

# St. Bartholomew's Newsletter

December 2002

## The Rector's Choice

*Rev. David Pollock, Rector*

Dear People of St. Bartholomew's:

Sunday December first is the first Sunday in Advent. Advent is the beginning of the church year. Advent is the season of anticipation and preparation for Christmas. The culture, outside the church, prepares very differently from we in the church for Christmas. The culture encourages us to shop and spend and purchase things for our family and friends. The church encourages us to buy gifts for our family and friends certainly, but really seeks to focus our attention on the other, more important part of our lives, our faith and spiritual lives.

The church calls us to study scripture and attend worship to make sure we have prepared ourselves and our families to receive the greatest gift ever given in the history of the world, the gift that God gave to humanity, His own Son, born into a human family in Bethlehem. It is not an easy task for us in all our preparations for Christmas, to keep the focus on our own preparation to receive the Christ Child into our hearts. When we strip away all the trappings of Christmas, it is really a time for us to give gifts to others in response to the wonderful gift to us of God's Son, Jesus.

But I do hope that in all your preparations for Christmas that you will at least set aside the four Sundays in Advent to come to church and enter into the world of anticipation and preparation that the church has preserved for all these years. We will sing no Christmas Carols in church in Advent, but we will sing beautiful Advent Carols and hymns that prepare us for Christmas.

When you come to church on the Sundays in Advent, you will not see Christmas decorations as you do everywhere else in our community. Instead, you will see our elegant, simple beautiful Church with the Advent wreath and its candles of preparation and it's circular shape reminding us of the eternal life that the coming of the Christ Child means to each of us.

Our focus in Lent is to prepare us to fully appreciate the gift of God's love personified in the person of the baby of Bethlehem. Please don't forget that Christmas is about God's greatest gift to us in His Son Jesus, and then and only then can the gifts we give to others, help us to really celebrate Christmas.

I wish you a faithful and holy Advent.

*Peace and love in Christ,  
David*

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Christmas.**

## Bishop Visit December 1, 2002

The Right Reverend Allen Bartlett will be coming to St. Bartholomew's on Sunday, December 1, 2002.

Please come and enjoy a parish breakfast in the undercroft at 9:30 a.m. with Bishop Bartlett.

He will preach and celebrate at the 11 a.m. service. There will be a coffee hour after the service also.

He is the Assisting Bishop of the Diocese of Washington. We are connected through the Diocese to the larger Episcopal and Anglican community.

It will be great to welcome him to St. Bartholomew's for the First Sunday of Advent — the beginning of our church year.



### Ladies Guild News

The Ladies Guild has been busy with the current renovations in the kitchen. All is not complete but you can use the water, a new hand sink has been installed and the countertop under the window has been replaced by one made of Corian. Because of the many activities, we will continue to finish the kitchen as we are able.

The guild will be preparing its Holiday Baskets for the sick and shut-ins in our Parish on Monday, December 16 at 9:30 AM at the home of Barbara White. We will deliver them personally that same day. We can always use more help so feel free to come by if your schedule permits.

Our next meeting and Potluck Luncheon will be on the third Monday in January (January 20, 2003) at 12:30 PM. All women of the Parish are invited to join and participate.

### Music at St. Bartholomew's

This autumn, our musical resources have been expanding bit by bit. We now have three people providing musical leadership: Penny Jansen continues as St. Bartholomew's organist; Laura Jansen leads the Junior Choir; and I direct the St. Bartholomew's Choir. Each one of us is now finding it possible to concentrate on and enjoy a particular musical ministry.

The nine-person adult choir includes all four voice parts. We have stepped up our practice schedule to once-a-week sessions. Soon we will be offering an anthem or other special piece of music on most Sundays, in addition to providing leadership to the congregation in singing hymns and service music. Listen for some simple and wonderful pieces during Advent and Christmas, perhaps including short vocal solos or instrumental accompaniment.

And now, in the Education Building there is a Choir Room. This room has just enough space for the choir to meet and warm up (once a piano or small organ is installed), as well as plenty of shelving to hold choir books and sheet music. Around the corner is a nook for a vestment rack, and soon choir robes will hang there. Then, the choir will be able to vest, gather music, and warm up in a space dedicated to these needs.

