

Cluster Chronicle

"A community of Episcopal congregations sharing the love and power of the Risen Christ in our communities through worship, evangelization and apostolic service."

Welcoming Reverend Hoster

The Cluster rejoices with the engagement of The Reverend Elizabeth Hoster as supply priest for the first six months of 2020. She briefly met parish congregations at regular and Christmas Eve services in December, and her presence has already energized weekly worship and coffee hours.

A native of Columbus, Reverend Hoster majored in English Literature and minored in History at Ohio University, graduating summa cum laude. She earned a Master of Divinity degree from the University of the South School of Theology with awards in Liturgics and Mission.

Her pastoral experience is extensive. Most recently, she served as Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Toledo during which time she envisioned and helped facilitate the merger of two parishes.

She was also Assistant/Associate Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, Charleston, West Virginia. In 2016 she returned to Columbus where she shares her home with canines Magnus and Cody, her "hairy kids."

She is currently a supply priest for the Dioceses of Ohio and Southern Ohio.



A past and present member of diocesan commissions, councils, committees, teams, leadership training and fundraising programs, Reverend Hoster's assignments have overlapped and deepened personal interests in social justice, environmental policy and practice and spiritual formation.

She explains that her ongoing study of scripture asks the question, "What is the story under the story under the story?"

What is scripture saying about human nature and the need for relation with God and each other?" She adds that she is challenged by Eleanor Roosevelt's behest to "Do something every day that scares you."

Lest this sound like all work and no play, Reverend Hoster confided that she is fond of storytelling, music, travel, fiber arts surface design, e.g., batik, shiburi and other dye techniques, open water kayaking, scuba diving, swimming and camping. We can't offer much in the way of water sports, but we predict that the Cluster Camp Auction will add perspective to Reverend Hoster's camping experiences.

A tribute to Marilyn

Our Saviour hosted a special coffee hour January 12 in celebration of Marilyn Foulk's ninetieth birthday. Congregants and a large contingent of the Foulk family gathered for a lovely brunch in her honor. We add a toast to the many years of faithful Christian service of this gracious lady who is loved, admired and respected by family, church and community.



Attending were: back, l to r: Gary Lantz, Susan Lantz, Marilyn Foulk, Rochiel Foulk; middle, l to r: Vincent Foulk, Matthew Yellen, Lauren Previte, Branden Previte, Vincent Lantz; front, l to r: Elijah Yellen, Caleb Yellen, Hudson Previte, Vivenne Lantz and Milo Lantz. Not pictured are: Stephanie and Isabelle Lantz and Mallory, Nick, Molly, Wyatt and Levi Zachrich.



Marilyn Foulk



Reasons to rejoice

Will Boeck, Cecilia Bradford, Gwen Westfall and Emily Westfall of Our Saviour were named to the Mechanicsburg Junior/Senior High School first term honor roll.

Joanie Stadler is recuperating well from surgery in early January. She will be continuing her recovery at Mercy McAuley Center and a note would brighten her stay.

Owen Barger and Slade Merriman were 7th and 8th grade classroom winners in the recent West Liberty-Salem Middle School spelling bee. Owen is Dorothy Headlee's great-grandson and Slade is a great-grandson of Chuck and Mary Neal Miller, all of Epiphany. Good work, gentlemen!

PARISH ANNUAL MEETINGS

Our Saviour's annual business meeting is scheduled for Jan. 19 following the service. Epiphany's business meeting will convene January 26 after services and a potluck lunch featuring a chicken entrée provided by the church. See you there!

Seasons of the Church Year

A Series by Heather Angus

A new calendar year gives rise to the notion that it would be good to refresh our knowledge and understanding of the Episcopal Church Year, its seasons, liturgy, colors and events. Each parish is likely to have its own variations, but the general progression of the Year follows Our Lord from preparations for His nativity through His life, death, resurrection and ascension.

The Book of Common Prayer orders our liturgical year into two cycles of feasts and holy days, one dependent on the movable date of Easter and the other on the fixed date of Christmas. Easter's date determines the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday and the start of Pentecost on the fiftieth day of the Easter season. The Church Year starts with Advent.

