

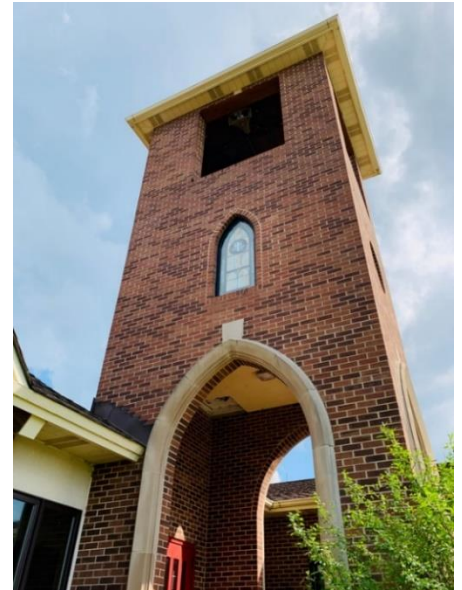
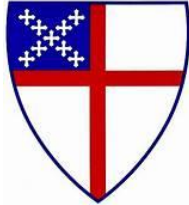
THE GOOD NEWS

January 2024



St. Ignatius of Antioch
Episcopal Church

Walking in love as Christ taught us



Shepherds and Flocks



Let me share with you a bit of parable: in spite of what the Christmas pageant might have us believe, and with great respect and love for pageant directors everywhere: shepherds aren't always with their flocks.

Once in a while, they get a day off too. A chance to go into town, get a pint at the pub or a hot meal perhaps. When they get there, they're dirty; they smell bad – like the animal dung that clings to their feet. Some say they were raised in a barn, and maybe they were. They're poor; they're uneducated; some

might have a criminal record – most of them weren't born here, though the animals don't seem to mind.

But the good people of Bethlehem do. Shepherds just aren't the type of people decent folk would have anything nice to say to. So when they come to town, they're not anyone we invite into our homes, or make a room for in an inn. Instead, we might tell them they can go sleep in the barn, where we can ignore them, and keep them invisible.

I picture one such shepherd, late in the morning, as he prepares to return to his flocks, he's slowly gathering his few belongings in the stable where he spent the night,

To him, this stable's a special place. A palace, really, by his standards, where he can spend a night on a pile of hay, instead of the hard ground; a place with a bit of roof overhead, instead of the stars – or this time of year, rain. To him, this stable is a place of comfort, and even if the town folk won't speak to him, it's a

place where he can occasionally hear a human voice instead of just sheep.

He's been coming here on his time off for almost two years now. Ever since that night, when this being had come and stood before him and his mates – they would swear it was an angel – telling them, “Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah.” The angel said to them, “Go, find this child, wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” So together they figured the sheep will be okay; they'd better check this out.

He's been coming to this stable ever since. It's where he can breathe a little easier: away from the sheep and the wolves that hunt them. Away from those people who won't meet his eye, or return his “good morning” when he walks down the street.

It's his place of peace, even if to the people of this tiny town, it's just a stable, and he's invisible to them.

That's why he is so surprised this morning. He hasn't seen them here before. As they park their camels, and give them a bit of water and feed, he looks at them with caution. They're from away. Their clothes have a layer of dust from their journey, but it's plain they are expensive. They're not wearing anything that signifies class or rank, but from the look of them he knows: they're of a station in life far above his own. Smart guys, he figures. Maybe they'll just go into the inn and leave him be. But then, they stop.

They speak to him. They see him.

One of them wearily asks, as if for the hundredth time: “Where is the child who has been born king of

the Jews? Your king in Jerusalem said we'd find him here.”

This shepherd thinks to himself, “Well, not my king,” though he wouldn't dare say that aloud. Still, when you spend your life tending flocks, you get a knack for reading a look, a sense of intuition. Looking into the eyes of the one asking him this question, his gut tells him this isn't bad a guy. He's just a traveler with a purpose.

But to be safe, he asks him, “Where you from?” And the stranger's only reply is, “East of here, we're far from home.” Maybe this visitor is trying to be careful too. As if he, too, needs to be cautious in this foreign land, and hide something, or someone.

The shepherd considers leaving this conversation where it is. At this point he could easily be getting himself into trouble. But hey, the angel told him, “Do not be afraid.” So, taking a leap of faith, he asks: “Do you mean that little kid we were told is the Messiah?” When they stop in their tracks, he figures in for a penny, in for a pound. He goes on, “Yeah, I saw him. I was with my flock when we saw angels – it's true – angels! They told us to come here, so we did. We saw him. I remember. He was just a tiny thing, but the angels said he's the Messiah. That was a couple years ago, but I believe those angels were right; I do.” It's more than he's ever said to the people in this town.

And the travelers just. Stare. At. Him. For what seems like forever, until one says, “Yes, that's him.”

And another says, “The king in Jerusalem said he was born here, so we thought we'd better check here first. “We have come to pay him homage. We want to bring him gifts. Together these travelers say, “This is wonderful news.”

