

# Time Together

## While We are Apart

*Trinity and St. Mary's Whitechapel Episcopal Churches*

Wednesday,  
December 23, 2020

Good day dear church communities,

As I write to you all, I still have the joy and fun of the Christmas Pageant bubbling in my head! On the 4th Sunday of Advent we gathered on Zoom, lit the 4th candle and prayed the prayer of love, and then joined in a beautiful and only mildly chaotic, first ever virtual Christmas Pageant! (See photos on the following page!) This long-standing tradition of Trinity Church, continued to be marked by characteristic good humor and joy, involved numerous willing actors from Trinity, and even saw a few SMWC folks jumping in and joining the fun! Many thanks to all who attended (we were over 60 present!) and all who took part. On a very grey, rainy morning, our pandemic-weary souls were lifted, and the light was indeed shining in the darkness.

Know that you are invited to our upcoming services:

Thursday, December 24th: Christmas Eve Service on Zoom at 5pm

Sunday, December 27th: 10am Sunday service of Lessons and Carols presented by the Diocese of Virginia, featuring choirs of the Diocese

Many of us have enjoyed the New Year's Eve concerts and parties at SMWC in past years, including ringing in the new year at 4pm (12 midnight in Riyadh and Moscow!) and still being able to be home and in pajamas by 6pm! We miss being able to gather this year, and thus I am suggesting we still gather on New Year's Eve on Zoom at 4pm. All are invited to come and visit a bit, and if you'd like to bring a poem to share, a favorite ornament to show, a picture of family you miss, a story to tell, a joke to share, we will be ready to listen! Pajamas and favorite warm beverages welcome! Most of all we can be together and look with hope to a new year. Let me know if you are interested in attending.

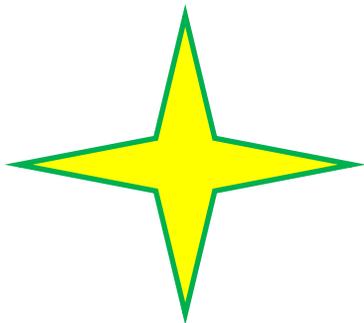
And now onward to a little more "Time Together",

Megan



# Christmas Pageant Joy!





## Prayer Notes:

We will include our prayer lists in each Wednesday Newsletter and in our worship services. Please continue to let us know of folks you would like to have on our prayer lists.

Please keep Alexa McGrath (SMWC) in your prayers. Alexa fell at home, and fractured her pelvis. After receiving care at RGH, Alexa returned home, but had to return to the hospital as she was having heart concerns. After a stay at the Henrico's Doctors Hospital in Richmond, she is now home and receiving nursing and PT care there. Please pray too for Malena McGrath, as she cares for her mother.

Please keep Lella Lee Edwards (Trinity) in your prayers. Lella Lee is doing better and healing from the head injury she sustained when she fell a few weeks ago.

Please keep Malcolm Jett (Trinity) and his wife Lorraine, in your prayers. Malcolm is recovering well from the heart procedure he had a few weeks ago.

**Trinity:** Lella Lee Edwards, Malcolm Jett, Sherri Carter, Terri, R.W. Courtney, Frances Bush, Delford Walthall, Glenn Courtney, Steve, Rick Bateman, Earline Tomlin Kelley, Ed Borer, Dean Haine, Mary and Karen Jackson, Berkeley Kellum, Preston Bryant, Michael, Mel and Frances Ercelino, Hilda Courtney, Robert, Karen Woodruff, Joey Coker, Michael Dunaway, Brad Quillen, Ian Larmore, Brandon Dunaway.

Armed Forces: Giovanni Elhordoy, Ward Gavin, Paul Price and Michael Stout.

**St. Mary's Whitechapel:** Alexa McGrath, Agnes Robbie, Don DeFilippo, George Clowser, Jori Keckman, Alexa Frisbee, R.W. Courtney, Tammy, Dorsey Ficklin, Glenn Courtney, Terry Thompson, Wendy Burnett, Lin Greene, Jake Cobb, Dave Petersen, Dan Ficklin, Marie Beringer, Mimi Chace, Donna Brayton, Hilda Courtney, Robert, Howard Hanchey, Jennifer Cassell Cole, Karen Woodruff, Roger Fortin, Gina Adams, Brad Quillen, Jessica, Joanne and Michael.

