

THE GRAPEVINE

A letter from The Rev. Rob Brown



Dear Friends,

My Christmas addiction is well known in the parish. I love everything from the glitter of decorations, to the endless rounds of holiday gatherings. I am easily swept up in the rush of the Season. My confession this year includes two new revelations. One – I diligently search for that one radio station that starts playing Christmas music on November 1st. Two – I watch all the sappy Hallmark movies and even shed a tear or two at the end of each of them when the main character finally understands the true meaning of Christmas.

Fortunately, I also realize all of those external things I enjoy about the Holidays have very little to do with the real reason I love this time of year. The real reason begins with my memories of growing up at Saint Matthew's. I remember the prayers said by my parents when each week we lit one of the Advent Wreath candles at our Sunday meal. I remember holly and berries, instead of flowers on the altar. I remember going with my mother to buy a gift for a less fortunate child and then carefully placing it under the tree at church. I remember how holy everything looked and felt on Christmas Eve when we gathered for Midnight Mass. I can still hear Father George slowly reading the story of Jesus' birth from the Gospel according to Luke. I remember my father carrying me out to the car after the service, only to stop and point out the brightest star in the sky and say, "Look, just like over Bethlehem."

I was greatly blessed to have parents who made sure we knew what Christmas was truly about and why we celebrated. It was our grateful response to having received the most wonderful gift of all, God sending his only Son to save us all. This year, slow down and focus on the truth of Christmas. We make ready, we prepare and finally we celebrate, the coming into the world...of hope.

Blessings,

The Reverend Rob Brown
Rector

Advent Festival of Lessons and Music
Sunday, December 18th, 9am and 11:15 am

Christmas Eve
Saturday, December 24th, 5:00pm, Children's Pageant
11:00pm Festival Eucharist (Traditional Midnight Mass)

Christmas Day
Sunday, December 25th, 10am, Holy Eucharist

The Curate's Corner: An Exploration of Our Faith

Be sure to think of your own tough questions and try to stump the Curate. Please submit any and all questions to Fr. Charles at, fathercharles@stmatthewsepiscope.org.

Kay Henderson raises this question that is near and dear to my own heart. **Tell me about the little wooden box that is on the back wall behind the altar. What is it and why is there a candle beside it?**

The “little wooden box” that resides on the back wall to the rear and left of the altar is called a Tabernacle. The word “tabernacle” means dwelling place or residence and this word is fitting because of the function the tabernacle serves. In it resides the reserve sacrament, the body and blood--soul and divinity, of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The concept of having a Tabernacle where the presence of the Lord would dwell with the people comes from our Jewish heritage, more specifically Exodus chapters 25 and 26. These two chapters from Exodus include instructions for building the Tabernacle in which the Ark of the Covenant, above which the Lord was pleased to dwell, would be housed.

In a similar fashion, the Tabernacle in our sanctuary is made of fine wood and is a place where the fullness of God's presence is pleased to dwell under the forms of bread and wine. At the celebration of Holy Eucharist, when extra bread or wine is consecrated, the extra bread and wine are reserved and kept in the tabernacle. The Reserved Sacrament can then be used when we visit the sick, so that they can receive Holy Communion. The Reserved Sacrament is also kept as a testament to the presence of God in our lives and in this community. The candle beside the Tabernacle is called a Sanctuary Light and is always kept lit to remind us that we are in the presence of God. Next time you are in the nave before a service, or during the week, stop for a moment and offer up a prayer and know that you are praying before the very real presence of God in the Tabernacle.

Juanita Thaxton raises a wonderful question about what St. Paul means when he says “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord” (Phil. 2:12). Juanita wonders **if we are indeed obtain salvation through the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross and are warned against using our own works as a justification for salvation how do you read St. Paul's letter to the Philippians?**

This is a classic question of scriptural interpretation. The interpretation of this particular portion of St. Paul's letter to the Philippians has generated a huge amount of debate and discussion. I now offer my own humble attempt at addressing this particular passage of scripture; however, for a fuller treatment about this particular passage I would urge you to take a look at the Sacra Pagina Series or the Yale Anchor Bible Series, both of which are fine biblical commentaries.