And now it's the shepherd's turn to stare.

He can't remember ever saying anything anyone would consider wonderful news. Feeling now a bit safer, he goes on, "Well, he was born here, but he and his folks were only here for the counting, they've gone back home. They were from Nazareth. I'm headed back to my sheep. It's on the way, I can show you how to get there."

"That would be awfully good of you, shepherd," says the traveler. "We're following a star, but it'll be good to go with someone who has seen him. You do know where to find him, right?"

He probably does, but do we? That's the question before us today – where do we find Jesus? How do you suppose we would answer that magi's question?

This morning we move from the season of Christmas, the moment God takes on human flesh and form and lives among us – into the season of Epiphany. And while Christmas may be a hard act to follow, in a very real sense, everything about our faith is a celebration of Epiphany. Epiphany literally means "revealing;" it's about taking away the veil that covers something. Epiphany is about unveiling what Luke promises us: that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God"; and what Isaiah foretold, that: "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together."

Epiphany is our time to explore how Christ is revealed to us. Each of our Epiphany stories start with this one last trip through Bethlehem, but they

hardly end there. For epiphanies continue through our own experiences of where we find Jesus.

Today, in the words of the theologian and educator Howard Thurman, we find there is more to life than we have previously imagined. Angels hide in every nook and cranny, magi masquerade as everyday people, and shepherds wear the garments of day laborers. The Good News of the Gospel is this: Christ is revealed to us by both shepherds and kings, by people of all stripes and walks of life. So that when we seek out Jesus, we find him not only with those around our dinner table, or with whom we sit next to in church, but also in the invisible ones who mow our lawns, who shovel our snow, who bag our groceries.

And oh, my sisters and brothers, when – not if – God gives us this kind of opportunity, then we can never again take anyone for granted. Regardless of whether they're rich or poor, whether they look like us and talk like us, whether they're Democrat or Republican, God gives us the chance to see Christ in everyone we meet.

And if this really is how God acts, what choice do we have but to consider every human being as a sign of holy love?

Now that's a game-changer: that's an Epiphany.

Thanks be to God!

-The Rev. Dcn. Geoffery Smith



Letter from your Wardens

Dear Family of St. Ignatius,

Our January Vestry Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 16th at 6:45pm. Along with the regular business, the Vestry will be discussing and voting on three important topics in moving St. Ignatius forward:

- 1.) 2024 Budget
- 2.) St. Ignatius Vestry Resolution
- 3.) St. Ignatius By-law Amendments

There will be an open discussion prior to voting, and we seek your input!

The information on these three topics is available in the vestibule or contact the office at 847-395-0652 or at saintignatiusofantiochil@gmail.com.

On January 21st, there will be only **ONE SERVICE** at 9am with our Annual Parish Meeting to follow at 10am. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Peace to all,

-Jack & Renee



On December 12, Reverend Sierra Reyes provided an update on rector candidates for St. Ignatius of Antioch. This update focused on two candidate sources.

First, during the week before the 12th, Rev. Reyes attended a gathering of Episcopal Transition Ministry Leaders, being held in the Houston area. There were 33 Episcopal Diocese represented at the event. We had hoped a candidate might emerge from the Houston conference, but that was not the case.

Within the Houston gathering, names of priests were shared, with the following criteria: (1) presently available for and interested in new assignments outside their home Diocese, and (2) “cleared” for placement to new callings. The list contained only four individuals, none of whom expressed interest in the Chicago Diocese. This formal event reinforced what we have known previously about the gap between the number of open rector (or other roles) and the number of available priests. Also, among the four names shared, none were seminarians. These facts are consistent with what we have previously learned; namely, that seminarians are designated for placement within the Diocese that sponsors their seminary studies, and not broadly available beyond that mutual commitment.

Second, two individual priests began conversations on their own with Rev. Reyes about our full-time



rector role. Aligned with the privacy of the search process, we will only share what we are able to share:

- One of the potential candidates is not presently cleared to apply for any role in the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. While this individual has expressed interest verbally in the position at St. Ignatius, they need to personally take some preparatory steps with their current bishop before they can apply and be reviewed by the Chicago Diocese. All these facts are known to and fully understood by the individual.
- Another potential candidate expressed broad interest in taking a rector role within the Chicago Diocese. Rev. Reyes took the opportunity to positively present our full-time rector position at St. Ignatius role as an excellent option. This included highlighting our increased compensation offering. Presently, the second potential candidate has elected to “pass” on applying for our opening. They prefer to wait for other openings to emerge in the Chicago Diocese during 2024.

Your RSC members do not consider any of this as a setback. Rather, we think of it as a continued challenge for us all lay leaders at St. Ignatius to provide a thriving religious home for our community while we await a new priest. As part of our commitment to this challenge, all the present RSC members have committed to the Vestry and to all of members of our congregation to continue on the committee in 2024 “until we get a new rector in-place”.

The next RSC Meeting will be on Sunday, January 14th. One of our topics will be consideration of

spending funds once again for the national advertising of the rector position.