Nursing Home Resident: Lancashire - Mary Sue Courtney

Armed Forces: Jacob Sensenig, Joshua Green, Aimee Budzinski, Kathryn McCormack Akacem, Mehdi Akacem, Thomas Mackie, Pia Mackie, Tate Young, Spencer Fortin.

## **December and January Birthdays and Anniversaries**

### **Trinity Birthdays:**

Elizabeth Berube, December 24th; Taryn Brice-Rowland, December 24th; Audrey Catherine Christopher, December 24th; Lella Lee Edwards, December 26th; Charlotte Self, December 26th; Michael Christopher, December 30th; Craig Giese, January 17th; Jean Price, January 24th; Fred Ripley, January 28th

### **SMWC Birthdays:**

Marsha Sitnik, December 23; Roger Fortin, January 8; Dorsey Ficklin, January 15; Jannine Pennell, January 22; Helen Cobb, January 28;

**SMWC Anniversaries** – Linda Stough and Linda Odum, January 9; Anne and Kurt Muse, January 24



## Announcements:

Interested in gathering on New Year's Eve at 4pm on Zoom? As I mentioned in my opening article, I am proposing a gathering so we can enjoy some visiting and sharing on New Year's Eve. Please let me know if you would like to attend, so I can gauge interest. recotorstmtrin@gmail.com or 804-477-5515

On the 3rd Sunday of Advent, I told the story in my sermon of a video a friend had sent me of a children's Pageant featuring a very independent little sheep! Many have asked to see the video, so if you are interested, the link is here:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ui=2&ik=59eb02666c&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg-f:1685818346586700834&th=17653adab822fc22&view=att&disp=safe>

Save the date for Annual Meetings! After a virtual Pageant, a virtual Annual Meeting should be easy, hopefully! Both churches will have Annual Meetings on Sunday, January 17th, 10am Trinity, and 11am SMWC. Hope to see you there!

You might notice a new line on my email signature. In October and November, I experienced a marked increase in my incidents of a-fib. I have consulted with my cardiologists and am working now to lower my stress level and lessen my type-A tendencies that push me to overwork! Thus, this line on my email signature: "Monday is my Sabbath day (my day off) and I do not read emails on Mondays. Many thanks for your understanding." Many thanks to both Vestries for their support of my efforts at self-care.

Lauren McLeery Valdez, her husband Pedro Valdez and their daughter Rosie (most recently seen as Mary, Joseph and Jesus in the Pageant!) have moved to Fredericksburg. Their new address is:

The Valdez Family  
812 Sledgehammer Dr.  
Fredericksburg, VA 22405

Recipes Needed! You are invited to join in the fun of our "Recipe Roundtable" in our Newsletters. Do you have a favorite recipe to share? Send the recipe and any story that goes with it to Megan by email or snail mail.

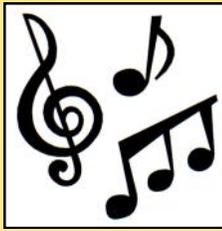
Do you need help getting trash to the dump or picking up prescriptions or an occasional grocery item? Please know that we have folks ready to help in our joint churches community. Contact Megan for connection to a volunteer.

Washington National Cathedral continues to offer beautiful and moving worship daily. They can be found at cathedral.org

You can continue to mail pledges and donations to Rector's Discretionary Fund to each church:

Trinity Church  
PO Box 208  
Lancaster, VA 22503

SMWC  
5940 Whitechapel Rd  
Lancaster, VA 22503



## ***Thoughts from the Organ Bench***

*by Glenn Courtney, Organist*

*SMWC and Trinity*

An inoperable church organ in a small Austrian village contributed to the creation of the most beloved Christmas hymn of all time.

