

Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out on this earth, yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good, and yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now.
Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582



The Rev. Paul Twelves

From Our Interim Rector

During most of my adult life there has been a mis-match between the cultural Christmas Story and the New Testament Christmas Story.

The cultural (American) Christmas Story has an aura of high expectation growing out of abundance. It thrives by creating a fantasy in which we all give and receive gifts that will make us unbelievably happy and that will enhance relationships with those near and dear. This Christmas Story is supported by an extravaganza of strings of lights, decorated trees, appropriate music (sometimes) and elegant wrappings in store displays. It is a story of the wonders of excess.

The New Testament Christmas Story is a sharp contrast. It is about a pregnant, peasant teen-ager, who is required to travel to Joseph's town of origin because the government in faraway Rome has arbitrarily decreed that's where you have to be at census time. No matter that you're pregnant and about to deliver. Get there. This is an oppressive government that cares about people only to suck every advantage it can out of them.

When the weary travelers get to Bethlehem, an insignificant outpost in the powerful Roman Empire, there is no place to stay.

The birth is attended by shepherds – not quite the middle class we talk so much about.

The New Testament Christmas Story is about God entering human life through those who have little and who count for little.

Interim Rector...Continued on page 2



John Reskusich

Senior Warden's Corner

As the holiday seasons of Advent and Christmas are upon us, I look back on a year of continued good works by good people. One specific area that needs everyone's assistance, attention, and involvement is Parish Development. And this comes full circle with Advent. If you recall, the group that has been meeting periodically since the spring developed a vision statement. It is:

*"Building a welcoming church community,
eucharistically centered,
that embraces family and
pastoral relationships
...open doors, open hearts."*

Each and every year, we prepare ourselves emotionally and spiritually to (re-)welcome Jesus at Christmas. We display and light the Advent candles symbolizing the run up to his Birth. We get ready each week for that climax and celebration of joy and expectation.

Yet, Parish Development, as is envisioned above, is preparing ourselves continually; getting ready for others, our Guests and Visitors, to join us at Saint Michael's and at the Eucharistic table. We are in an **Advent-ure** of being prepared to welcome anyone and everyone that come to our doors.

This is especially important now because for nearly 4 years we have developed and been preparing ourselves for a new rector. I do not know when a new rector will be called. We all pray that it will be soon. But, regardless of when a new rector is called, we must prepare ourselves for his or her "advent".

SeniorWarden...Continued on page 2

The mismatch between cultural Christmas and religious Christmas could be described further. But you get the point.

Because of the faltering economy, the mismatch between cultural Christmas and New Testament Christmas is less than in any year since the Great Depression (why do we capitalize these words?). That's bad news. At least, materially. But, if we can open ourselves to the possibility, it may just be good news, spiritually.

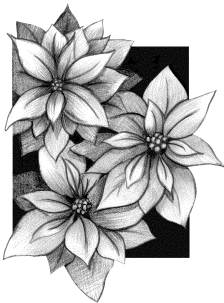
The good news:

- Lowered expectations – and, hopefully, an accompanying sense of relief and relaxation.
- Appreciation of “things” because there will be fewer – and given more thoughtfully.
- Focus on relationships.
- Reflection on what's important in my life.
- Hearing the Christmas Story, New Testament version, afresh.

May Christmas, despite the despair over the economy, be good news for you.

Paul Twelves

Christmas Flower Memorials



If you would like to have flowers in the church for Christmas in memory of a loved one please use the enclosed flower memorial envelope and return it to the church by December 19th with your donation of \$ 25.00.

I ask that we pray for peace in this troubled world we live in and for stability in all of our economies that are so intertwined. Pray for hope and the expectations of a better tomorrow. Pray for an excellent *Advent-ure!*

Happy Christmas to all!!
John Reskusich



From the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry and Staff of St. Michael's Church.

“Vestry Meetings Open to Parish”

Did you know Vestry Meetings are open to the Parish? They are and you should come. See how and what we discuss and do. If you have something you would like to bring to our attention or suggest to the Vestry, you are more than welcome to attend. If you are interested in possibly participating sometime in the future in the governance of St. Michael's, please come and join us.

The Vestry meets once a month usually the 3rd Tuesdays. Here is our scheduled meeting dates for the rest of the year. All meetings are at 7pm in the Tildesley Bldg.

Tuesday, December 16th

Additionally, the Finance Committee usually meets the Monday evening before the Vestry at 6:30pm in the Ivy Room. You are welcome to join us then as well.

John Reskusich
Senior Warden

PARISH NEWS

Report On 218th RI Diocesan Convention

by Elaine Cohen/(Gotovich), Delegate

As a delegate to our 218th Annual RI Diocesan Convention, I have a few thoughts to share with my church community at St. Michael's. Bishop GERALYN WOLF delivered the Convention Address as our spiritual leader and CEO. The business of the day was the discussion on the pending resolutions on immigration, slavery and disaster preparedness.