Juanita is correct in asserting that we obtain salvation through the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus Christ. On page 870 of the Book of Common Prayer we read that, “we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour (sic) Jesus Christ by Faith, and not through our own works or deservings.” However the word “work” in the Book of Common Prayer and the Greek word for “work” *katergazomai* (*katergazomai*) are different words with slightly different meanings.

The difference in meaning is lost in translation, despite good modern translations such as the NRSV. As Bonnie Thurston and Judith Ryan point out in the Sacra Pagina Series commentary on Philippians *katergazomai* (*katergazomai*) can be better understood as meaning that “the Philippians are not ‘earning’ their salvation, but living into all it means and expects of them; they are completing something already begun” (Sacra Pagina Series [Philippians & Philemon](#) p. 94). The working out of salvation mentioned in Philippians 2:12 then is not an earning of salvation but closer to a perseverance in faith that brings to fullness the gift of faith.

Community Closet

Louise Wickersheim

Just a reminder that the Community Closet will host a blanket give away on Saturday Dec. 10th from 9am-11am in the gym. Set up will be Friday Dec. 9th from 3-5pm. You may bring the blankets to the gym no earlier than Sunday December 4th due to lack of storage space. Anyone wishing to volunteer for either day please contact Louise Wickersheim at 541-7903.

December 4 EYC 5-7

December 11 EYC 5-7

December 18 EYC 5-7 (This will be an Advent Party)

Please remember our upcoming events. We will be going skiing January 20-22 with a total per person cost of \$140, plus possible incidental expenses if you want extra snacks or souvenirs. The skiing trip can only be possible if we get at least a group of 15 people who are committed to going, with a \$75 deposit paid by December 11. Please speak with Fr. Charles about additional details about this trip.

Our Jr. High EYC'ers will be having a lock-in in February to raise money for the St. Matthew's Food Pantry. Further details to follow in the January issue of The Grapevine.

Greetings from Cambridge!

I hope you all are well and know that you all are prayed for daily.

Cambridge has gotten more fall-esque in the past month with lots of colorful leaves and subsequent piles to rake. It's also gotten darker. It's practically pitch black at 5 pm. I had a hard time with it the first time I noticed it. It had been sunset at evening prayer (our eyes behold the vesper light, as goes the prayer) but when it was suddenly dark at 6 pm and still that dark at 6 am, I found myself sad. One of the brothers lent me their light box and the brother in charge of facilities gave me an outside job- raking leaves. It's fun and gets me outside during the day.

I've gotten to do a new thing as of late, I'm now chanting with a brother at one of the daily Eucharist. I did it twice last week. One of the other interns here was trained as an acolyte here last week; being an acolyte here is a lot to do in one service, they hold the various books the presider needs- the priest isn't always the homilist here, there are lay brothers here who can't officiate- obviously, but do preach. There is no distinction made in their title but I only noticed at the services. So the acolyte holds books but also helps to set the table and is also one of the chalice bearers. Sometimes in addition to all of that, they also are responsible for thureffer duties as well. I haven't yet been trained to do that. As of now, I'm reading every two weeks at the Sunday Eucharist in addition to singing with the Scola.

I've got my second retreat day coming up this Wednesday the 16th, which I'm taking up at Emory House. I'm looking forward to it. Not sure what I'm going to do but that's the point.

I've learned to navigate the transit system here in recent weeks, I'll admit there's a sense of freedom in going where I need to, when I need to that has been hard to find in other places I've lived.

As of now I'm thinking of coming home for a few days in March after my birthday, other than that, I'm going to hang out here.

We got a random bit of snow the day or two before Halloween, although I hear it was more wind that affected power outages than anything else. We had a flicker with the power here but Emory House lost power for a few days and their interns took refuge here at 980. Weather here is weird, it was 65 today but is supposed to be 55 and rainy on my retreat day, and we've had 40's too.

Thought I'd let you know what I'm reading presently, just cuz- Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Being A Priest Today, The Practice of Prayer, Practice of the Presence of God, Ulysses, Engaging the Word- an intern is reading it to me and we discuss it together. I've read a few more fantasy books to get out of my head now and then. We interns sometimes get DVDs from the library and watch a few on our Sabbath as well. Anything available to download on Kindle app on iPad or google books app is always a good suggestion if you have any.

Oh and at meals we're reading a book about Bonhoffer.

I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas.

Peace of the Lord be with you all,
Nancy & Doc

"Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to "God". Eph.5:2.

