



Pastor, Frank Yates
Secretary, Jennifer Collins
Sunday Worship 9:30 am

Regular office hours:
Monday - Friday
9:30 am - 1:30 pm

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DECEMBER LECTIONARY LISTINGS

- December 4** Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a;
Mark 1:1-8
- December 11** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126:1-6 or Luke 1:47-55;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28
- December 18** 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38
- December 25** Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98:1-9; Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12);
John 1:1-14

Readings in bold indicate sermon topics.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- PASTOR TO PEOPLE 1
- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION 2
CHILDREN & YOUTH
CALENDAR
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES
- NOVEMBER SESSION 3
HIGHLIGHTS
CHILDREN & YOUTH
REPORT
FROM THE DEACONS
- PARISH UPDATES 4
NEW PRESBYTIDINGS
COMING
- PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN 5
GIFTS OF HOPE
- MISSION UPDATE 6
HOMEBOUND MINISTRIES
HEALTHFUL HINTS
- VIRLEEN VERPLOUGH 7
SYC SAYS THANK YOU
WHAT DOES THE BIRTH
OF JESUS MEAN TO ME
TODAY?
- AN ALTERNATIVE 8
CHRISTMAS STORY
AN INVITED PRESCENCE

PASTOR TO PEOPLE—FRANKLY SPEAKING DECEMBER 2011

During this Advent season it is important to consider the blessings of our lives and how those blessings are to be shared to enrich the lives of others. I got to thinking about the many and sundry ways that my life is blessed by our life together at St. Andrew-especially during this Advent and Christmas season.

I can't wait to hear the music of this season as we worship together. I can't wait to hear the words of hope and longing that we hear together around the Advent wreath. I can't wait for the Christmas Progressive Dinner December 3 and the Choir's Christmas Cantata on December 18. There is a spirit of sharing and giving at this time of year that is quite wonderful. Even the decorations in our sanctuary seem to bring out the best in us. This year our Project Share responsibilities will be on Christmas Eve-the timing could not have been better! And of course, on Christmas Eve we will get to hear Bill Aber in another wonderful monologue to get us into the spirit. To cap it all off, we will worship together on Christmas morning, at a little later time to allow for family celebrations. Advent and Christmas at St. Andrew are quite wonderful.

At this time of the year Sharon and I are particularly grateful for your prayers that attended my wife's surgery. Sharon had her gallbladder removed on October 28 and thanks to your prayers and the surgeon's skill, we were able to go on the Presbytery's mission trip to Cuba from November 4-14. We felt uplifted by your prayers and we were so grateful that Sharon made it through the trip just fine. She is not completely recovered yet but she is well on the way. And for this we give thanks.

On December 18 Sharon and I hope to share slides of our trip to Cuba during the Adult CE hour. There are so many stories to share and pictures to see. The land of Cuba is just beautiful and the people are even more beautiful. The church is amazing. When I told one pastor that I had visited China, he said he would dearly love to visit with Chinese pastors about their common challenges of living in communist societies. I saw some striking similarities in the Chinese and Cuba churches-enormous courage and faith. I hope we can share with all of you some of the blessings we received from the people of Cuba.

One extra added attraction about December 18, is that my two Texas boys Aaron and Kyle will hopefully be with us in worship. I can't wait to introduce them to you, our beloved community in Christ.

So let us pray for a magnificent Advent and Christmas season here at St. Andrew. Please know I thank God for each of you and for the gifts you bring this company of God's people. May Christ come among us yet again.

Peace and Hope
Frank

WORSHIP SERVICES

- December 4, 11 and 18 9:30 am - Worship Service
- December 24 7:00 pm - Christmas Eve Monologue
- December 25 9:30 am - Fellowship (Bring goodies to share.)
10:15 am - Worship Service
- December 31 6:00 pm - Worship Service

DECEMBER ADULT CE TOPICS

- December 4 Max will present reflection on how his faith has informed his work as a professor and community organizer.
- December 11 Rev. Karen Cobb will continue her exploration of Jesus' Beatitudes.
- December 18 Frank and Sharon Yates will present slides of their recent mission trip to Cuba and reflections on the situation in Cuba. Nursery care will be provided.
- December 25 There will be no Adult CE on Christmas morning.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Men's Bible study continues our study of the scriptures on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 am. Frank Yates leads this study open to all the men of the church.