Bishop Wolf reminded us that we are more than members of each of our local parishes, but members of the church community through our baptism in Christ and renewal in partaking of the Eucharist. She reminded us of our purpose of the proclamation of the spiritual message of God's forgiveness, salvation, and grace.

Bishop Wolf's words spoke of the reality of the world around us, and the fear and anxiety we are facing daily. This same reality confronts us daily in our work places, local papers, and nightly newscasts. I heard the words of:

- 8.8% unemployment in the state of RI
- jobs cuts in many industries, and businesses closing
- home foreclosures affecting owners and renters alike
- instability of our financial markets and investments vaporizing
- declining church enrollment & church expenses rising

I also heard words of hope, and the top four(4) "must have" hopes were:

1-Continued worshipping the Lord each & every Sunday, through word and sacraments in good weather & bad, good times and bad, and in good moods and bad.

2-Growth in Hispanic Ministry, due to growth in proportion of Spanish speaking peoples in the population mix of RI. Out of discussion came the recommendation of church sponsored English as a second language classes at the parish level.

3-To take seriously Christian formation for all ages, and in action the words become "**Inform-Form-Transform**" within our parishes. The fruits of this hope have blossomed at St. Michael's through our Children's Sunday

School, Adult Inquirers' Class and book discussions. The thought provoking questions proposed were:

"What do Christians believe"?

"What does it mean to live a Christian life?"

4-Let go of doom & gloom thoughts of the "glass is half empty". It is time to take on an attitude of gratitude, and count our many blessings from God. The blessings of good weather, good crops, and good health are just a few of the multitude of everyday things, which God has bestowed and blessed us bountifully.

We heard from our guest Speaker, Bishop Charles Jenkins III, Diocese of LA, about the devastation in LA caused by Katrina. We heard about the continuing work on our companion relationship with the Diocese of Louisiana and the ministry opportunities that are currently available. Some of these are: Mission Trips-"Rebuilding Orleans", -Children connected as Penpals, -"One Story at a Time" as adopt a family

When we broke out for group discussions, I attended the Disaster Preparedness workshop. I learned that all disasters start locally and end locally. It is important that our parish and diocese prepare for any type of emergency. At our federal and state levels we have institutions ready for action. In times of natural disaster we have FEMA, and in times of winter blizzard storms we have our RI National Guard. We do not wish to duplicate, but to interface with existing disaster teams and assist with our resources to our neighbors in our community. Out of the discussion was the confirmation of the resolution to assemble a commission of five (5) individuals, with experience in disaster planning. The goal is to be able from the diocesan level down through to the parish level to have a disaster plan in place to preserve church records, to identify parishioners in need of higher care because of being disabled or elderly, and have at disposal the availability of space to offer refuge in time of disaster.

In closing I wish to express my gratitude for the opportunity to act as a delegate from St. Michael's parish. May the message that I carried back to you from Bishop Wolf continue for today and each and every day to "remind us who we are and what we are about. We are Christ followers, disciples, with the bible as our guide, as we continue with our goal, the transformation and salvation of the world and her peoples."

Peace

PARISH NEWS



Birthdays & Anniversaries This Month!

If your name is not listed and you would like it to be, please contact the church office and give us the appropriate date, either wedding anniversary or birthday.

Birthdays

Rita Crabtree	12/01	Chris Fay	12/16
Susan Sorrentino	12/01	Katelyn Butler	12/17
Sarah Abate	12/02	Carol Faulkner	12/18
Alexandra Robitaille	12/02	Jonathan Kristopik	12/18
Curt Chase	12/06	Jonnie Greer	12/20
Susan Morettini	12/08	Matthew Kirchner	12/21
Marsha Prindiville	12/08	Arthur Manuel	12/22
Priscilla Gill	12/09	Anna Rowell	12/23
Emily Reynolds	12/10	Max Cohen	12/23
Frank Munro	12/12	Kate Harden	12/24
Edith Turner	12/14	Robert Hollands	12/26
Philip Bennett	12/14	Elizabeth Hazlett	12/28
Ana Lial	12/14	Cynthia Cambrola	12/28
Noah Krupowicz	12/15	Paul Prindiville	12/29
Philip Berretto	12/15	Melissa Marine	12/30
		Jill Cabral	12/31

Wedding Anniversaries

Bruce and Nancy Moger	12/01
Robert and Veleta Curran	12/13
John and Mary Ann Allen	12/13
Gary and Jane Mesagno	12/30
Jane and John Corbishley	12/31

BICYCLES NEEDED



Glenn Donovan, parishioner and volunteer for the RISE program, knows of 5 or 6 adult males in need of bicycles.