It is a rare weekend that there is not a "walk-a-thon" in the area for some worthy cause. Queen Elizabeth often descends from a royal carriage {of sorts} and "walks about" among her people. Walking, when done regularly, is considered a fine exercise and toner for bodies. I've checked the concordance in my Bible and there are dozens of scriptural references to "walk" and "walking". Jesus and his disciples and friends walked the dusty roads around Jerusalem. We may very well "take-a-walk" these days but rarely is it a mode of transportation as it was for them. This reference in Isaiah 30:20,21. I just love, "with your own eyes you will see your Teacher. And if you go astray you will hear a Voice behind you say... "No, this is the way; walk here" - Jesus is the way. Ponder that pronouncement.

Advent - the great Adventure beckons us along the road to Bethlehem, to a stable behind an inn. Envision yourself meeting up with the shepherds as they follow the star. They have left the sheep behind, as with anticipation and fear they sought out the place marked by a great and dazzling light - and with them, Fall on your Knees - (picture it, could you do less?) Surely there was a glow, a radiance, lighting that moment a young woman with dark hair, looking adoringly down at her child - the infant Jesus. All new parents behold their first borne as a Miracle. Here in this humble stable with even the animals transfixed and wondering --"What child is this?" Only the beloved Son of the Father, Prince of Peace, Master. He who came upon a darkened world, the Light on the path. Walk ye the Way.

So how about a "walk-a-thon for Jesus." Take up your "staffs" fasten your "sandals" and step by step on the "Advent"-- --ure of a lifetime. To truly walk in Love....

"Be full of love for others, following the example of Christ who loved you and gave himself to God as a sacrifice to take away your sins. And God was pleased, for Christ's love for you was like sweet perfume to him". Eph 5:2 - the living Bible paraphrased

Glorious Christmas my precious St. Matthews family

Merrv Widows	Louise Tower	Congratulations to our new Confirmands!
<p>Our Christmas luncheon... "and the angels sing" is Sat. Dec. 10th, 12:00pm at our favorite place, The City Range.</p> <p>Six of us kept scissors and paste in busy fingers Nov. 8th, as we continued to create beautiful candy/gift boxes made from old Christmas cards. You may leave cards on the shelves to the right as you enter the library/conference room. PLEASE leave the backs on; they are the bottoms of the boxes. The messages written there just make the gift more personal. Thank you. We will be offering them at \$3.00 per box, filled with hard candy again before and after services, up to and including, Sun. Dec 18th. Last year Merry Widows presented a check for \$600.00 to the food pantry. We are aiming for that again.</p>		<p>Jerry Lee Bowers Carmen Bowers John Kimball, Jr. John Kimball, III Erler Meyer Erin Stewart Vanessa Ponder Mary Vann Charlie White Jordan White Taylor White Received – Marie E. Kimball Reaffirmed – Richard Smith</p>

Serving this month at 9:00 am

	December 4	December 11	December 18	December 24 Christmas Eve 5:00
Vested Eucharistic Minister	K. C. Price	Kathy Amick	Susan Pretulak	TBA
Eucharistic Minister	Ray Cannon	Ray Cannon	Melinda McDonald	TBA
Lessons	David Rutledge	Marie Tewkesbury	Angie Painter	TBA
Prayers	Hazel Cannon	Carol Wishard	Debbie Rutledge	TBA
Crucifer	Erler Meyer	Brittany Moore	Erler Meyer	TBA
Torch Bearers Alternate	Lynda Amick Will Amick Rini or Zani Ewing	Harrison Moore Dana Cumbee Will Amick	Zani Ewing Rini Ewing Lynda Amick	TBA
Eucharistic Visitor	Carol Wishard Mike Georgion	Debbie Rutledge David Rutledge	Mike Georgion Chuck Frank	12/25 Debbie Rutledge David Rutledge
Greeters	Mike & Kathy Wood	Rick & Brenda Lenderman	Tom & Ena Stapleton	Don Davis Norman Tyler
Ushers	Shep Miller Zach Pretulak	Will Boyd Robin File	Dewey Halford Eric McDonald	Ron Coleman Jeff Jennings
Altar Flowers	In loving memory of Sandra Casey by Jerry Casey	In honor of all the people of St. Matthew's by Gerry & LouAnn Fishbeck	In thanksgiving for our anniversary - the Georgions.	Christmas Poinsettias (see insert in bulletin)
Nursery Vol.	Open	Nichols	Open	Open
Coffee Hour	EFM-Marie Tewkesbury Ethel Tortorice	Vestry-Helen Cook Jay & Joy Hope	The Merry Widows	
Wed. Evening Prayer Officiates	December 7 Chris Wilkerson	December 14 Erler Meyers	December 21 Andy Gmitter	December 28 Melinda McDonald
Network of Care	Open			
Vestry of the Month	Ann Moore			