FIRST TUESDAY SOUP AND STUDY

First Tuesday on December 6 begins with a soup supper at 5:30 pm. Then Frank Yates will present the last in a series of discussions on *The Problem of Suffering in the Scriptures*. We will focus our attention on two books: Douglas John Hall's *God and Human Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross* as well as Arthur McGill's *Suffering: A Test of Theological Method*. Everyone is cordially invited.

**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY
EVENT CALENDAR**

- December 18 Cantata and Pageant. No CE.
- December 24 Christmas Eve at Project Share! Come and serve dinner. 4:15 to 6:00 pm. All ages are welcome.
- December 25 Merry Christmas! No CE.
- January 1 Happy New Year! No CE.
- January 8-21 Deborah's Seminary Intensive in Dubuque.

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

The November meeting of the book group is Wednesday, November 30 at 6:00 pm. We chose *Gardens of Water* by Alan Drew to discuss. There will not be a December meeting. Watch the bulletin announcements to see what book we chose for January.

LUNCH GROUPS

Join us for lunch this month. Both groups are informal and meet at 12:30 pm for lunch once a month. Susan Page sends out reminders via email, so let her know if you'd like to be added to her list.

- UNM Group: Thursday, December 1 at 12:30 pm at Which Wich, 2300 Central Ave SE.
- Downtown Group: Thursday, December 8 at 12:30 pm at AmerAsia Dim Sum, 300 3rd St. NW.

FAMOUS FRIENDS

Famous Friends are having breakfast together on Sunday, December 11 from 8:30 to 9:20 am. Please come! Find out what the Jesse Tree is all about and help decorate one. Supplies will be furnished.

Your favorite side dish or fruit will be appreciated. The traditional beverages and cereal will already be on the table.

Contact Doris or Donna for more information.

CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER

For over 25 years, there has been an opportunity to celebrate Christmas by joining with others from St. Andrew for Christmas dinner. Someone cooks a turkey and everyone else brings side dishes. Think of it as a coordinated potluck. This year the dinner is on Sunday, December 25 at 5:30 pm. When we have an idea of how many are coming, we'll decide whether to have the dinner at one home, several homes, or at the church. Call Linda if you would like to join in the Christmas celebration.

RECITAL

Luciana Simões, guest pianist at St. Andrew a few weeks ago, has a recital at UNM on Saturday, December 10 at 4:00 pm in Keller Hall in the Center for the Arts. She is a master's student in Collaborative and Piano Performance.

It's a Collaborative Recital, so she'll be playing with a vocalist, a cellist and a clarinetist. It will include works by Britten, Beethoven and Brahms.

NM MASS CHOIR

There are lots of chances to enjoy music of the season with the NM Mass Choir. Louise, Susan and Mark all sing in this gospel choir along with about 50 other singers from churches all over town.

- Saturday, December 3, River of Lights, Botanic Garden, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
- Sunday, December 11, Christmas Concert, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 114 Carlisle SE, 4:00 – 6:00 pm
- Wednesday, December 21, Sunport Serenade, ABQ International Airport, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve Services, Calvary Chapel, 4001 Osuna Rd NE, 4:00 & 6:00 pm

NOVEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Received new member Calvin .
- Reviewed Deacons’ plan to reorganize parishes on a geographic basis.
- Mission reported \$1,400 total for Crop Walk.
- Approved Mission-proposed Welcoming Statement to be displayed on website, in bulletin and in the Narthex.
- Changed time for worship on Christmas Day to 10:15. Refreshments will be shared from 9:30 to 10:15.
- Approved the following building use requests:
 - Girls Scout use of the Activity Room on December 3 for 75 people.
 - Jim and Beth use of the Activity Room and kitchen on November 26 from 4:00 to 10:00 pm and November 27 from noon to 3:00 pm for anniversary celebrations.
 - Laguna Colony use of the kitchen and Activity Room for a Christmas potluck on December 10 from 2:00 to 6:00 pm; fee to be paid.
 - Oasis use of the Library on the 3rd Tuesdays from 1:00 to 2:30 pm and the 4th Tuesdays of each month from 1:30 to 3:30 pm from January thru April; temporarily relocating to St. Andrew while Erna Ferguson Library being remodeled.
- Approved hiring on new child care worker Davynne .
- Set ordination and installation of new officers for worship on January 8.
- Gave thanks for:
 - Frank and Sharon Yates’ opportunity to go to Cuba.
 - Kathy for her work with Martineztown.
 - Steve for preaching.
 - The choir for their continuing contribution to worship.
 - Janet for serving as Liturgist.
 - The three confirmands now taking instruction.
 - Those who provided assistance, particularly pastoral care, during Rev. Yates’ absence.
- Clerk’s Report:
 - Avg. Oct attendance: 140
 - Membership as of Nov 1: 238
- Treasurer’s Report:

	October	2011
Income	\$25,754.45	\$260,744.07
Expenses	<u>\$23,928.60</u>	<u>\$248,925.03</u>
Difference	\$1,825.85	\$11,819.04

PANHANDLING POLICY

On Sunday mornings we are blessed by the company of homeless friends who have many needs. The Board of Deacons asks members of St. Andrew please not to give money to individuals, but refer those with needs to the Deacons (Bill ,moderator) or the Pastor. If you are asked for cash, a gracious response is that “The church asks us not to give money, but you can talk to _____ about your needs.” Please do welcome, talk to, and sit down with our homeless friends, as Jesus would. The Homelessness Task Force (Deborah , chair) welcomes your ideas, donations, and participation in ministry to the hungry and homeless among us.

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

By Deborah Huggins, Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministry

We have had a very full, and very fun month in Christian Education for children and youth! We started out the month with our first “tween” event. We brought a group of 3rd-5th graders together for a lock-in, bible study and service. Our retreat was based around Micah 6:8. We learned that God requires us to “Seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.” All weekend long, we looked for “Micah Sightings”- people acting in the ways that Micah tells us to act. We had a wonderful retreat, and made over 50 “Treats for Change” to sell at the Alternative Christmas fair. The children all had a wonderful time and so did the leaders! Many thanks to all of the kids, and especially to Laura Paul--our excellent chaperone!

The second week of November brought another retreat! This one was the Presbytery’s annual mid-high retreat. This year the Austin Activators led the retreat in Las Vegas, New Mexico. The retreat was about recognizing that we are all called by God, into communities, to contend with things that hurt and scare people. The retreat was lots of fun with energizers, games, fellowship and study.

Our Confirmation Class met in November to talk about what it means to be a Presbyterian. The class learned about the Presbyterian Symbol and system of government. The class also talked about their “gift” to the congregation. They are thinking about hosting a family ski and snow retreat later on this winter.

Youth Group served at Project Share in late October, and helped sort food for the Road Runner Food Bank’s Sorting Sunday. Our tween group sold cookie and drink mixes at the Alternative Christmas Fair, raising money for hot lunches for the homeless.

On Sunday, November 27, we enjoyed making Advent arts and crafts. Special thanks to Mary , Paul and everyone else who made the Advent celebration a success.

Our Christmas Pageant rehearsals have already started. It’s not too late to participate, however. If you would like to be a part of the pageant, please come to Children’s Choir.

FROM THE DEACONS

By Bill , Deacon Moderator

**“I was hungry and you gave me food”:
The Sunday Morning Lunch Program**

With a U.S. median (50th percentile) annual income now at \$27,000, about one in five Americans live in poverty, most of whom experience “food insecurity” – the current politically correct term for running out of food and going hungry. Our homeless friends who visit us on Sunday morning are the most immediate reminder, but there are many more people who have

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

places to live and jobs and yet are short of food. Each week the Deacons pack 20 or more sack lunches that are distributed through the church office on week-days. We participate as a congregation in Project Share and in monthly food collections. Now we are also serving hot lunch on Sunday mornings during the 11:00 am hour for members and friends with food insecurity. We need volunteers to help feed the hungry, which you can do by preparing food in advance or by fixing lunch from stocked supplies, or just by offering helping hands at St. Andrew on Sunday morning. God can't make it much easier for us than that! If you're willing to help in some way please contact Bill or just sign up on the list posted in the mini-kitchen.

Coming January 1: New Parishes!

Every five years or so, we reorganize the parishes so we can get to know a broader range of people. We're overdue, so beginning January 1 all members and regular friends of St. Andrew will be in newly-formed parishes, each served by its own Deacon. This time they are organized by the area in which you live. This will mean less travel for parish get-togethers, greater ease for parish members to help each other, and a more concentrated geographic region for each Deacon to serve. There will be seven parishes, initially named Del Oso, Los Altos, Montgomery, Northside, Sandia, University, and Westside. If they wish, each parish can choose a new name when they convene in 2012. New parish lists will be distributed in the January *Presbytids*.