If you are able to help please contact Glenn Donovan at 253-7837 or email him at gdonovan@lifespan.org.



Come and Join Us!

Adult Choir Rehearsals

Wednesdays - 7-9pm -Chantry

Handbell Choir Rehearsals

Fridays - 6pm

St. Michael's Angel Choir

First and third Sundays of the month

-After the 10am service

Children ages 3 through 11 are invited to participate. We will be singing, moving, learning some sign language, and playing percussion instruments!



News From Bristol Good Neighbors

December 22-Christmas Dinner will be served
December 24, 25, 31 and January 1-Bristol Good Neighbors will be closed.

With the holidays upon us Bristol Good Neighbors gratefully accepts, canned and dry foods, food gift cards to Stop & Shop or Seabra, and clothing.

The soup kitchen is looking for donors for their Adopt-A-Family program for Christmas. If you would like to be a donor please contact Janet Stephenson, director, at 254-0726. Gifts should be delivered to the Parish House no later than December 12th.

PARISH NEWS

Something New for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

Advent is a time of preparation, Christmas is a season of joy, and Epiphany is when a Light shines in the darkness. Any of these is a reason for contemplation and reflection. One of the oldest and least understood practices in our tradition is meditation. Practiced by such Christian mystics as Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179), Ignatius of Loyola (1491 – 1556), and Henri Nouwen (1932 – 1996), meditation has taken many forms and provides us with a rich opportunity to deepen our sacred experience.

Schedule: (all meetings will be at 7:30 in the Ivy Room)

- Thursday, 11 December (Advent and Christmas) – Lectio Divina is Latin for divine reading. This traditional Christian practice of scriptural reading and meditation is intended to engender communion with God through The Word. Our exercise will enable participants to carry the practice into our personal prayer lives throughout Advent, Christmas and whenever the need to connect through scripture moves us to prayer.
- Thursday, 8 January (Epiphany) – Hildegard von Bingen, a German abbess, author, counselor, linguist, naturalist, scientist, philosopher, physician, herbalist, poet, visionary and composer contributed much to the practice of meditation. Our exercise will include the music of Hildegard von Bingen.
- Thursday, 22 January (Epiphany) – Ignatius of Loyola developed a method called Spiritual Exercises that are designed to lead the practitioner through several months of guided prayer and meditation on the life of Christ. We will explore selected meditations that include themes from Epiphany.
- Thursday, 5 February (Epiphany) – Henri Jozef Machiel Nouwen was a Dutch Catholic priest and prolific author of books on the spiritual life. Nouwen, while considered controversial by some, continues to be one of the most widely read modern Christian theologians. His ex-

egesis on the belovedness of God changed the church's understanding of our relationship with God. Our meditation exercises will draw on passages from Nowen's *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*.

- Thursday, 19 February (Epiphany) – In contemporary Christian meditation, kinetic contemplative methods include music, yoga, labyrinth walks and other active forms. Our exercise will use the ancient practice of yoga in a contemporary contemplative form. Wear comfortable clothes. More information provided before the meeting.

Christian meditation is a rich heritage that leads many into a fuller relationship with God. This program is intended to give participants information and practice that they can explore further in the context of prayer life. Feel free to participate at your own level of comfort. For more information, please contact Louisa Jones 396-5067.

The Greater Tiverton Community Chorus Presents “A Classical Christmas”

Another festive concert by the Greater Tiverton Community Chorus- **Saturday, December 13, at 7:30pm in St. Michael's Church.** Beth Armstrong, Chorus Director, announces “A Classical Christmas”, featuring the Mozart “Coronation Mass” with chamber orchestra. Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$ 10. Children 16 and under are free. Save the date.

PARISH NEWS

It's Live Nativity Time Again! Sunday, December 7th at 5pm

by Leta Cain

Children and adults are participating in the event which will be held in the garden area next to the Church on Hope Street. In addition to the Holy Family, the cast will include shepherds, magi, angels, and townsfolk. The Church will be open to the public for self-guided tours and will be decorated in candle-light. Some Charles Dickens-like characters will grace our iron gates with cookies and joy.

If you are interested in baking some cookies please contact Beth Fay at 254-2665.

Come all ye faithful!