Prime Timers

The Prime Timers will meet at 12:00 noon on the third Thursday of each month at Apollo's for lunch. Everyone over 50 is invited to attend and get to know some of the new members. In December we will meet on the 15th at Apollo's, which is on Reidville Road in the Bi-Lo shopping center.

Serving this month at 11:15 am

	December 4	December 11	December 18	December 24 Christmas Eve 11:00 pm
Vested Eucharistic Minister	Lynn Kerfoot	Carol Wishard	Chris Wilkerson	TBA
Eucharistic Minister	Chris Wilkerson	Louise Rambo	Mary Margaret Richards	TBA
Lessons	Anne Wilkerson	John Richardson	Lori Winkles	TBA
Prayers	Sally Galbraith	Jean Wales	Michelle Pierce	TBA
Crucifer	Luke Turner	Allison Fowler	Luke Turner	Allison Fowler
Torch Bearer Torch Bearer Alternate Special Duty	Josh Whitworth Olivia Whitworth Elias or Sami Ewing	Elias Ewing Sami Ewing Josh Whitworth Jocie Ewing	Hank Lovelace Nikki Upton Madison Shelton Will Lovelace	TBA
Greeters	Lewis & Rosemary Moore	Mike Georgion Glyn Shackelford	Bill & Suzanne Searson Joe & Kathy Ellis	Danny & Madison Shelton
Nursery Volunteers	Ford	Open	Ewing	Open
Ushers	Dave Pretulak Helen Cook	Brandon Turner John Kimball	Hugh Rambo Daniel Cude	Larry Dodd Danny Shelton Christmas Day-Helen Cook
Vestry of the Month	Jay Hope			

Veterans News



Norman Tyler

On November 4, 2011, we all met at Bubba's Bar B- Q and Grill on Blackstock Road about noon. As usual, we began with gang health. We found out that a large number of us were having some medical procedures. As of this date, all of us are doing well.

We place our orders and the conversation turned to the current economic conditions. After we all expressed our opinions, it was time to eat. Frances Richardson, our mascot, said Grace. We took time to remember all our vets and current serving men and women serving in the Armed Forces. The food was all right but the service was slow for fast food.

After we finished our meal the consensus was if we had a strong leader in Washington along with a few good men and women, the economy would be just fine. A few of our gang lived through the Depression. After World War II, there was a resurgence in our economy. If we all pray and ask for God's help, we will be just fine.

Next month, we'll gather at the Golden Corral on December 2, 2011 at noon. Unlike the ECW, all are invited. Ain't Saint Matt's great?

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Danny Shelton	20	Frances Mulligan
4	Rob DePaol Tom Stapleton Betsey Davey	21	Jane Hinze
6	Matthew Whitworth Kim LaRock	22	Susan Pretulak Catherine Henderson Will Hope John Hope
7	Abby Pretulak	23	Paige Watson
8	Grace Marie Till	27	Julia Nichols
9	Ron McCarter Angie Painter Susan Cherry-Casey	28	Sarita Shipman Joy Harper
10	Keeley Southerland	29	Mike & Kathy Wood (A) Melinda McDonald David Thomas
11	Debbie Rutledge		Martha Griswold
12	Fergie Horvath Jaylen Kelley		Halle Price Julie Rodrick
13	Thomas Watson	30	Tiffany Word-Tolbert
	Priscilla Vann	31	Brenda Groves Lynn Kerfoot Mary Connor Kitchens Mary Margaret Richards Angela Viney Thomas & Ena Stapleton (A)
15	Johnny Kay Mike & Rosalind Georgion (A)		
17	K.C. & Angie Price (A)		
19	Max & Angie Painter (A) Mike Wood		



A Prayer for Those Celebrating Birthdays

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please call the church office at 576-0424 with additions or corrections to the birthday/anniversary list.