Advent, Christmastide, Epiphany

Advent always includes the four Sundays before Christmas Day and the purple color of altar cloths and vestments signifies penitence. The liturgy at this time reflects not only a quiet waiting for Jesus' birth, but also an anticipation of Jesus' second coming at the end of the ages.

Therefore, it is usual, when other mainline Protestant denominations are singing *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* and other cheery Christmas carols, for Episcopalians to hear scripture like this one, set for the first Sunday of Advent, 2020:

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence — as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

Toward the end of Advent, the mood lightens, and by the fourth Sunday the liturgy reflects the joy of the coming Nativity. In 2020, the fourth Sunday of Advent includes the beautiful Magnificat:

*My soul doth magnify the Lord,
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior,
for He hath regarded the lowliness
of His handmaiden.*

The Church Year continues with Jesus' Nativity, symbolized by the color white, representing joy, purity and truth.

White hangings are sometimes used the Sundays after Epiphany to express the joy of the coming of the Christ Child.

There is a protocol for lighting the four candles on the Advent wreath, at home or in the sanctuary. Three candles may be blue, purple or lavender, one should be pink.

Candles are lit clockwise starting at the left on the first Sunday of Advent. The next week, the first and the second are lit; the pink one added on the third Sunday.

The Sunday before Christmas, all candles are alight. In this order, the candles represent hope, peace, joy and love.

The twelfth day of "Christmastide" is called Epiphany, meaning "manifestation of God."

Traditionally this is the day on which the three Magi from the East arrived at the stable, offering their precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ child.

Thus, Jesus was manifested to the Gentiles, indicating his significance to "all the nations of the Earth."



Christmas revisited

The name Clement Moore is quickly recognized as the author of the beloved poem, *A Visit from St. Nicholas*. But it's likely that few know he was the son of Rev. Benjamin Moore, second Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the State of New York. Last Christmas the New York Times printed the poem and explained Moore's Episcopal connections and some of what transpired as a result.

In the early 1700s, Clement's grandfather, Major Thomas Clarke, owned several thousand acres in Manhattan which he named Chelsea Farm. The Major's daughter, Charity, married Bishop Moore; their son, Clement Clarke Moore, was born in 1799.

Clement eventually inherited Chelsea Farm and donated one of the orchards to the Episcopal Church to build The General Theological Seminary. It was established in 1817 with Clement its first Professor of Literature, Divinity and Biblical Learning. The Seminary is still in operation today. Moore also funded the building of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in New York.

Chelsea Farm became the Chelsea district of Manhattan, but Moore's poem preserves a poignant bit of the farm's history. Moore was fond of one of the groundskeepers, a descendant of an old Dutch family, and used the Dutch tradition of St. Nicholas bringing presents at Christmas as the model for the St. Nicholas of his poem. He even gave the reindeer Dutch names, e.g., Donder and Blixen---Thunder and Lightning.

When Clement Moore died, he was buried in Trinity Cemetery of the Episcopal Church of the Intercession in New York. Every year it hosts the Clement Moore Festival, Moore's poem is read on the last Sunday of Advent followed by a procession to the burial site. This 110-year tradition is the oldest in the city.

Another tradition was set in motion by Jim Glaub who rented a 22nd Street apartment, once part of Chelsea Farm. While living there, he received more than 800 letters addressed to St. Nicholas. He figures that people learned of Moore's connection to the property and hoped the missives would be answered. Inspired by the contents of the letters, Jim founded a non-profit called Miracle on 22nd Street where elves adopt letter writers and help families in need. Clement Moore's St. Nicholas lives on.



Rochiel Foulk will attend Continental Congress

Our Saviour's Rochiel Foulk will represent the Urbana Chapter of DAR at the week-long Daughters of the American Revolution Continental Congress in Washington, D. C, June 23-28. She will also be a delegate to the Ohio State Conference of DAR in Columbus March 26-29.

In Washington, Rochiel will join other Champaign County delegates and guests in historic Constitution Hall for business sessions, committee meetings, social functions and formal evening ceremonies.

Award presentations will recognize patriotism, education, heroism, community service, citizenship, conservation, military service and youth achievements.