DOORKEEPERS PARISH UPDATE

We had such a great time at the home of Rob and Teresa for our Fall Gathering in November. We had 17 Parish members present, lots of great food and such a gracious host family. As we end this year, we deeply are thankful for our times together. Our loss of Bill really touched our Parish. We all love the family so much and were honored to celebrate his great life with this large special family.

On a personal note, I have loved being the deacon for the Doorkeeper Parish. This group always pitched in every time we were called to serve as a Parish. It's wonderful to know, that within our church that we can serve together as a united church family for the benefit of others. This group always did their personal service in faith with a joyful heart.

With gratefulness for each one of you!

- Brenda , Deacon

CARMEL PARISH UPDATE

There is much good news from the Carmel Parish this month. Our two members who have had bladder cancers are progressing nicely: Gail is back in town recovering from her major bladder surgery. Jack and Norma have just returned from a wonderful ten-day trip to Hawaii following his extensive therapy. He will have a bladder scan on the 29th. On the real estate

front, Deb and Jeff has finally closed the deal on their new home in the University area and they have moved in. Bravo! Jan has recovered well from her knee surgery. The Carmel parish joined with the Apostles parish for a fall get-together on Sunday, November 13, at the church. It was great fun and many thanks to the Soderbergs who joined me to provide soup and homemade bread and to all the members who brought great desserts.

-Rogene , Deacon

This month we are featuring the following biosketch written by Jan :

I was born and raised in Lansing, Michigan. There were five of us in the family—my parents, a sister who was seventeen months older than me, and a lovable beagle dog. Before I started kindergarten, my family began attending Westminster Presbyterian Church in Lansing. This was my church all through my school years. Friends and I spent portions of our long ago summers at church youth camp in the upper peninsula of Michigan. As it turned out, my favorite job before graduating from high school was being a camp counselor for underprivileged children. I was able to appreciate beautiful lakes and quiet nature before my young campers awakened.

Some of my fondest memories were enjoying holidays with numerous family reunions. I was fortunate to have many aunts, uncles, and cousins who were my age. Even though they lived in other towns in Michigan, there were laughter filled fun events. Very shortly before my senior year of high school, my sister died after a three year illness. My pastor was extremely helpful in getting me through my somber senior year. While I was in high school, I was able to decide that my choice for a career was to be an occupational therapist.

Boyd and I met in our freshman year at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. After we both graduated, we married in 1950. So our marriage and St. Andrew are the same age! We have one son living here in Albuquerque, and another son, daughter-in-law, and young grandson living in Evergreen, Colorado. After moving to Albuquerque in the early 1980's, Boyd and I joined St. Andrew.

NEW, IMPROVED PRESBYTIDINGS COMING IN JANUARY

By Susan Page, Communications Task Force

Watch in January 2012 for a redesign of our monthly newsletter. Our church secretary, Jennifer Collins, is putting her talents to this after successfully redesigning our Sunday announcements. Since things at St. Andrew change frequently, the announcements are often the best place for updates, especially since they are repeated online. We want the newsletter to be a place to help folks "save the date," and explore our church community in greater depth. Our goal is to make the newsletter both informative and inspiring.

The new *Presbytids* will have three sections: Plans

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

and Opportunities, The Work of the Church, and Reflections for Spiritual Growth. Plans and Opportunities will include previews of activities at the church and in the community, a calendar, and birthdays and anniversaries. The Work of the Church will include reports from the Session, Deacons, Christian Education, Mission and other program areas, profiles of members and information about ministries we support. Reflections for Spiritual Growth will include Healthful Hints, An Invited Presence, book reviews, prayers and poetry.

You can help make the new newsletter better by following the following guidelines: submit articles before the deadline (generally the Friday after Session meets) the earlier the better, submit articles in electronic form, keep articles under 500 words, and include who, what, when, where, how and why information.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

By Edith , Co-moderator

Because Martineztown House of Neighborly Service is being reorganized, the offering that was begun last January with the Christmas stockings will still go to the people of Martineztown through a holiday program sponsored by Menaul School. PW is asking you to put the final 12 dimes into those stockings, or write a check for \$7.80, made out to PW of St Andrew with the notation MHNS and you can keep the stocking to hang on your tree, and bring this offering to the church on Sunday, December 4 or to the Bible Study on December 6. Menaul School's program will be happening on December 10 and we need to get these monies to Rev. Monaghan for the Honor Dinner, Christmas gifts and food baskets. There will be a basket on the Usher's Table at the back of the church to receive your gifts on Sunday, December 4.