On that note: St. Bartholomew's music program has a Christmas wish, for two pianos (or small organs). A piano in the choir room will enable the choir to warm up properly before services, and work through those tricky passages just one more time. As well, a piano in the undercroft would be great for hymn singing during parish gatherings, or for the Sunday School. Please advise the church office if you have an instrument to donate.

Thanks to all who make music at St. Bartholomew's -- choirs, cantors and soloists, organist, instrumentalists, and the whole congregation! Together we make a beautiful sound, rising in prayer and praise to our Lord.

*The Rev. Margaret Pollock*

### "Giving is Good News! Stewardship Update

The parish enjoyed a pleasant Sunday evening dinner last month celebrating our Stewardship program. The total pledge amount was reported and our thanks were given to the parishioners for their pledges and efforts.

Since then, our total amount pledged has grown to \$122,000, an increase of some \$11,000 over this time last year. Another thanks to the parish.

We'll be calling people to ask if they have received pledge materials and are planning to make a pledge. We hope that all will participate.

*Dave Carvey*  
*Stewardship Chairman*

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## International Outreach

The International Outreach Committee continues its ministry with Father and Mary Demo and their dream of building the Milembe Children's Home in Migori, Kenya. To date we have contributed a total of \$4,820.00 towards this most worthwhile cause.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, we received an e-mail from Mary Demo outlining how our funds have been used thus far. Because of the generosity of our congregation, they have been able to pay down the balance on their land loan, purchase building materials, pay for additional labor, provide for the digging of a sewer and purchase a septic tank.

As you can see, they are progressing with phase one, but are still in need of additional funds to complete the project. We are hoping to continue our support for the orphanage and make a difference in the lives of those young girls in need.

You will soon see a bulletin board erected in the undercroft. It will display pictures of the orphanage as it continues to be built, any e-mails received, articles relating to Kenya, a map, pictures we already have of the orphanage and anything else that will keep the congregation informed on our ministry with the Demo's .

The next meeting of the International Outreach Committee will be December 15<sup>th</sup>. Please join us!

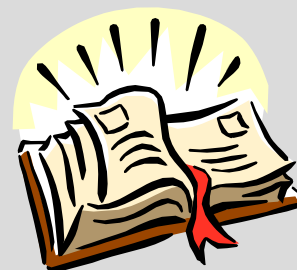


1928 Prayer Book  
Service

It has been an old tradition of St. Bartholomew's Church to use the 1928 Prayer Book. We will have an opportunity to remember this tradition on Sunday, December 8, 2002 when we will conduct services from this book at both the 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services.

Youth Service  
November 10, 2002

The Journey to Adult (J2A) class conducted the 11:00 a.m. church service on November 10, 2002.. Participants included Robert Tyler Barberi, Lauren Bray, Jackie Davis, Lauren C. Fisher, Travis Fisher, Wade Henderson, Brian Horton, Peter Horton, Alex Jansen, Ellen Jansen, Jeff Kaufmann, Ashleigh Middleton, and Payton Middleton. We thank our youth for their wonderful work. The sermon was given by Lauren Fisher.



Bible Study

The Monday Evening Bible Study meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Undercroft. We will begin the study of the Book of Matthew on December 2, 2002.

The Wednesday Bible Study meets at 10:00 a.m. in the Education Building (Rectory). The class is followed by Wednesday Holy Communion at 11:00 a.m. Come join one of these dynamic groups!

## Journey to Adulthood Service Sermon for November 10<sup>th</sup>

Lauren Fisher

Today's Gospel reading illustrates the importance of being prepared. Have you ever been in a situation when you weren't ready for something? Maybe it was a big test or a presentation at work. Among our class, we haven't been prepared for the first day of school, tryouts, many tests, and even the deaths of loved ones. Think about how you felt when you weren't prepared. It wasn't a good feeling, was it? If we felt that nervous about a small test, imagine how we'll feel when it comes time for the Big Test, when we must answer to God for the way we spent our lives.