The bottomless vessel

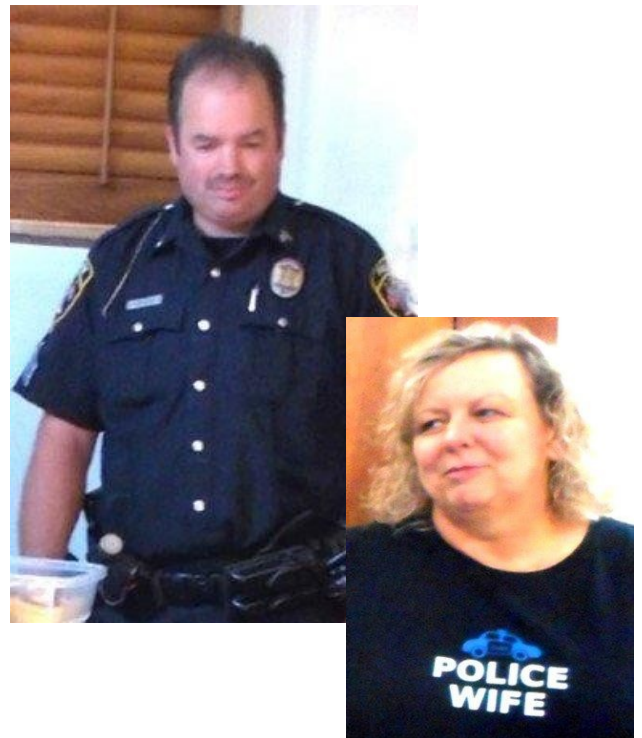
If you write a check your account balance drops; if you dip into your supply of food, there will be less of it. There's one exception we know of and are vastly grateful for. Chief Matt Lingrell and the Urbana Police Department have for years participated in Epiphany's monthly Community Meal program. They provided nourishing, homecooked food and personally served it---without depleting the department's generosity, kindness, professional, material or spiritual resources.

Last December Chief Lingrell & Company again co-hosted Epiphany's Community Meal with Matt Upchurch of Steve's Market and Terra Jordan of Urbana's Caring Kitchen. Plates were filled with ham gifted from Steve's Market and baked at the Caring Kitchen, potatoes prepared by the Chief, and accompaniments.

Recently retired Urbana Police Sgt. Chris Snyder and his wife, Mary Kay, were instrumental in creating this partnership. Mary Kay has cooked vats of spaghetti with marinara sauce in her own kitchen. It was transported to the church and served with a smile and a hearty, "Good to see you!"

James Neal, retired naval officer and journalist, writes in *Forward Day by Day*: "Jesus calls us to be living vessels, active agents of God's will, pouring out the Holy Spirit---giving way to a force that transforms our own lives and untold stretches of the world around us."

Chief Lingrell and his force often see humanity at its worst but continue to tap a seemingly bottomless supply of energy and compassion to encourage the weak, hopeless and broken in the world around us.



Left: Chief Lingrell dishes up spaghetti; above: Sgt. Chris Snyder and his wife, Mary Kay, who took the lead in the Community Meal partnership.

The Ghost of an idea

Cluster congregants are asked to give serious consideration to making financial pledges for the coming year. Church treasurers explain that, without some idea of future income, proposed budgets will be unrealistic. And, we are assured that there will be no pressure to collect!

A pledge is more than a promise. It becomes a vision, an influence for good, affecting benefactor and recipient. Nothing confirms that more powerfully than Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

Les Standiford, author of a book about the writing of Dickens' *Carol*, explains that Christmas was not much celebrated in England after Puritan Oliver Cromwell's reign characterized it as pagan. Easter was the country's high, holy day. Dickens was born into the England of unemployment, poverty and despair. This bleak existence triggered his "little carol".

Dickens became a published but poorly paid writer. In 1843, deeply in debt, he had an inspiration for a unique new book to be put on the market for Christmas. He was convinced it would "raise a Ghost of an idea, a hopeful vision that would transform the 'Scrooges' of the world and make life better for everyone." He was so excited about *A Christmas Carol* that he pledged all he had left and even borrowed from a friend to get it published.