(Take a look at some of last year's photos below)



Christmas Eve-December 24th

4:30pm - Family Service with Eucharist

Traditionally St. Michael's has presented a children's Christmas Pageant at the 4:30pm service on Christmas Eve. We are issuing a call to all children ages 4-11 who wish to participate as an angel, animal, shepherd, or wise man in the pageant. It doesn't require a lot of rehearsing or a lot of talent, just your presence. We know a lot of families attend this service with their children and would like to give the children the opportunity to participate in the pageant. If you would like your child to participate please contact the church office at 253-7717 or email Betty at stmichaels@fullchannel.net by or before Friday, December 5th. Rehearsals are planned for Sunday, Dec. 14th and 21st following the 10am service (around 11:30am- 12:15pm) in the church. We really would like to have as many children as possible participate. It's great fun!

10:00pm - Festive Eucharist

Christmas Day- December 25th

10:00am - Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 28th

8:00am - Holy Eucharist

10:00am - Service of Christmas Lessons & Carols

6:00pm - Holy Eucharist

Note: Due to the Grand Illumination and Live Nativity ***there will not be*** a 6pm Eucharist on Sunday, December 7th

Church office will be closed on Thursday, December 25th and Friday, December 26th and also on Thursday, January 1st and Friday January 2nd.

PARISH NEWS

ST. MICHAEL'S MEMORABILIA FOR SALE

As part of our 290th celebration we had hats, t-shirts and bags imprinted with "St. Michael's Church in Bristol Celebrating 290 years". These items were given as a token of thanks to those who contributed to the 290th Fund which will be returned to the General Fund within our endowment. We still have some of these items and will be offering them for sale. The hats are \$ 12.00; T-shirts \$10.00; and the bags are \$10.00.

If you are interested in purchasing any of these items, there are order forms available at the back of the church to be filled out and returned to the office.



Step #3 of Effective Church*

3. Take the initiative to build relationships with people and groups in the wider community beyond your congregation.

Refuse to be isolated. Take to the streets, the coffee shops, library and parks of your community. Be curious about what's going on. Get involved in community events. Meet people. Introduce yourself as a member of the church. Invite people to "come and see."



Step #3 of Ineffective Church*

3. Practice the following evangelism strategy: "If they want us, they know where to find us."



Assume that everyone does know where you are and what you are. It can also be helpful if your building looks like a medieval fortress. If you don't have that going for you, encourage your ushers and greeters to look like palace guards as they perform their role.

* Taken from *The 7 Habits of Highly Ineffective and Effective Churches* by Anthony B. Robinson

(Continued from John Reskusich's article from the October issue of WINGS.)



ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH OF BRISTOL
Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
Matthew 6:21
2009 Stewardship "ON LOAN" Campaign

I want to help support the mission of St. Michael's Church by pledging,

\$ _____ each week, or \$ _____ per month, or \$ _____ annually, or \$ _____ other/specify.

Do you want weekly offering envelopes? _____ Yes _____ No

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Email Address: _____

*If you have not pledged in the past, please consider doing so.
 For those who have pledged, please consider stretching your pledge for 2009.
 We appreciate your generous contribution.*

PLEDGE CARD

PLEASE TEAR OFF AND SEND TO ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, P. O. BOX 414, BRISTOL, RI 02809

<p>STEWARDSHIP UPDATE FOR 2008 <i>Please consider sending in your outstanding pledge balance before the end of the year.</i></p> <p>Pledging units: 112 Amount pledged: \$127,777</p> <p>Total received on pledges to date: \$96,879</p>

<p><i>Remember St. Michael's Church in your will and estate planning and help ensure our mission as your legacy for future generations.</i></p>

A GUIDE TO GIVING IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD

Annual Income	TITHE				
	3%	5%	7%	10%	15%
\$20,000	\$600.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,400.00	\$2,000.00	\$3,000.00
\$30,000	\$900.00	\$1,500.00	\$2,100.00	\$3,000.00	\$4,500.00
\$40,000	\$1,200.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,800.00	\$4,000.00	\$6,000.00
\$50,000	\$1,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$3,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$7,500.00
\$100,000	\$3,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$15,000.00
\$150,000	\$4,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$10,500.00	\$15,000.00	\$22,500.00

PARISH NEWS

Third Annual Faith Walk for Charity a Success - Raising Nearly \$8,000 for Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence

by Chris Fay

On a recent, rainy Sunday afternoon in Colt State Park, a Rabbi from a Barrington temple, a Deacon from a Bristol Catholic church, an Imam from a Providence Muslim worship center, and a Pastor from a Providence Baptist church stood together to say a prayer, and then led roughly 100 Rhode Islanders on a one mile walk to support child victims of domestic violence.

During the brief prayer service, each clergy person reflected on the importance to his or her religious tradition of helping neighbors in need. Later, one participant from a Christian tradition remarked "I was struck by how similar they all sounded." Indeed, there was a strong feeling of solidarity at the event. Imam Farid Ansari put it poignantly when said that all people, from every race and religion, working together to help those in need, is the picture that God wants to see.

