

Mountain Spirit

DECEMBER 2017

Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit

"A Welcoming, Loving Christian Community Committed
To Serving God, One Another And Our Neighbors"

Coming in Advent...

**Wednesdays
Dec. 6, 13, 20**

10:00 - 11:15am
Centering Prayer Group
Advent Meditations
by Susan Sherard

**Sundays
Dec. 3, 10, 17**

David McNair:
9:00 - 10:00am
"Making Space for
Christ in Advent"

Dec. 24

10:30am
Christmas Pageant
by CHS Children
and
Holy Eucharist

Dec. 24

7:00pm
Christmas Eve
Service and
Holy Eucharist

Dec. 25

10:30am
Christmas
Day Service



What an Issue!

In this issue you will see an opportunity to enjoy authentic Mexican food right here at ECHS (p. 3), find out what is the most peaceful place on our church property (p. 4), and read a very important letter from David Mc Nair (p. 7). Be aware that the weekly Centering Prayer group has a new time to meet (p. 3). And 'tis the season to go Advent Caroling! (p. 2)



Advent Caroling at Mars Hill Retirement Center

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2:00pm

Music led by
Jim and Margie Haaga.
Meet in the Chapel at the
Retirement Center.

The church office will be closed from December 25 through January 2. Pastoral care issues should be directed to David McNair through his personal phone or email.

Christmas Angels All Accounted For!

Thanks to our wonderfully giving Holy Spirit parish, all thirty-five Christmas Angels have been removed from the Angel Tree! Remember to bring your gifts for the angels back to the church by Sunday, December 10. Be sure the gifts are clearly marked with that angel's initials and number.

If you weren't able to select an angel — or even if you did— Operation Santa also needs your help. Operation Santa supplies food for hungry school children in Madison County. This is the third year we have been asked by Mars Hill Baptist Church to help out with the project. Counselors from each public school in the county identify approximately sixty children who are food insecure. They receive hot meals when school is in session but will not have sufficient food to get them through the two-week winter break.

Mars Hill Baptist provides toys and food for a family Christmas dinner, but Holy Spirit Church tries to supply as much food as possible for the children to prepare easily on the other days of the winter break. Our Villager Initiative budget and a grant from Thrivent Financial has allowed us to make a good start, but we need you to bring the following to church by Friday, December 15: big jars of peanut butter, big boxes of cereal, cans of soup, ravioli, etc., boxes of macaroni and cheese. Thanks for your generosity! "Tis the Season!"

-Pam Stein

New Meeting Time for Centering Prayer Group

The weekly prayer group will be meeting at a new time beginning Wednesday, December 6. Our new meeting time is Wednesdays at 10:00—11:15 am. Susan Sherard has written Advent meditations for our four Wednesdays in December. We'll ponder and discuss them before we share 30 minutes of Centering Prayer in silence. All are welcome to join us. If you've never tried Centering Prayer, Advent is a wonderful season to give it a try.

Centering Prayer is not so much the absence of thought as it is detachment from them. It is the opening of the mind and heart, body and emotions, our whole being to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond words, thoughts and emotions.

—Fr. Thomas Keating from his book, ***Open Heart, Open Mind***

Sunday, December 10, Following the Service

A MEXICAN MEAL & SILENT AUCTION OF HANDICRAFTS MADE BY THE LATINA WOMEN'S GROUP LOVE DONATION FOR THE MEAL

You haven't lived until you've eaten authentic Mexican food! Sometimes it can be a tad hot, but always it's delicious! Proceeds from the meal and auction will go to a fund to help our Latina families when they are facing a financial need such as health, car, home, etc. This meal is the women's way of working together to help meet those serious needs.



Here is the group of good-hearted ECHS folks who helped with serving the Church of the Advocate Holiday Dinner on Sunday, November 5.

The Quietest Part of the Peaceable Kingdom

OUR BELOVED MEMORIAL GARDEN

By Regan Burnham

For many gardeners winter is the down time. Weeding stops for a while, and although amazing things are happening underground, no one can see them. But this gardener thinks winter is the most creative time! It is Advent in our Garden at Holy Spirit, and both wonderful and magical things are happening.