The great author and theologian C.S. Lewis said, "The doctrine of the Second coming teaches us that we don't know when the world drama will end. The curtain may be rung down at any moment.... We do not know the play. We don't even know if we are in act one or act five. We don't know who the major and minor characters are. Only the Author knows.... We are lead to expect that the Author will have something to say to each of us on the part we have played. The playing it well is what matters infinitely." It is true that we don't know how much time we have left on Earth, especially in light of recent events. We can't spend our lives thinking that we have a lot of time to get close to God and to start doing His will. George Bernard Shaw said, "If you take to long in deciding what to do with your life, you'll find you've done it." We don't want to be dragged kicking and screaming through the valley of the shadow of death yelling, "But I'm not ready! I haven't done anything good lately!" If we spend our whole lives living for God, then when we get to that valley, we'll be ready. Always, we will be prepared to answer to God.

A character in a book my mother was reading had a shirt that said, 'Jesus is coming. Look busy.' Interesting advice, but it's not enough to look busy. We have to be busy, going about the work that God has given us to do. So, how can we be prepared? Well, coming to church every Sunday is a good start, but we need to do more. It's not enough to come here and recite the Lord's Prayer every Sunday. We have to take what we learn in church out into the world, and use it every day, not just for an hour on Sundays. This means being kind to others and helping them in any way we can, whether in big ways or small. A quote from an early Peanuts comic strip comments on this. Linus, Lucy, and Charlie Brown are lying on the grass, watching clouds.

Lucy says, "If you use your imagination, you can see lots of things in the cloud formations. What do you see, Linus?"

He answers, "Well, those clouds over there look like a map of British Honduras on the Caribbean. That cloud up there looks a little like the profile of Thomas Eakins, the famous painter and sculptor. And that group of clouds over there gives me the impression of the stoning of Stephen...I can see the Apostle Paul standing there to one side."

**Have you ever  
been in a situa-  
tion when you  
weren't ready  
for something?**

"Uh-huh," Lucy says, "that's very good. What do you see in the clouds Charlie Brown?"

"I was going to say I saw a ducky and a horsy," Charlie Brown replied, "but I changed my mind."

This strip reminds us that not everyone thinks big, like Linus, and will be called to do the big things. We are not all like Mother Theresa in Calcutta or the Demos

in Kenya. Most of us are like Charlie Brown and see the simpler things, but those simple things count, too. They are important to God. Helen Keller said, "I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." Our confirmation class went to Washington D.C. last spring to deliver supplies to a homeless shelter. That wasn't a big thing, but it helped the people who were at the shelter. We've also done good deeds as individuals, such as returning lost property and doing volunteer work.

Who knows? Maybe a little thing that we do for someone else will become a big thing. You may be familiar with this story from Chicken Soup for the Soul. "Mark was walking home from school one day one day when he noticed the boy ahead of him had tripped and dropped all the books he was carrying, along with two sweaters, a baseball bat, a glove, and a tape recorder. Mark knelt down to pick up the scattered articles. Since they were going the same way, he helped carry part of the burden. As they walked, Mark discovered the boy's name was Bill, that he loved video games, baseball, and history, that he was having a lot of trouble with his other subjects, and that he had just broken up with his girlfriend. They arrived at Bill's home first and Mark was invited in for a coke and to watch some television. The afternoon passed pleasantly with a few laughs and some small talk and then Mark went home. They continued to see each other around school, had

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lunch together once or twice, and then both graduated from junior high school. They ended up in the same high school, where they had brief contacts over the years. Finally, the long awaited senior year arrived, and three weeks before graduation, Bill asked Mark if they could talk. Bill reminded him of the day years ago when they first met.

"Do you ever wonder why I was carrying all my books home that day?" asked Bill. "You see, I didn't want to leave a mess for someone else. I had stored away some of my mother's sleeping pills and I was going home to commit suicide. But after we spent some time together, talking and laughing, I realized that if I had killed myself, I would have missed that time and so many others that might follow. So you see, Mark, when you picked up my books, you did more than that. You saved my life."

If we do nice things for people, then others may follow our examples. My friend told me about a girl named Jill, who she goes to school with. Jill hadn't had a single friend since fourth grade and spent all her time studying. My friend was assigned to work with her on a school project. While they worked together, she discovered that Jill had a social side, and that she was a very nice person. They became friends and after a couple of weeks, Jill had five more friends. Those five people followed my friend's example, and discovered what she already knew; that Jill was a good person and a good friend.