"We are truly fortunate to be selected as this year's recipient of the *Faith Walk for Charity* fundraiser proceeds. The money raised during this wonderful event will truly be a well received blessing," said Deborah DeBare, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "During these difficult financial times, these funds will enable us to provide services for children who witness domestic violence. This type of program is our best hope for breaking the intergenerational cycle of domestic abuse within many families."

Faith Walk for Charity exists not only to help those in need, but also to celebrate what is common about different religions - to stress that helping neighbors in need is a common denominator among different faiths. Each year, the advisory board of Faith Walk for Charity, which is comprised of leaders of a variety of Rhode Island religious groups, chooses a secular human need to be served, and a beneficiary to support. Faith Walk for Charity is not a religious organization; it is an independent, non-profit RI corporation with 501(c)3 federal tax status. For more, visit the Faith Walk for Charity website: www.faithwalkforcharity.org

Faith Walk for Charity was started by the St. Michael's outreach committee.



(Due to a printing error this article is being rerun in this issue.)

PARISH NEWS

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT BRISTOL'S NURSING HOMES.....

by The Rev. Cece Perry

Yes, the days ahead will be very busy — from Thanksgiving to Christmas week, we seem to be trying to do too many things at once. Yet I will ask you to consider stretching yourself a little more, stretch your wings, and take part in a very rewarding ministry — once or twice during the month.

The residents in nursing homes are watching on television many family programs about children and grandchildren getting together for special times. And our residents are without their immediate family members most of the time. If they have a visit on a Sunday afternoon, they are fortunate.

So those of us who do the nursing home ministry on Tuesdays for St. Michael's invite you to join us. Be there as that extra neighbor, the son who can't quite get in or the daughter who has so many responsibilities — come with your children, and watch the activity of the young people bring smiles to the residents.

Tuesdays are always special days — we have the pleasure of worshipping together with older folks who are so pleased to be part of a worship service. The residents watch each one of us as we take on the responsibility of helping with the reading of a lesson or singing together or distributing communion throughout the room. They need our help finding the page for a prayer or for the intercessions.

And you probably know that we have been short of volunteers. Some of the most faithful among us have not been able to come — illness, difficulty in getting around. And a few of our volunteers are taking a week or two to visit warmer climes and be with the other members of their families in Florida or wherever they may go.

So put a smile on your face, find a funny hat and place it on your head, and come and bring good cheer to those who live week after week in our nursing homes.

Special gifts, those gifts of compassion and love are meant to be shared. And we all have them — they are the gifts given to us, those "talents" that the Lord has placed

within each of us. They are not to be buried in the ground—they are to be celebrated and given freely to others. A loving heart and words of kindness and encouragement are the gifts we give to others. And the residents, perhaps your family members, your neighbors, will thank you. And you will enjoy the love returned to you, their gift simply because you have been present, you have shared a little time with them.

The nursing home schedule is printed within the Sunday bulletin and also can be seen in the glass enclosed board in front of the office with other announcements.

Hope to hear from you soon — or just join us — plan to pray with us, to sing with us, and rejoice with all of the residents and the nursing home team.

God's peace be with you.



- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| December 7, Sunday | 2:00 pm |
| St. Elizabeth's Manor, Bristol | |
| Celebrant: The Rev. Mark DeWolf | |
| December 2, Tuesday | 11:00am |
| Silver Creek Nursing Home, Bristol | |
| December 9, Tuesday | 10:00am |
| St. Elizabeth's Manor, Bristol | |
| December 16, Tuesday | 3:00pm |
| Grace Barker, Warren | |
| December 23, Tuesday | 10:30am |
| Haven Health, Warren | |
| Celebrant: The Rev. Cecilia Perry | |

GIFTS OF WOMEN

THE ECW OF RHODE ISLAND

by The Rev. Cece Perry

November has been a busy month, a time to evaluate our work, to complete reports, to plan new projects, and to recognize and give thanks for the many gifts of Church Women.

The annual business meeting of the Episcopal Church Women was held on November 8 at the parish hall of Holy Trinity Church in Tiverton, RI. The women of Holy Trinity welcomed the visitors and provided coffee and refreshments. The Luncheon was catered. Several women from St. Michael's attended the meeting, the Eucharist, and luncheon. Names were presented for openings on the ECW Board and were voted on and approved. The position for Missions was not filled. No new name was presented when the Missions chairperson found it necessary to resign. Although St. Michael's does not have an active ECW group, if anyone would like to serve on the Board and learn about this ministry and others, please contact the Rev. Cece Perry.

Mrs. Kathy Lavallee, Director of Hallworth House, the Episcopal nursing home on Benefit Street in Providence, was present to receive a grant of \$23,000 from the National Episcopal Church United Thank Offering. This grant will enable Hallworth House to purchase a new van with lift and runners to accommodate wheel chairs. Residents of Hallworth House can look forward to easier trips to doctors and special event days.