The 2011 Vestry

Father Rob Brown, Rector	583-8112	Louise Wickersheim	541-7903
Jeff Jennings, Treasurer	587-7237	Kay Henderson	574-4462
Helen Cook, Clerk	587-6770	Doug Hubbell	463-4756
Ann Moore, Sr. Warden	574-7822	John Price	574-3599
Jay Hope, Jr. Warden	809-9796	David Rutledge	595-0401
Kathy Miller	583-0706	Donna Hicks-Wood	804-2474

November Worship Service Attendance

	11/6	11/13	11/20	11/27		11/2	11/9	11/16	11/23	11/30
9:00 am	115	97	N/A	N/A	Wednesday 6:30	11	31	21	N/A	N/A
11:15 am	75	127	N/A	N/A						

I invite all of the St. Matthew's family to observe this beautiful season of Advent by taking advantage of the literature available in the church foyer. There is something for every age- from calendars to ideas like the "Good Deeds Manger" which shows even the youngest kids the significance of giving to others!

Please plan to attend our "Children's Christmas Pageant" on December 24th at the 5:00 service. As Father Rob says every year... "If you're looking for the cuteness factor, then this is the service for you!" The children under the direction of Donna Simpson have worked very hard to prepare their program for this year and I thank God for this wonderful ministry!

Due to the upcoming holidays, CF classes will not meet on December 25 or January 1 and will resume on Sunday, January 8th at 10:15.... look for new class offerings for the adult sessions!

And finally...

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO A
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!!!**

Guest of Honor: Jesus Christ

Date: Every day, but traditionally December 25

(but He's always around, so the date is flexible)

Time: Whenever you're ready

Place: In your heart...He'll meet you there. (You'll hear Him knock.)

Tickets: Admission is free... He's already paid for everyone.

(It cost Him everything he had.)

Gift Suggestions: Your life. He's one of those people who has everything else.

R.S.V.P. Very Important! (He must know ahead so He can reserve a spot for you at the table.)

This party is being given by His kids (that's us!!).

In Christ's Service,
Debbie Richardson

ECW: The final total for the fall in gathering for UTO was \$ 276.65. Thanks to all the members of the parish who gave in support of this cause!



December 2011

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1 6:30 pm - Choir Practice EFM - 6:30-9:00	2 Noon Veterans lunch at Golden Corral 6:30-7:30 pm - NA's	3 Sit-n-Stitch 9:30-11:30
4 9 & 11:15 am Holy Eucharist 10:15am Christian Formation EYC 5-7 8:00 pm-NA'S	5	6 10:00 am- Food Pantry set-up 10:30 am Merry Widows Library/Conf.	7 3:00-5:00 Food Pantry 6:30 pm Night Prayer & Healing	8 6:30 pm - Choir Practice EFM - 6:30-9:00 .	9 6:30-7:30 pm - NA's	10 Sit-n-Stitch 9:30-11:30 Merry Widows lunch at City Range at noon
11 9 & 11:15 am Holy Eucharist 10:15am- Christian Formation EYC- 5-7 8:00 pm-NA'S	12 7:00 pm Vestry Meeting	13 10:00 am- Food Pantry set-up	14 3:00-5:00 Food Pantry 6:30 pm Night Prayer & Healing	15 6:30 pm - Choir Practice EFM - 6:30-9:00 Prime Timers meet at 12:00 at Apollo's	16 6:30-7:30 pm - NA's	17 Sit-n-Stitch 9:30-11:30
18 9 & 11:15 am Holy Eucharist 10:15am- Christian Formation EYC - 5-7 8:00 pm-NA'S	19 Deadline for January Newsletter!!	20 10:00 am- Food Pantry set-up	21 3:00-5:00 Food Pantry 6:30 pm Night Prayer & Healing	22 6:30 pm - Choir Practice EFM - 6:30-9:00	23 6:30-7:30 pm - NA's	24 5:00 pm Holy Eucharist & Children's Christmas Pageant - 11:00 pm - Festival Eucharist
25 10:00 am Holy Eucharist	26 Church Office Closed	27 6:30 pm Spinal Cord Injury Support Group	28 3:00-5:00 Food Pantry 6:30 pm Night Prayer & Healing	29	30	31