We'll be looking at Lesson 4 of the study on Confessing the Beatitudes this month at the regular times of first Tuesday at 9:30 am and second Sunday at 11:00 am. Lori Castle is hosting the Christmas Brunch at her home at 10:30 am on December 20. Bring something to share for the feast. Lori will also have her Nativity and Creche collection on display for us.

On January 15, PW will host another Mother/Daughter potluck salad luncheon in the Activity Room after the CE hour at noon. Plan to bring a salad or dessert to share and remember that your own table setting will be appreciated by Mother Earth. Put these dates on your calendar now so you won't miss these important events of community and fellowship.

Presbyterian Women have long been supporters of Bible Study in the local churches and mission projects nationally and around the globe. We need your presence to continue this work at St. Andrew. Make a resolution to join us in the New Year.

GIFTS OF HOPE

AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT GIVING MINISTRY

Gifts of Hope Mission: To provide an opportunity to help agencies in the community when you honor someone with your Holiday or Special Occasion gifts. The gifts bring hope and joy for real change in the lives of persons in need.



A Growing Tradition: The catalog is distributed every November by participating congregations. Catalog gifts are available year round. This unique catalog offers you the joy of giving through making a faith statement and provides opportunities to benefit people with special needs. It also informs the recipient of the gift about service agencies in our area. (All gifts are 100% deductible).

About the catalog: Donations go to the general program of the selected agency. When you make a donation, you will receive cards that describe the over-all or general program of the agency you have chosen. The cards state that the gifts were made in honor of the persons who receive them.

How it works: You can place orders for any holiday or special occasion (birthday, anniversary, etc.) Catalog orders are made **payable** to Gifts of Hope and **mailed to:** St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 5301 Ponderosa Avenue NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110. The order forms are found in the center of the catalog. Every cent of your donation goes to the agency you select. Administrative costs have been donated by the participating congregations.

What won't happen: You will not be put on any mailing list. You won't end hunger, nor any of the other problems addressed by the agencies included in this catalog, but you will make a difference.

The charitable agencies in the catalog have been selected by the participating congregations.

"...and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8

"How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help?"

*I John 3:17
NRSV*

"Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

*Luke 3:11
NRSV*

"For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead."

*James 2:26
NRSV*

MISSION UPDATE

By Ester , Mission Committee

Alternative Christmas Fair Results:

Roadrunner Food Bank	\$ 200.00
Two Cents/Meal	305.00
Hunger Task Force	250.00
Peacecraft	600.00
East Central Ministries	355.00
Gifts of Hope	1355.00
Heifer Project	1090.00
Total	\$4155.00

We still have some children's names left on the angel tree. Please talk to Ginger if you would like to participate in this ministry. Thanks to everyone for your generosity and to those who participated or helped out with the Fair. Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed for next years Fair.

CROP Walk Results: We had 13 walkers and we raised \$1400. The overall CROP WALK raised \$19,140 - 25% of this will go to the Storehouse, Storehouse/West, Cuidando Los Ninos & St. Martin's. Thanks to all the walkers, to all the sponsors, and to Dana who coordinated the CROP Walk. Ester

Family Promise: Thank you to all the folks who drove, prepared food, or hosted our three families: Max , Susan , Marilyn & Richard , Rod & Fonda , Bill & Kathy , Ester , Jack & Lori , Eleanor . God bless you all.

HOMEBOUND MINISTRIES

By Bill , Deacon Moderator

There are various ways in which people who have been active members of St. Andrew become "homebound," which to the deacons means being unable to leave home safely without assistance. As a community of believers, we are responsible to keep in touch with and minister to those for whom even a trip to church is not so simple. Each homebound member belongs to a parish and is served by the parish deacon. There is also a deacon (Jake and Gail in 2011, Jackie in 2012) assigned specifically to minister to the needs of our homebound members. We keep in touch by phone, send cards, provide transportation, visit in person, provide home communion, and deliver a gift basket at Christmas.

You also have an important part in remembering our homebound members even if you are not currently active as a deacon. You can send a personal note or card, chat by telephone, pay a visit, and find out about special needs. You can find contact information for our homebound members in the church directory or from the church office, and the deacons may be able to advise you about special needs. We care for each other in the St. Andrew family!

Our homebound members are: Geoffrey , Doe , Betty Jean , Patsy , Martha , Josephine , Doris , Lois , Emmett , Joy , Mary , Virginia , and Roberta .