Those present then moved to the Church, and prepared for the celebration of the Eucharist; the Rt. Rev. Geralyn Wolf officiated and was assisted by the Rev. Alan Gates, rector of Holy Trinity. Mrs. Carolyn Howell, organist at Holy Trinity, kept us all singing. The Bishop received the United Thank Offering brought in from parishes throughout the Diocese.

Sister Grace of the Sisters of St. Margaret in Roxbury, MA, was the speaker for the day — She brought pictures and memoirs from her work as a spiritual coordinator for the ministry offered following the attack on the World Trade Center in September of 2001. She read several of the letters that school children had written to the firemen and policemen who provided rescue and recovery work after that tragedy.

Sister Grace spent the weekend in Bristol and preached at St. Michael's on Sunday, November 9, at both the 8 and 10 o'clock services. She preached on the lessons for that Sunday, and at the time for announcements, told us about her vocation as a nun and how she came to enter the

Convent. Because most people in our area are not familiar with Episcopal nuns, many were surprised to learn that Sister Grace is part of the Episcopal Church. She told us that there are 26 orders for nuns and 6 orders for monks. The Sisters of St. Margaret in Boston and the Sisters of the Holy Nativity in Wheeling, WV, are among the orders known in our area. The Sisters of the Holy Nativity at one time had a house in Providence and participated in the ministry of several city churches and still have a number of Associates in Rhode Island. The Sisters of St. Margaret also have many associates, both men and women, in the Diocese of RI. The monastery, the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge, MA, is better known in our area through their publications and through the Rt. Rev. Thomas Shaw, Bishop of Massachusetts, who is a member of that community. And another men's order in the Episcopal Church, the Order of the Holy Cross of West Park, NY, has been in the news recently as their house in Santa Barbara, CA, was completely destroyed by fire in the devastating fires in the third week of November.

Sister Grace thanked both the ECW of RI and St. Michael's for their financial gifts to the Convent. Sister Grace has told us that the Sisters are able to visit at other times to provide quiet days or retreats, and they invite people in our area to visit them at the Convent in Roxbury, MA. Simply call ahead to make arrangements.

A busy month —

FROM THE ECW President, Kay Meyer. Kay Meyer used this prayer in the Winter 2007 issue of COMMUNIQUE, the ECW journal. Its author is Sir Francis Drake (1540—1596), the first explorer to circumnavigate the earth:

Disturb us, Lord when we are too pleased with ourselves.
When our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little.
When we arrived safely because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst for the waters of life.
Having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity.
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, To venture on wilder seas
Where storms will show Your mastery,
Where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes;
And to push back the future in strength,
courage, hope, and love.
This we ask in the name of our Captain,
who is Jesus Christ.



Don't Mess with Santa Claus, A Bastion in Changing Times

by Marcia Torrey

Before I had digested by Thanksgiving turkey, a white-bearded, grandfatherly figure dressed in a crimson suit appeared on my television screen as the star performer of Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. In the days that followed, he was seen on town street corners waving to passing motorists and at the shopping malls where he held court to the animal cracker crowd.

My young granddaughter informed me his name was Ho-Ho. My grandsons referred to him as Santa. He also answers to St. Nick, Kris Kringle and Father Christmas. Above all, he symbolizes the spirit of Christmas.

I was a product of the era of the Outlet Department Store's dedicated Santas during a period when downtown Providence was the focus of our Christmas activities. During the long anticipatory days of December, before the magnetism of television and the lure of shopping malls, we were drawn like bees to clover by the glitter and fantasy world of the Outlet Company.

The lavish displays in the store windows attracted thousands to Westminster Street. Outside in the bitter cold, people watched the animated figures dressed in elegant costumes as they performed their various tasks. Sounds of Christmas were piped through loud-speakers on the street, creating an atmosphere of enchantment and bliss.

Inside the store, Santa listened attentively to endless requests from boys and girls who assured him they hadn't been naughty and were deserving of the presents they hoped Santa would bring. Year-old, rosy-cheeked babies sat unyielding upon his ample lap while the two-year-olds toyed with his fluffy whiskers and were the epitome of charm and endearment.

Santa made guest appearances at church school, Masonic and Odd Fellows Christmas parties—his arrival preceded by the jingling of sleigh bells which to our receptive young minds appeared to originate from the rooftops. The familiar figure of Santa Claus appeared, a great sack upon his back containing a present for every child seated around the Christmas tree, aglow with brightly lit bulbs and decorated with shiny colorful balls and strands of silver tinsel. The paper dolls, coloring books, toy cars, and checkerboards were to us as significant as the VCR's and Walkmen of today's generation.

