Choirmaster*

On Saturday, Jan. 30, at 5 pm, the Choristers and Evensong Choir will present a Choral Evensong in commemoration of the medieval Russian monk and iconographer, St. Andrei Rublev (1365–1430). The service will also include the admission to the choir of a new chorister, Tessa Gingras.

The choristers will sing a

stunning evening service by the Canadian-born composer, Sarah MacDonald (b. 1968), who is the Director of Music at the Chapel at Selwyn College, Cambridge, England, and is the director of the summer Girls' Training Course at St. Thomas Church in New York City.

December 2015

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | 1 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School 5:30 Family Faith Formation | 2 9:30 Playgroup 10 Contemplative Eucharist 10:45 Sacred Journey 5:15 Adult Choir | 3 10 Women's AA | 4 | 5 |
| 6 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse/ Adult Confirmation 10 Choral Eucharist & Sunday School 11 Fellowship 11:30 Youth Confirmation | 7 9:30 Personal Planning Committee 4 Advent Journey: Understanding Race | 8 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School 4 Pastoral Care | 9 9:30 Playgroup 10 Contemplative Eucharist 10:45 Sacred Journey 4 Finance Cmt. 5:15 Adult Choir | 10 10 Women's AA 2 Shawl Ministry | 11 4 Notables Concert 4-8 Christmas Fair | 12 9-3 Christmas Fair |
| 13 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist & Sunday School 11 Fellowship | 14 1-3 Gift & Consignment Shop Holiday Party 4 Advent Journey: Understanding Race | 15 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School 4 Vestry Meeting | 16 9:30 Playgroup 10 Contemplative Eucharist 10:45 Sacred Journey 5:15 Adult Choir | 17 10 Women's AA 10:30 Liturgy, Worship, and Music | 18 3 Spiritual Formation Cmt. | 19 5 Christmas Celtic Evensong and Communion |
| 20 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Lessons and Carols 11 Christmas Brunch | 21 4 Advent Journey: Understanding Race | 22 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School | 23 9:30 Playgroup 10 Contemplative Eucharist 10:30 Holy Eucharist at Liberty Commons 4 Together with Africans 5:15 Adult Choir | 24 10 Women's AA 3 Choral Eucharist/ Christmas Pageant 5 Festal Choral Eucharist 10 Contemplative Eucharist | 25 10 Holy Eucharist Church Office Closed | 26 |
| 27 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Holy Eucharist 11 Fellowship | 28 Church Office Closed | 29 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting No Choir School | 30 9:30 Playgroup 10 Centering Prayer No Adult Choir | 31 10 Women's AA | For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. ~ Isaiah 9:6 | |

Vestry Highlights

- The vestry discussed that it is now nominating time for vestry members and wardens.
- Capital Campaign funds continue to come in, and there is confidence that the projected numbers will be met.
- An annual meeting has been called for Sunday, January 31.
- The vestry celebrated the large numbers of children regularly attending Sunday School, and the growing Chorister program.



TWO DAYS!

St. Christopher's **CHRISTMAS FAIR**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 - 4 PM TO 8 PM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 - 9 AM - 3 PM

Holiday Sweets & Treats

Pottery ♦ Jewelry ♦ Handmade Gifts & Decorations

Holiday Plants & Arrangements

Christmas Decorations ♦ Stocking Stuffers

Kids Craft Corner ♦ Santa Hat Decorating

Special December/January Issue: This is a combined edition of Soundings, offering information for both December 2015 and January 2016. Monthly editions will resume with the February issue.

Church e-mail list: If you are not on the church e-mail list and would like to be, please subscribe yourself on the homepage of the church website, www.stchristopherschatham.org, or e-mail Maury A. Castro at maestromaury@gmail.com. By adding your address to the list, you will receive the weekly mid-week e-mail and periodic messages from the Rector.

Digital Soundings: All church members who are on the e-mail list receive Soundings electronically, and it is available on the website. If you would like to be taken off the print list, please e-mail Maury at the address above and let him know.

Parish Statistics

Baptisms

Lillianna Rose Raymond
Nov. 1, 2015

Charlotte Hope Cleary
Nov. 1, 2015

Saint Christopher's
Episcopal Church

625 Main St.
Chatham, MA 02633
508-945-2832
stchristopherschatham.org

The Rev. Brian W. McGurk
Rector

The Rev. Dr. John Martiner
Priest Associate

Natalie Finstad
Minister for Community Life

Maury A. Castro
*Organist & Choirmaster;
Communications Director*

Haskell Thomson
Musician-in-Residence

Kerén Castro
*Director of Children,
Youth, and Families*

Jamie Chalker
Parish Administrator

Barbara Bush
Administrative Assistant

Ali Crockett
Facilities Manager

David Smith
Treasurer

Bridgette Renaud
Assistant Treasurer

Lou Augustin
Sexton

Priscilla Chick, R.N.
Parish Nurse

Sandra Bowden
Curator, The Gallery

Rick Franklin
Manager, Gift Shop

Ted and Martha Miller
Managers, Food Pantry

Dennis Johnson, Lynn Van Dine, and Tim Weller,
Soundings copy editors.

January 2016

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|--|-----------|--|
| <i>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.</i> | | | | | | |
| ~ Lamentations 3:22, 23 | | | | | | |
| 3 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist 11 Fellowship | 4 | 5 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School 5:30 Family Faith Formation | 6 9:30 Playgroup 10 Centering Prayer 5:15 Adult Choir | 7 10 Women's AA | 8 | 9 11 Joanne Bergquist Memorial 1 Choir School |
| 10 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse/ Adult Confirmation 10 Choral Eucharist & Sunday School 11 Fellowship 11:30 Youth Confirmation | 11 | 12 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School 4 Pastoral Care | 13 9:30 Playgroup 10 Contemplative Eucharist 4 Finance Cmt. 5:15 Adult Choir | | 15 | 16 |
| 17 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist 11 Fellowship | 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—Church Closed | 19 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School 4 Vestry Meeting | 20 9:30 Playgroup 10 Centering Prayer 10 Parkinson's Support Group 10:45 Sacred Journey 5:15 Adult Choir | 21 10 Women's AA 10:30 Liturgy, Worship, and Music | 22 | 23 |
| 24 & 31 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist and Annual Meeting (31st) 11 Fellowship 11:30 Youth Confirmation (24th) | 25 | 26 9 Morning Prayer 9:30 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School | 27 9:30 Playgroup 10 Centering Prayer 10:30 Holy Eucharist at Liberty Commons 4:30 Together with Africans 5:15 Adult Choir | 28 10 Women's AA | 29 | 30 5 Choral Evensong |



625 Main Street
Chatham, Massachusetts 02633

December 2015–January 2016

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Permit No. 14
Orleans, MA 02653

Christmas Services

Saturday, Dec. 19, 5 pm

Christmas Celtic Evensong and Communion

Sunday, Dec. 20, 10 am

A Service of Lessons and Carols & Christmas Brunch

Christmas Eve

Festal Choral Eucharist and Christmas Pageant, 3 pm

Festal Choral Eucharist, 5 pm

Contemplative Holy Eucharist with Organ and Harp, 10 pm

Christmas Day

Holy Eucharist (said), 10 am