Please continue to pray for candidates to find their way to St. Ignatius.

Your RSC Committee: Linda Mizwicki and Warren Cinnick (co-chairs); Ernie Kraak, Roger Van Patten, Kathy Fields, and Jim Hallwas (members)



Another successful year has closed featuring special gatherings and social hours filled with good eats and friendship with our community of faith. Again, thank you all who support the Fellowship effort.

Looking back on a year is retrospective and healthy for memory recall. Looking forward for a whole year is overwhelming, causing lapsed resolutions and forgotten promises. Is there an answer to this? To quote Henri Nouwen...

"We must learn to live each day, each hour, yes, each minute as a new beginning, as a unique opportunity to make everything new. Imagine that we could live each moment as a moment pregnant with new life. Imagine that we could live each day as a day full of promises."

What does this have to do with Fellowship??? Every day provides the opportunity to spread the word in the community that we welcome new members. Fellowship is the invitation to learn about us and expand our community of faith, creating new personal connections. Imagine a Social Hour with no empty chairs. Let's work toward that goal!

-DianeCinnick



Outreach Summary

For the month of **December**, we collected items needed for **The Lake County Childrens Advocacy Center!** The (LCCAC) facilitates the interagency coordinated response of child sexual and physical abuse allegations in Lake County.

It was such a great effort by all who contributed...

many thanks for the over \$200 worth of collected items!



For the month of **January**, our Mission will be for **PADS of Lake Country**. We are supporting their Housewarming Project by collecting various items they are seeking. Their will be a flyer available on the table in the vestibule with this information, as well as located under community outreach on our website.



Thank you in advance for your generosity!

-Cathy Ehlers



Sharing Our Faith



In the Name of Jesus, we ask You to bring healing and courage into lives and hearts for the glory of your Name. May people across the earth see you move so that there is no doubt about Your power and Your goodness! We may not understand all that is going on around us but we trust Your heart!



We want to extend a big **THANK YOU** to all who participated in making our Christmas Holiday Services such a success!

From decorating the church, to joining our choir, and attending our services and social events.



We truly are a family, and it takes all of us to make St. Ignatius the great community that we are!

God Bless us in 2024!!

-Kathy Kraak



God's Will Give Back

Gods Will Resale Shop was blessed with an abundance of donated Christmas decorations throughout 2023. Besides half price sales of these items, the week after Christmas any Christmas item was FREE to our customers of which 50 people participated.

In December, through Open Arms Mission and the Sharing Center, we helped 12 people with furniture, housewares and bedding.

We appreciate our volunteers, regular customers, and are seeing first time shoppers each week.

A big Thank You for a successful 2023 and look forward to a better 2024!

-Carolyn Van Patten



GOD'S WILL RESALE SHOP

January Special:

50% off all BLUE sticker items!

Accepting all donations during business ho

Thank You To Our Sponsors!



WE SUPPORT ANTIOCH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES

St. Ignatius Campus Hours:

- **Worship Services:**
Sunday's at 8am & 10am
- **Office Coordinator Hours:**
Mon.-Thurs. 8:30am – 12:30pm
- **God's Will Resale Shop:**
Wed.- Fri. 9am-5pm, Sat. 9am-2pm
- **Midlothian Counseling Services**
hours at the church: Mon. & Wed.
1-8pm & Fri. 1-6pm.



dates to Remember

1/16/24- (Tuesday)- Vestry Meeting at 6:45pm
ALL are welcome to attend!

1/21/24- Sunday
9am "One" Service
10am Parish Annual Meeting



Kathy Fields- Ernie Kraak- Kathy Kraak
Felix Cizewski- Elizabeth Johnston
Zach Green- Margaret Slamar
Jim & Pat Bletsch- Clare Coleman
Jennfier McElligott - Mike Culat-
Mildred Hamlin - Kathy Burns
Pam Anas- Jenn Bodden
Bonnie & Tom Borla- Donna Lambert



2023 St. Ignatius Nativity



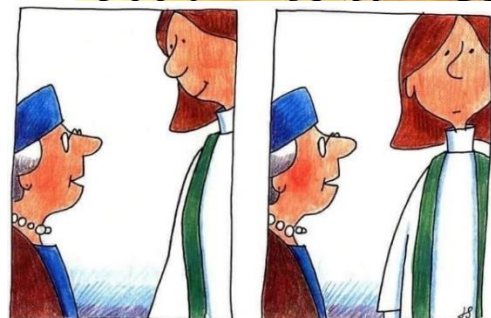
January Birthdays

1/18- Nancy McConnell
1/20- Brian Mielke
1/24- Larry Ward
1/30- Jim George

January Anniversaries

None this month

COMEDY CORNER



RECTOR, I WANT YOU TO
KNOW I'M 100% IN
FAVOR OF YOUR PLANS
FOR CHURCH GROWTH

JUST AS LONG AS NONE
OF THESE NEW PEOPLE
SIT IN MY PEW.