HEALTHFUL HINTS

By Carol , RN, MSN

Are you ready for Christmas?

The Advent and Christmas season is such a special time for Christians, as well as for many who do not profess to believe in Jesus Christ. At St. Andrew, in our community, and with family and friends, we have many opportunities to celebrate and worship during this beginning of a new year. But, despite the joy inherent in the season—*the Word becoming flesh- a light, THE LIGHT coming into our world--*we sometimes find that our bodies, minds and spirits get bogged down.

How then can we embrace the Joy of Christmas with health and wholeness?

A **body** can get tired at Christmas! Shopping, crazy schedules and festive food can result in physical stress, sometimes exhaustion and even illness! My favorite response to someone asking me if I'm ready for Christmas is "Yes! I'm always ready for Christmas; I just haven't finished everything yet!" It's so easy to get overwhelmed with marketing ploys, the obligation of tired traditions, and the festive excesses of eating. Try to simplify your life a bit. Examine your reactions to all that is bombarding you, and find a way to celebrate and be a steward to your body as well. Make time to rest; enjoy traditional feasts, but maybe not for every day or meal.

Your **mind** might be refreshed by reading O'Henry's *Gift of the Magi* or Van Dyke's *The Other Wise Man*. When was the last time you read the original version of Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*? Or maybe you can think of a new way celebrate Advent at home.

One's **spirit**, sometimes is the most challenged of all at Christmastime. Financial burdens or illness can interfere with gift-giving. Grieving for lost loved ones or beloved traditions can cause us to feel alone and depressed. This is when we really need to search for that LIGHT, which is come. It's amazing how physically lighting even one candle can banish darkness. I love to light a candle. It really warms my spirit!

The Rule of St. Benedict illuminated in a book by John McQuiston II *Always We Begin Again* (1996) can also offer much spiritual nourishment. His interpretation of St. Benedict's First Rule follows:

The first rule is simply this:
 live this life
 and do whatever is done
 in the spirit of Thanksgiving.
 Abandon attempts to achieve security,
 they are futile,
 give up the search for wealth,
 it is demeaning,
 quit the search for salvation,
 it is selfish,
 and come to comfortable rest
 in the certainty that those who
 participate in this life
 with an attitude of Thanksgiving
 will receive its full promise.

Merry Christmas! *Shalom.*



VIRLEEN VERPLOEGH

Virleen Verploegh, a former member and dear friend of St. Andrew church passed away in Wausau, Wisconsin on October 21, just a week after her 96th birthday. She died in her sleep surrounded by her loving family. Private memorial services will be held at a later date in Iowa and Albuquerque. Her son Alan sent me photos of her, as a young woman and as we knew her, along with an interesting obituary that her son David wrote. I will email these to anyone who would like to have them, or provide a copy of the obit if you do not use e-mail. She was a delightful lady and a blessing to many.

-Gail

SHARE YOUR CARE SAYS 'THANK YOU'

The silent auction, at the recent Share Your Care gala, was a rousing success, in part due to the generosity and talent of St. Andrew members. Listed below are the names of 24 members who helped make the auction so appealing. Many thanks to you all.

-Jan

Sally	Mary Carol
Bill	Fran
Donna	Vera
Sara	Jann
Anna	Fonda
Beth & Jim	Janet
Patty	Lee
Gail	Susan
Melissa	Risa
Agnes	Shirley
Ester	Guy
Josephine	My Jeweler
Kevin	Garry

WHAT DOES THE BIRTH OF JESUS MEAN TO ME TODAY?

These are the responses compiled by Jan to the question "What Does the Birthday of Jesus mean to me today?"

The birth of Jesus puts me in mind of the births of my own children and God's greatest gift to the world and to me.

As Mary fed and nurtured that child so did I with my children. They all grew to be great blessings to me and my life. Those births are a historical perspective on the birth of God's love in my heart, mind and soul that is never ending and ever growing and changing to bring meaning and insight to my life through prayer, community and service, with thanksgiving for the wonder of it all.

To me, Jesus' birth represented God's love and compassion in human form. Jesus' teachings continue to be a model for us of how to see God in others and how to express love and compassion through our actions.

In spite of our broken world of hunger, pain, and injustice very similar to the world Jesus was born into, Jesus lives inside of me with love, with pure and boundless spirit, and with warm and radiant light. I am reminded that I can live through love.

It means we have the promise and responsibility of love and support for one another and the whole world.

Good will and kindness will continue because of His teachings and inspiring messages.

