

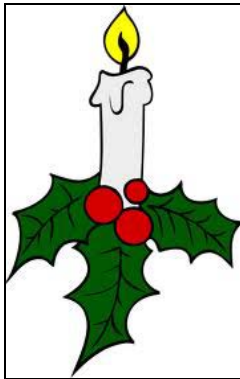


# The Road to Damascus

December 2012



## Christmastide Services From The Rector



**Christmas Eve**  
December 24  
5:30 p.m. Family service

**Christmas Day**  
December 25  
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with  
Carols

**Sunday, December 30**  
One service at 10:00 a.m. Lessons  
and Carols

**Sunday, January 6**  
The Feast of the Epiphany  
Holy Eucharist and 8 and 10 a.m.

6:00 p.m.  
Caroling and visit of the Three  
Kings, Red Lion porch

### “The light from on high has dawned upon us”

One of the great joys of the church year is the light that gently fills our churches on Christmas Eve. At the very darkest time of the year, the Light of the world, the One through whom all things were made, takes on our nature and comes among us. Our Lord Jesus brings us light and hope.

This is something God has prepared for a long time. Throughout the Advent season we've been hearing the stories and the songs of John the Baptist, Zechariah, Mark, Elizabeth. The lights on the Advent wreath are growing week by week. The star on our tower is already summoning the Magi from their distant land. And on Christmas Eve, we'll stand before the manger, holding our candles, with the Angels illuminated in the ceiling above us, and hear again the great words of John's Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word and his life is the light of all people. The true light, which enlightens everyone, is coming into the world.”

This is a never-ending cycle. It began, of course, nine months ago when the Angel announced to Mary that she was to have a child. In the Spring, when light was in the midst of its life-giving return, Mary gave her great “Yes” which set all in motion. And in the Spring, our candles will be lit again for the Great Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter, when Jesus' gift of his own life restores eternal life to us and to all creation.

So we gather on December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, and on December 30<sup>th</sup> for Lessons and Carols, and on January 6<sup>th</sup> for the Epiphany to celebrate the great light, the great reality that has come into our world and into our lives: “The Word has become flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

*Tom +*

### **Stewardship**

Thank you to those who spoke so movingly about Stewardship, and especially our role as a Parish in the Community.

Thank you to all those who work in Food Pantry and in other commitments to caring and sharing.

Thank you to John Tarrant for his inspirational sharing on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you to the Church of the Good Shepherd for the generosity shown to so many outreach projects.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of pledging to the support of the mission and ministry of this parish in 2013.

### **Outreach**

Members of the parish have been asked the following questions. If you have not yet responded, please do so by email.

- What outreach / community service are you yourself involved in right now?
- Where do you see areas that we can as parish get involved in?
- Would you be interested in serving on 2013 Mission and Outreach Committee?

### **Christmas Flowers and Plants**

I/We would like to contribute In memory of

In thanksgiving for

Name

### **In Memoriam**

- Jack Love, Brother-in-Law of Bill Vogt, died on November 18.
- Katherine Lemoine Fenimore Cooper Cary, longtime friend and supporter of St. Paul's, died on December 4. Her family gave the two windows to the left and right over the high Altar.

Our prayers and thoughts are with their families. May their souls and the souls of all the departed rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine upon them.

## Welcome Back, John Tarrant



St. Paul's was blessed to welcome John Tarrant, former Rector and now Bishop of South Dakota on November 25. It was a special occasion for many, including John's grandson, Andrew Gilman (to John's left in the photo above). John preached on his ministry in a diocese that is very different from ours. There is a close connection, however, between our community and the churches of South Dakota, as the story below illustrates.

### **The Church of the Good Shepherd**

The Church of the Good Shepherd is featured in the current issue of *the Pastoral Staff*. This is a fine presentation of the grace-filled process through which the congregation decided to close in an intentional way. As Mary Lee Johansen said, the "Church of the Good Shepherd (and, indeed, other churches like it) is more than a building. It encapsulated the spirit and faith of its parishioners and its outreach community activities."

A series of legacy grants is now being completed, which have provided funds for work in the Diocese of South Dakota (where Stan Wooley and John Tarrant now serve), support for the ongoing Vacation Bible School, and much more.

The membership of Good Shepherd's parishioners has been transferred back to St. Paul's, and steps are underway to see that the work among the people and area served by Good Shepherd since 1856 is carried forward.

## Our New Bishop



The Rev. Dr. Douglas John Fisher was ordained and consecrated the ninth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts at 11:00 a.m. on December 1 in a ceremony held at the MassMutual Center in Springfield, MA.

The Most Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, was the Chief Consecrator. The Right Rev. Gordon P. Scruton, co-consecrating Bishop, passed the crozier to Fisher, ceremonially transferring to him the position of Bishop.

"This day is not about one person, but about the whole Church," said Bishop Fisher. "The ordination and consecration of a Bishop is a deeply meaningful time when we all get to renew the faith that is within us and re-commit ourselves to following Jesus in his mission of mercy, compassion and hope. It is a time of celebration and inspiration for all God's people."



To read more please click on [the Ordination and Consecration of Bishop Douglas John Fisher](#). Please also see more photos and a video of the Seating of the Bishop on the Diocese's [Website](#).



Photos:

**Top:** Retiring Bishop Gordon Scruton, new Bishop Doug Fisher and Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori.

**Middle:** Getting ready to process, photo by Carla McCormick.

**Bottom:** The St. Paul's banner, carried by Carla in the ceremony.

## St. James Church

On Sunday, December 2, we joined with our friends and neighbors at St. James, Great Barrington, for the celebration of 250 years of ministry at this, the oldest congregation in Western Massachusetts. The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, was the Celebrant and Preacher, assisted by Rector Francie Hills, the incoming Archbishop of the Episcopal Church in Ghana and our newly-retired Bishop Gordon Scruton.

On January 1, St. James and St. George's churches will become the newest parish in the Diocese, as "Grace Episcopal Church: An Episcopal Community in the Southern Berkshires." They will continue to worship at Crissey Farms.

Francie and members of St. James/St. George's will again join us for our joint Christmas Day service this year, at 10:00 a.m.



*The Rev. Daniel Kwabena Pieh, Diocese of Kumasi; Archbishop Daniel Sarfo, Ghana; Retired Bishop Gordon Scruton; Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori; The Rev. Francie Hills, Rector of St. James; Deacon Jane Griesbach, Diocesan Mission Officer.*