Remember that in order to be prepared by doing good unto others, we have to have the right motives. We can't do good deeds because we want to get our picture in the paper, recognition, or some kind of reward. We have to do them because of the good feeling it gives us and because it's God's will.

What if it all seems like too much? What if you don't have time for all these good deeds? What if you're too busy with your own life? What if it's too much of a sacrifice to be prepared? According to the Catholic theologian, Thomas Merton, a sacrifice isn't supposed to be hard or painful. It's supposed to bring you closer to God. Think about that for a minute. Could the feeling you get when you've done something good mean you are closer to God? We think so. Remember that next time you're about to walk past someone who needs your help, or when you're thinking about skipping church, "just this once." These sacrifices of your time and effort will bring you closer to God. That's worth it, don't you think? It's worth the sacrifice to be prepared. You don't want to miss out on Heaven.

I'd like to close with a quote from John Wesley. "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Amen.

## Sunday School

The month of December is always an exciting one for the Sunday school. We will begin with Advent and the lead up to the miracle birth of our Lord. We will be stressing the meaning of Christmas. We hope that each family will take time to reflect on the magnitude of the season. We are sending home with each child a calendar of activities for Advent. We hope the activities will add to joy of your Christmas.

Dec. 8 & 15 are reserved for rehearsal for the Pageant. We are making some changes this year. There will be more parts for the children. The pageant is always a big event in our church and this year will be no different. As always we welcome friends and relatives. There is always room for more, even the day of the pageant.

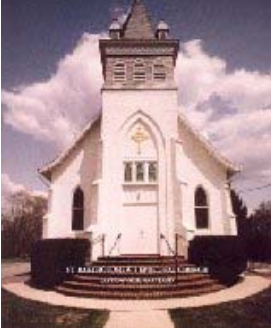
Special arrangements have been made for Santa to take time from his busy schedule and visit the children of St. Bartholomew's after the pageant. Everyone can have their picture taken with Santa at this time. Don't miss this opportunity.

On December 29 the Sunday school will take a recess for one Sunday.

*"We are all children in the eyes of God"*

**HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

## Scheduled Activities



**St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church**  
**P.O. Box 5005**  
**21615 Laytonsville Rd.**  
**Laytonsville, MD 20882**

### Upcoming Events

- 12/1/02 Breakfast with the Right Reverend Allen Bartlett at 9:30 a.m.
- 12/1/02 Right Reverend Allen Bartlett will preach and celebrate
- 12/8/02 1928 Prayer Book Services, 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
- 12/22/02 Christmas Pageant Morning Prayer Service at 11:00 a.m.
- 12/24/02 Christmas Eve Services at 5:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.
- 12/25/02 Christmas Service at 10:00 a.m.
- 12/29/02 Christmas — Rite II - Eucharist
- 1/5/03 Christmas — Eucharist

### Sunday Schedule

- 8:00 a.m. The Holy Communion
- 10:20 a.m.. Youth Choir practice
- 11:00 a.m. The Holy Communion - first and third Sundays
- Morning Prayer - second, fourth and fifth Sundays

Sunday School Activities are held during the 11:00 service

Sunday Fellowship Coffee Hour follows both Sunday services

### Regular Weekly Schedule

- Mondays 7:30 p.m. Monday Evening Bible Study .
- Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. Wednesday Morning Bible Study .
- 11:00 a.m. The Holy Communion
- Thursdays 7:00 p.m. Sr. Choir rehearsal — Thursdays

**St. Bartholomew's Church**  
**P.O. Box 5005**  
**21615 Laytonsville Rd.**  
**Laytonsville, MD 20882**  
**Office Hours:**  
**12:00 -- 3:00 p.m.**  
**weekdays**

**Phone Numbers:**  
**Office: (301) 948-8201**  
**Church: (301) 948-8202**  
**Fax: (301) 990-7787**  
**Web Address:**  
**[www.saintbartholomews.org](http://www.saintbartholomews.org)**