His love pushes back the darkness and pain.

Same as always "Do unto others."

The birth continues to give me hope that the future holds a closeness to God and that I can attain that closeness through faith and am expected to live my faith, not just say it in words. It shows me God's love for all of us. And if I accept God's love, I am then to show I accept it by showing God's love, especially to people who need God's love.

Jesus was born over 2,000 years ago and the thought of this happening that long ago and still being remembered, is another reason to believe he was the Son of God. Is there any other person who influenced so many for so long? I thank the Lord for his presence this day.

It's the story I find the most credible about Jesus

Rebirth and new beginnings, time to re-evaluate. "Resolutions" and plans for next year.

God through Jesus became one of us, a human being, not just a somewhat remote deity. Someone we can relate to in a person-to-person way as well as creator-to-creature.

The beginning of a new religion that is full of grace and love, rather than punishment and sternness. A world view that promotes peace and equity, when at its best, rather than domination and separation.

It gives me cause to think about ways to explain in an understanding way to others that Jesus' very existence forms and reforms who I am today. When I have to make a decision, I fall back on his teachings. When I make a mistake, I fall back on his strengths to face the world honestly.

The birth of Jesus, as God's person on earth, still means to me that God (with her multiple human faces) has trusted each of us to try to learn how to love God with all our hearts. Jesus' teachings still represent God's best design for a method that might work to distinguish those people who really do love God completely from those who say they do but believe that God is all powerful so they are just doing what they are told.

When I was a teenager, my biggest puzzle was "If I were as all-powerful as God, how would I arrange to have every person learn to love me. So every Fall brings to the fore my hope that the baby Jesus gives each of us as a reminder that when we fail, we can always begin again.

The birth of Jesus brought the true soul of God to the world so that we would learn and come to see the

(Continued on page 8)

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pathway of light to the depths of living life with the positive touch and feel of how to reach out, how to treat one another, no matter the complexities of person, community, or world.

Celebrating Christ's birth means we know God keeps his promises. God promised to send us a Savior and Christmas is our annual celebration of this amazing gift and our strong covenant with God. As Christians, we faithfully walk in the footsteps of Christ as He did on Earth. It's very understandable about our personal "Glitches" in this walk, but like Christ we will continue in God's work even when we discover our own shortcomings. Merry Christmas!

AN ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS STORY

By Susan

"The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness, and the darkness wouldn't put it out." John 1:3, The Message by Eugene Peterson.

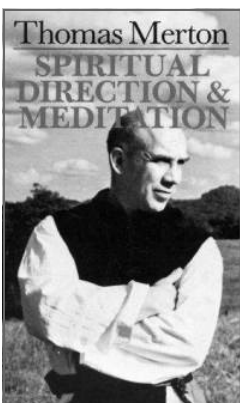
I believe it is no coincidence that we celebrate the incarnation at the darkest time of the year. For me, the story of God's presence in the world doesn't come as a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. I'm a city girl, and I didn't understand until I was almost a teenager that "manger" wasn't just another word for baby bed. Then I suffered through many baby-oriented church Christmas celebrations as an infertile woman before finally having my own December baby. Then, just as the world was lightening up in spring, he was gone, dead from complications of a cold.

So, the version of the incarnation that speaks to me in this dark time of year isn't so much the traditional Luke story about a baby, but the John story about light. John 1:3 says, "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it."

May it be so for all of us in this dark time of the year. May the light of the world come again into our hearts and shine in the darkness, and may we have the faith to believe that the darkness will never overcome the light.

AN INVITED PRESENCE

By Joel Swadesh



Spiritual Direction & Meditation (The Liturgical Press, 1960, 1987, *Thomas Merton*). Thomas Merton (1915-68) suffered the loss of both parents while very young (<http://www.merton.org>). Educated at Cambridge and Columbia, he entered the Cistercian Order (Trappist) of the Roman Catholic Church in 1941, serving at the

Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani in Kentucky. He was a strong supporter of the peace and civil rights movements, and studied Eastern religions. He

produced *Spiritual Direction & Meditation* not only as a guide to those who would be spiritual directors, but to people seeking a spiritual director. As Merton says, the real spiritual director is the Holy Spirit.