First, the Vestry has approved the Memorial Garden Team's request for Phase One of the Three-Year Memorial Garden Plan. Come January, we will have the funds to install a handrail leading up from the parking lot to the level pathway, enhancing access and safety on that slippery slope. We'll install a small sign indicating the Garden lies ahead. We will attempt to lift the stones creating our Celtic design, although we've been warned that raising the stones could prove difficult. As always, we'll continue to weed, fertilize, and treat the soils with organic nutrient-rich food so that in the spring we all may enjoy hundreds of tulips bursting forth in red and yellow. Already in progress are dozens of daffodils and several native plants happy to be in our soil. The large stones have been recently weeded and are clear for sitting.

Phase Two of the Memorial Garden Plan will add to the native planting. We will fill the pathway with fine gravel for proper drainage and more secure footing in damp weather. The path will be edged so the gravel doesn't float away. Two shade trees will be planted, and new benches will line the side where there is now only one bench. We need that extra seating for services as well as when folks visit the garden to pray or meditate.

Phase Three will add seat cushions for our amphitheater, a storage bin, and wireless speakers for the services and occasional music. Capping off the entrance to the space will be a simple wrought iron arch. A portion of the funding in this phase will be dedicated to creating a design plan for steps and railings leading down from the church to the garden.

And finally, the Memorial Garden Team would very much like to establish a Memorial Garden Endowment Fund. That fund would allow routine yearly maintenance and occasional tree work to be handled without impacting the Parish budget.

All these ideas and plans have been at work lovingly under the surface, just like a winter garden. No doubt some plans will change over time, and the new Landscaping Committee will have their contributions to make. Nonetheless, I thought everyone would like to have a glimpse of what's been "cookin'." We are small in number but fiercely dedicated to this beautiful space where more and more members of our Communion of Saints reside. By all means join us as we make "safe the paths of the Lord" this winter.

Faithfully, Regan

December's First Sunday Offering Goes To Homeward Bound

HOMeward BOUND is a nonprofit organization with the goal of ending homelessness. It follows the best practice model of Housing First, the most effective, cost-efficient, sustainable, and humane intervention for homelessness. People experiencing homelessness are quickly housed and given support and resources to maintain housing stability. The success rate of Homeward Bound's housing programs is impressive: of the more than 1400 people they have housed, 89% remain in permanent housing.

Homeward Bound also operates a Day Center in Asheville. The Center offers services such as showers, phones, storage, a mailing address, and a safe place. The Day Center often serves as many as 200 homeless people a day. ECHS has an opportunity to help the Day Center by donating warm socks, hats, gloves, and cough drops.

Another program of Homeward Bound is Room in the Inn, which serves homeless women, twelve at a time, who for a variety of reasons can't stay at a shelter.

Room at the Inn partners with faith communities taking turns hosting the women for a week at a time, providing all of their meals, shelter, and overnight accommodations. Holy Spirit has participated with the Room in the Inn program for several years, partnering with Weaverville Methodist and Weaverville Baptist churches. This year ECHS did hosting in March and November.

Please help this valuable program however you can, by contributing to the first Sunday offering, donating warm items to help the homeless population survive winter, or participating in our Room in the Inn week next spring.

(Article by Donna Turnbaugh, who will answer any questions about Homeward Bound or The Room at the Inn programs.)

Letters for Jack's Parole Hearing

Jack Angel's parole hearing in Raleigh will happen mid-January, 2018. Sam Shiver and Pete Von Dreele will attend the hearing and speak on Jack's behalf. In preparation for the January hearing, support letters are urgently needed for presenting to the Parole Commission. So many of our parishioners know and love Jack. This is an opportunity to put those appreciative thoughts in writing in support of Jack's release. Please submit your letters to the church office or give them to Sam or Pete by December 17.



“Women Gathering”

A time for the women of ECHS to get together, pray, meditate, laugh, share interesting activities, and learn more about each other.

Every third Saturday of the month, starting with a time of chat at 10:00am, continuing to a circle in the Sanctuary, and ending with a shared lunch.

(Photo courtesy of Ann Smith.)



A letter from Ann Smith and Nancy Larkin in response to the Women's Gathering of Saturday, November 18.

We hope all of you left with renewed strength, compassion, peace and GRACE (seemed to be a recurring theme word) today. It is such a joy to be with this amazing group of women who take the time to come together and refresh! Lunch was a smaller but more intimate group. It was a time for deeper sharing. For those of you who could not attend, please know your presence was missed and we will rejoice when you are again in our midst!

The next "Women Gathering" time will be on Saturday, December 16. Same time, same place. Pam McNally will be leading us for that meeting. If, in between now and then, you would like to send a message to the group as a whole, I [Nancy Larkin] will be happy to do so. Also, if you know of someone I have inadvertently left off the list, please tell me!