I am grateful that Santa has remained steadfast in his responsibility to protect his grandfatherly image from the fads of our times. I have a problem visualizing this adored and legendary figure sporting a gold earring. I am relieved that Santa hasn't been smitten with the manifestations of a mid-life crisis or replaced his familiar steel-rimmed glasses with bifocals. Today's men appear to suffer from an identity crisis, but Santa has escaped the need to find himself—his silver tresses haven't been replaced by a spike hairdo in shades of purple and hot pink. His chest hasn't been weighted down with gold chains or his reliable reindeer replaced by a sleek red sports car with not-so-reliable horsepower. I'm thankful Santa hasn't become a paragon of weight control, his comforting rotund figure super-ceded by a muscle-bound frame.

The American consumer has accepted monumental change during this century, much of it with a sense of loss. We mourned the demise of our sleek Flexible Flyers for round metal disks we strapped to our rears. We've suffered the loss of our imaginations with the disappearance of radio dramas. We no longer need to imagine anything—it's all spelled out for us on our television screens.

My generation has never had a reputation for being rebellious, but don't attempt to trifle with the familiar, conservative, adored figure of our innocent childhood. We will never relinquish our struggle to protect the legendary figure of Santa from the affectation of the modern world.

The year I turned six, a friend informed me that there was no Santa Claus. I became a soothsayer of gloom and doom for a week or so—until I figured it was to my advantage to continue the pretense and keep those presents coming.

Today, I know that my friend was wrong. Yes, friends, there is a Santa Claus, whether you know him as Santa, Father Christmas, St. Nick or Ho-Ho. Age is no barrier to the spirit of Christmas. It's the warm glow you feel deep down inside. It's the joy and enchantment seen upon the face of a tiny child. It's listening to the Hallelujah Chorus with tears streaming down your face, sharing the joy of Christmas with family and friends.

*I wish the gift of love,
A mind free from care,
And the ability to know Ho-Ho
Through the eyes of a child.*

RI ECW Annual Meeting-Women Involved in the Episcopal Church

by Elaine Cohen

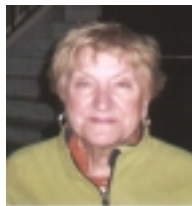
On November 8, 2008, the Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women was hosted at the Holy Trinity parish hall. In addition to the business meeting of the ECW's year long events, the Eucharist was celebrated by Bishop GERALYN Wolf with the ECW group and guests in attendance in the Holy Trinity Chapel. Rev. Cecilia Perry, Freda Doyle, Alice Cullen, and Elaine Cohen were attendees from St. Michael's parish.

The agenda of the RI ECW chapter's Annual Meeting was extensive, but I would like to share just a few topics with you.. The agenda included: the Annual Reports read by Elaine Oliveria/Secretary and Priscilla McFarland/Treasurer, the ECW's involvement with "UTO-United Thank Offering" and a donation that was made in memory of Pauline Ward, a long time UTO chair person. In addition, scholarships were awarded to Olive Swinski and Joyce Thorn.

Following the service, Rev. Cecilia Perry introduced our guest speaker, Sister Grace of St. Margaret's Convent, Boston, MA. Sister Grace spoke of the ministry of the religious order of St. Margaret. She shared with us her personal ministry of communication while stationed at St. Paul's Chapel, Wall Street, New York in September 2001. She displayed her photo album, which captured the events at Ground Zero in 2001. The pictures showed the transformation of the sacred space of St. Paul's Chapel to also become a space that ministered to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the volunteer workforce at Ground Zero.

After Sister Grace's address we assembled back into the parish hall and we were treated to a luncheon of finger sandwiches, multiple green and macaroni salads, and desserts that complemented the meal. It was now time for us to mingle, and to become better acquainted with each other in a very relaxed, supportive setting.

It was a well spent day, and I greatly encourage anyone interested in the work of the RI chapter of the ECW to contact Priscilla McFarland/Treasurer, 401-766-3115. Peace.



From Our Faith Community Nurse

by Anne McCarthy

Christmas Eve

It is almost midnight on Christmas Eve. I am ready for the joyful experience of exchanging presents with family members in the morning. In fact, I still feel some of the excitement that has been associated with this special evening since childhood. But before I lie down to sleep, I need to speak with you, O God.

All the decorations around me are indicative of the season. With every blink, the Christmas tree lights seem to say, "Christmas, Christmas, Christmas." (I must remember to unplug those lights before I go to bed.) Yet, sitting here on the sofa, I see nothing in this room that bears any resemblance at all to a stable. And I'm not sure I have ever seen a real manger. I am wondering what this indicates about the prospects of your Son's coming to me.