Spirituality is, above all, the search for the authentic self. The spiritual person acts "freely, simply, spontaneously, from the depths of his heart, moved by love." In the words of Dom Augustine Baker, the spiritual director is "God's usher." For the ordinary layperson, the pastor/confessor serves as the director. Someone with a religious vocation, especially someone with heavy responsibilities, needs a guide to help in self-examination. Sin is not just breaking rules. It is insincerity. One's true motives are revealed in a *manifestation of conscience*. A good director imposes the discipline of sincerity and simplicity, but not by demanding obedience. The director needs to understand that some problems are psychological in nature, not amenable to spiritual ministrations. Spiritual dryness is a consequence of too much theory and not enough reality.

The second half of the book is devoted to meditation, whose discussion Merton grounds in St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Communal prayer, as in the liturgy, is a means of bringing God from outside to within. Meditation, he says, is a search for truth (*inquisitio veritatis*) aimed at communicating with ultimate truth. It therefore brings God from within to the world. Meditation may begin in intellect and vocal prayer, it may travel through intelligence, but it ends, silenced, in loving praise as Christ prays within us.

Meditation cannot succeed unless it becomes a part of everyday life. One must cultivate an attitude of *leisure*, i.e. that how much one accomplishes is meaningless if it is not directed toward seeking God. While laziness represents weariness and distaste toward what is good, leisure is an energetic keenness for what is good. One must also cultivate a sense of *indigence*, of hunger for contact with God. Like the Prodigal Son, we only need to return to the Father to be fed.

Merton's approach toward meditation is kataphatic, i.e., it involves calling to mind an image such as a religious mystery or historical or personal events as viewed from a religious perspective. For example, one might meditate on the mystery of how the Word becomes flesh in the Incarnation or on God's role in the cruelties of this world, such as hunger or war. If we are not sincere, the effort bears no fruit. But if we are sincere, a sense of *compunction* energizes our effort. Our hearts and that of the Spirit begin to beat in harmonious unison.

Merton describes four stages to meditation: Gathering our attention and purpose to ask for grace (*recollection*), envisioning the object of our quest (*vision*), the development of desires to transform one's life (*aspiration*), and *communion* through reposing in love, listening to the Beloved, or praising God.

DECEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Spiritual Formation 10 am UNM Lunch Grp 12:30 pm 5:30 pm PPR Worship Review 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 pm	2	3 Progressive Dinner
4 First of Month Collection Worship Service 9:30 am Christian Education 11 am Lot & Jordanaires 12 pm IHS Gathering 12 pm Officer Training 5:30 pm	5	6 Bulletin announcements due by noon Presbyterian Women 9:30 am 1st Tuesday Soup & Study 5:30 pm	7 Morning Glories 9:30 am Men's Bible Study 10 am	8 Historical Jesus 10:00 am Downtown Lunch Group 12:30 pm Worship Review 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 pm	9	10
11 Famous Friends 8:30 am Worship Service 9:30 am Christian Education 11 am Mary & Martha Potluck 12:00 pm	12	13 Bulletin announcements due by noon Mission Committee 5:30 pm Session—Special Meeting 7:00 pm	14 Morning Glories 9:30 am Men's Bible Study 10 am Deacons 7:00 pm	15 Spiritual Formation 10 am Worship Review 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 pm	16 Presbytidings articles due by noon	17
18 Worship Service 9:30 am Christian Education 11 am Comfort My People 12 pm	19	20 Bulletin announcements due by noon Presbyterian Women 9:30 am Session 7:00 pm	21 Men's Bible Study 10 am	22 Historical Jesus 10:00 am Worship Review 6:00 PM Choir 7:00 pm	23 Office Closed	24 Project Share Worship Service 7:00 pm
25 Worship Service 10:15 am Adult Singles 12:30 pm	26 Office Closed	27 Bulletin announcements due by noon	28	29 Choir 7:00 pm	30 Office Closed	31 New Year's Eve Service 6 pm

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St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
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Please contact us at:

Phone: (505) 881-9626

Fax: (505) 884-9636

E-mail: sapc2@juno.com

www.standrewabq.org

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS OR DONATIONS FOR MISSION

Would you like to purchase Christmas poinsettias or make a donation
to the Mission Committee to award to needy organizations ?

Turn in this form to the church office or place in offering plate by Sunday, December 18.

Poinsettias are \$10 each. Please make checks payable to St Andrew.

Be sure to tell us if your purchase or donation is "In Memory Of" or "In Honor Of".



Name: _____

In Memory Of: _____ (list additional names on back)

In Honor Of: _____ (list additional names on back)

____ Number of poinsettias (\$10 each). How many will you take home on Christmas Day? _____

____ Amount of donation for mission.