In Sisterhood,
Ann and Nancy

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Jim Sparrow..... 1
Carol Slaughter 4
Bendik Clark 7
Diane Vestal 9

Matt Yeakley..... 10
Natasha King 11
Larry Smith 11
Caleb Loomis..... 14
Lee Ballard..... 15
Natalie Willis 15
Harold Phillips 18
Carol Cumbie 19

Ernie Miller..... 19
John Zeller 19
Linda Ballard 22
Joey Larson..... 23
Anne Hutzell 28
Ginny Koranek 28
Pam Stein..... 29
John Graeter 31

An Important Letter From David McNair

Dear Church of the Holy Spirit,

For the past eight months our church has prayerfully discerned whether or not the Holy Spirit is calling us at this time to offer Sanctuary to our undocumented immigrant neighbors. At our meeting Tuesday, November 14, the Vestry unanimously made the following decision:

“We, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit (ECHS), declare ECHS a Sanctuary Support Congregation. Also, we commission a Task Group to assess the feasibility of ECHS becoming a Sanctuary Host Congregation.”

This process of discernment has sought to be inviting and inclusive of all our members and those associated with our congregation. We have aimed to respectfully and carefully listen to one another and to consider all expressed views and opinions regarding whether or not to offer Sanctuary in light of our calling to be faithful disciples of Christ and to live more fully into our Baptismal Covenant.

Under the leadership of a Vestry-appointed Sanctuary Discernment Team (Mark Holland, Barbara Moloney, and Bob Warner) we have had three congregation-wide meetings, an educational Immigration 101 presentation and forum led by Marisol Mimenez, and six small group discussion/listening sessions. In addition, members of the committee met with Bishop Jose McLoughlin to apprise him of the process and enlist his support for whatever the congregation decided to do.

Also, members of the congregation were invited to participate in multiple Immigration Law workshops, Immigration education forums and Sanctuary Movement meetings.

Currently in Western NC, only one congregation that owns a building, The Unitarian Universalist Church of Asheville, has declared its commitment to be a Sanctuary Host Congregation. Therefore, the decision of our church to become a Sanctuary Support Congregation means that we will be supporting that congregation in its efforts to be a Sanctuary Host Congregation. The scope of our support will depend on the persons in our congregation who agree to volunteer in yet undetermined ways. As of now, our becoming a Sanctuary Support Church does not include financial support from ECHS but this may change upon further action of the ECHS Vestry.

The Sanctuary Task Group that will be commissioned by our Vestry to assess the feasibility of ECHS becoming a Sanctuary Host Congregation will, at a yet undetermined date, report back to the Vestry and the ECHS congregation with a detailed feasibility report. At that time the Vestry will make a decision as to whether or not we will declare our church a Sanctuary Host Congregation. The Vestry and I are committed to keep you abreast of the work of the Task Force, its pending report and of any new developments regarding ECHS involvement in the Sanctuary Movement. We also welcome your continued input and conversation as we continue to discern our role and commitment.

(continued on page 8)

David's Important Letter

(continued from page 7)

There will be a meeting on Sunday, December 3, in the Community Room following the 10:30 service to answer questions and offer further clarity regarding this decision by our Vestry.

I have been encouraged by your willingness to respectfully and deeply listen to one another and to trust that, in doing so, we are listening to and being led by the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God and to each of you for the many ways you have offered yourselves and engaged in this discernment process.

Let us be assured that God is with us, that we are one in Christ even in our diversity and that God is ever seeking to reveal the depths of God's love and mercy to us as we move forward together in faith.

In Christ's love, David McNair

Sunday Morning Advent Class

David McNair will be leading a class entitled "Preparing, Waiting and Expecting" on the first three Sundays in Advent:

**December 3, 10, and 17
9:00 - 10:00am
In the Community Room**

We will explore through poetry, prayer, readings, and discussion how we can make room for Christ's coming into our lives and into the world. All are welcome!



STEVE DAVIDOWSKI is a unique talent.

Classically trained at the Eastman School of Music, Davidowski was a member of the pioneering southern jazz-rock group The Dixie Dregs in the mid-1970s.

Over the years he has put his keyboard and woodwind talents to work, drawing from his love of jazz, blues, gospel, Latin and Appalachian traditions to take his listeners on an unforgettable musical journey.