I am not a shepherd. At no time during this season have I even donned a robe in order to play one. If I were to hear singing angels, or see them, I would not know what to do with them.

But I *do* want you to come into my world, into my life. I invite you here and now. I welcome you.

Please come here as you came to Bethlehem. I long for a recognition of your permanent presence. I need the guidance of your wisdom in all my deliberations.

Come, Lord Jesus. Be born in me. Live in my house. Abide in my life. *Amen.*

PARISH NEWS



WINTER CAN BE FUN!!!!!!!!!!

Are you young, older, single, married, have children, don't have children, can drive, can't drive, ambulatory or having trouble getting around? If one or more of these apply to you, you are ready to sign up for the Foyer Groups!!

Hopefully you have noted that there is an air of lightness to this appeal but as parishioners of St. Michael's we are very serious about getting the Foyer Groups back in our lives.

This intermittent tradition of St. Michael's is ready to be resurrected as a winter program and as something we can all look forward to every year.

***What is a Foyer Group?* Foyer Groups provide an opportunity for you to get together with ten other members of St. Michael's for food, conversation, fellowship, friendship and fun.**

The goals of the Foyer Groups are simple. If you are a newcomer to St. Michael's this will provide you with the opportunity to meet those who are eager to welcome you. If you are a long standing member, then it's the place to meet the new members, renew old friendships and catch up.

If you are having trouble getting to social events like this, the Foyer Group members will be there to pick you up and get you to the gathering.

Here's the plan: please sign up at the back of the Church or call Betty Vargas at the Church office at: 401-253-7717 and let her know you are ready to become part of a Foyer Group. We want you to sign up no later than November 23rd.

Groups will then be formed and you will be notified as to when and where your Group will first get together. The first meeting will be in January, 2009 - shortly after this year's holiday season.



At the first gathering, the Group will decide when and where to meet and on what monthly dates. Friday night gatherings at homes, restaurants or pubs have worked best in the past.

Why we are doing this.... because winters in New England are long, darkness comes early and we all need to become part of something more. That "more" is a St. Michael's Foyer Group.

So if you are looking for something different to do that will be both fun and enjoyable during our New England winter, become part of a St. Michael's Foyer Group by signing up now! You'll be glad you did!

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH CALENDAR

Please place on your refrigerator.

DECEMBER 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
30 8am, 10am and 6pm -Holy Eucharist 9:00 AM Child Care 9:45 AM Sunday School	1	2 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist- Silver Creek NH	3 7:00 AM Holy Eucharist 7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	4 7:30 PM Book Group	5 6:00 PM Handbell Choir	
7 8am, 10am-Holy Eucharist NO 6PM SERVICE 9:00 AM Child Care 5:00 PM GRAND ILLUMINATION AND LIVE NATIVITY	8	9 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist- St. Elizabeths Manor	10 7:00 AM Holy Eucharist 7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	11 7:30 PM Meditation for Advent, Christmas	12 6:00 PM Handbell Choir	
14 8am, 10am and 6pm -Holy Eucharist 9:00 AM Child Care 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Angel Choir	15 6:30 PM Finance Meeting	16 3:00 PM Holy Eucharist- Grace Banker NH 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting	17 7:00 AM Holy Eucharist 7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	18 7:30 PM Book Group	19 6:00 PM Handbell Choir	
21 8am, 10am and 6pm -Holy Eucharist 9:00 AM Child Care 9:45 AM Sunday School	22	23 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist- Haven Health NH	24  7:00 AM Holy Eucharist 4:30 PM Family Services/Holy Eucharist 10:00 PM Festive Eucharist	25  OFFICE CLOSED 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist	26 OFFICE CLOSED	
28 8am, 10am and 6pm -Holy Eucharist 9:00 AM Child Care 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Angel Choir	29	30	31 7:00 AM Holy Eucharist 7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY OFFICE CLOSED	2 OFFICE CLOSED	

visit our WEBSITE at:
stmichaelsbristolri.org

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter or if you are receiving it by mistake, please call the church office or e-mail a note to us with the name and address to be removed and we will make the correction. Thank you.

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on the people of St. Michael's Parish and so guide us as we look forward to the call of a new Rector that we may be readied to receive a faithful pastor who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

After 5 Days Return to
St. Michael's Church
P.O. Box 414
399 Hope St.
Bristol, RI 02809-0414
Change Service Request

Telephone:(401)253-7717 Fax: (401) 253-7785
Email:stmichaels@fullchannel.net
Website:stmichaelsbristolri.org

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Time Dated Material -- Please Do Not Delay



Office Hours: M-F 8:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Worship Services:

Sunday: 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

Holy Eucharist -Wednesday: 7:00 a.m.