Joseph Mohr was born in the beautiful city of Salzburg, Austria in 1792. As a boy he was a cathedral chorister and in 1815 ordained to the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. He served various parishes in the area and while serving as an assistant at the Church of St. Nicholas in Obernoff in 1818, in the region of Tyrol, high in the Alps, Mohr wrote the text for this favorite of all Christmas carols. Father Mohr and Frans Gruber, the village schoolmaster and church organist, talked about writing the perfect Christmas hymn. When he received word that the church organ would not function, Father Mohr decided he needed to write his own Christmas hymn in order to have music for Christmas Eve Mass, and to avoid disappointing his congregation. Upon completing the text, he took his words to Franz Gruber, who exclaimed when he saw them, "Friend Mohr, you have found it-the right song-God be praised!"

Soon Gruber completed his task of writing the proper tune for the new text and the hymn was completed in time for Christmas Eve Mass. The two friends sang their hymn to the accompaniment of Gruber's guitar. The hymn made a deep impact on the parishioners.

Neither Mohr nor Gruber intended that their hymn would be used outside their mountain village, but in a few days the organ builder and repairman, Karl Maurachen, came to the church and obtained a copy of the new hymn. Through his influence, the carol spread throughout the Tyrol region where it became popular as a Tyrolean folk song. Soon various performing groups, such as the Strasser Children's Quartet, began using the hymn in concerts throughout Austria and Germany.

In 1838 the carol appeared in a German hymnal. And in 1839 it was first heard in the United States when a family of Tyrolean singers, the Rainiers, used the music during their concert tour. Soon it was translated into English and many other languages. At least eight different English translations exist today. The carol is presently sung in all major languages and is a universal favorite wherever Christmas carols are sung.

The translation by John F. Young is the version most widely used in this country. Young was born in Pittston, Kennebec county, Maryland on October 30, 1820. He was ordained to the Episcopal Church and served a number of years as a bishop in Florida. His translation first appeared in 1863 in Clark Hollister's Service and Tune Book. Young is also known as the editor of two published hymnals, Hymns and Music for the Young, 1861, and Great Hymns of the Church, published posthumously by John Henry Hopkins in 1887.

## Silent Night



Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, All is bright  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child  
Holy Infant so Tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night, holy night!  
Wondrous star, lend thy light!  
With the angels let us sing  
Alleluia to our King!  
Christ the Saviour is here,  
Jesus the Saviour is here!

Silent night, Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord at thy birth,  
Jesus Lord at thy birth.

Please enjoy this performance of Silent Night:

[Silent Night - YouTube](#)

Source: 101 Hymn Stories by Kenneth W. Osbeck. 1982, Kregel Publications

## Reflection

Our Reflection today comes from the Reverend Talitha Arnold, Senior Minister of the United Church of Santa Fe (UCC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

## Advent's Thirst

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. - Psalm 42:1-2 (NRSV)

The chorus of a popular Spanish carol, "Los Pesces en el Rio," goes like this:

"The fishes in the river are jumping and dancing,  
jumping and dancing because God is born!"

Hispanic Catholics of northern New Mexico sing this carol differently. Perhaps elsewhere the fishes in the river "jump and dance" at the birth of Christ, but in the high desert, the fishes drink – and drink and drink:

"Beben y beben y vuelven a beber.  
Los peces en el río por ver a Dios nacer."

(They drink and they drink, and they return to drink.  
The fishes in the river, to see God being born.)

Years ago when members of Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Community taught our UCC congregation "Los Pesces," they acknowledged there were many versions of the song, but in this high desert, they knew you have to drink before you can dance.

Whoever wrote Psalm 42 knew such thirst. As a deer yearns for flowing streams, the psalmist's soul longs for the living God. They remember being in the midst of great celebrations, but now that joy is dried up. The psalmist thirsts for God's life-giving waters.

Dry times aren't limited to physical deserts or summer seasons. A week before Christmas, we may know the psalmist's thirst, even if it's snowing outside. We may feel their loneliness as we too remember more abundant times. If that's true for you, take time to drink deeply from the wisdom of the psalm and the carol. Like los peces, drink and drink and return to drink, en el rio de amor de Dios, in the river of God's love.

## Prayer

Thank you, God, for your deep love in this season and every season. Help us to drink deeply. Amen.