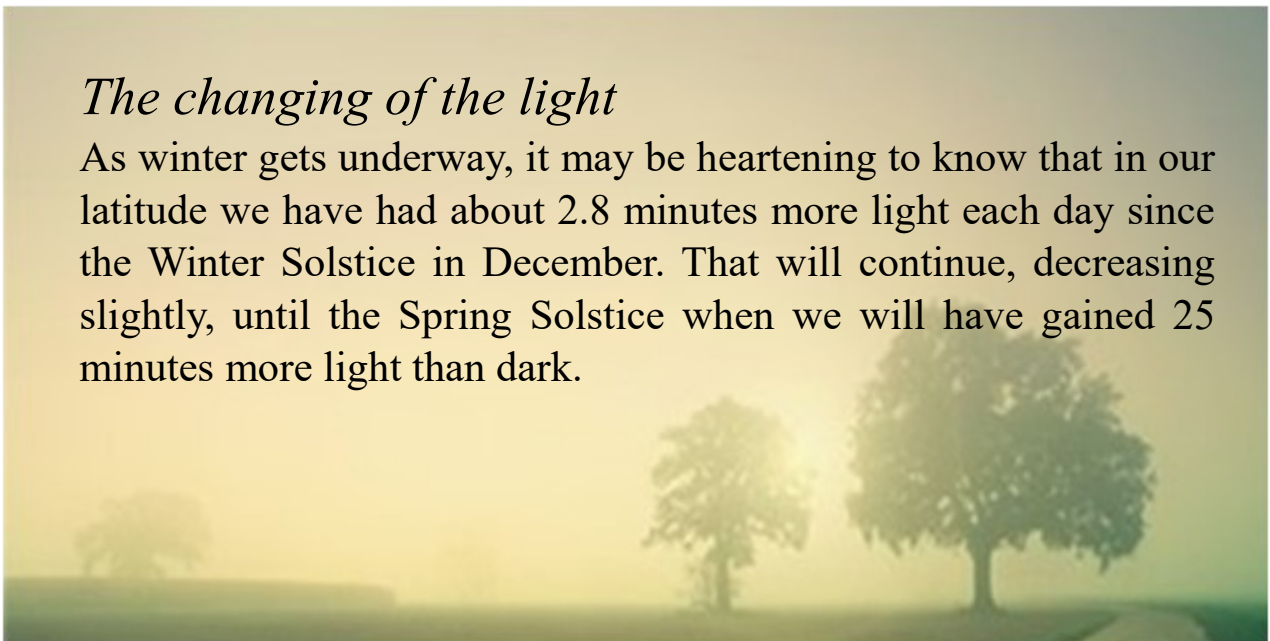
The first printing of 6000 copies sold in one day. It prompted rave reviews (...*religious and moral truth, a glorious manual of Christian duties*) and crushing criticism (...*a ghost story, displeasing and absurd*). Sold for five shillings (about \$1.25) each, it barely covered expenses. Dickens' dry wit deplored that "such a success could be so disappointing."

While it did nothing to alleviate Dickens' financial distress, it did become the catalyst he envisioned; "A tale to make the reader laugh and cry---to open his hands and open his heart to charity, even towards the un-charitable." Some credit it with initiating a revival of the English celebration of Christmas.

Dickens pledged everything to prove that a soured, stingy, meanspirited nature could be transformed. His fantasy of ghostly wisdom, resurrected hope and a Christmas turkey---his little carol---still opens hearts and hands. Make a pledge for 2020. Be it paid in part or in full; in treasure, talent, time or a turkey for a "Cratchit" family, it will generate incredible faith and hope and possibly transform a 21st century Scrooge.

The changing of the light

As winter gets underway, it may be heartening to know that in our latitude we have had about 2.8 minutes more light each day since the Winter Solstice in December. That will continue, decreasing slightly, until the Spring Solstice when we will have gained 25 minutes more light than dark.





***Gladys Spencer** of Epiphany celebrated Christmas with four generations of the family. She is shown here with daughter, Diane Kremer, lower left; Diane's son Joe Kremer, standing, and Joe's son, two-year-old Benjamin. Joe's family was visiting from San Diego, California, where he is a teacher and coach.*

It was a great pleasure to have Rev. Derrick Fetz and his family among us again. Pictured, l to r, are Mrs. Fetz (Jamie); Rev. Fetz; Sheila and Robert Fetz, Derrick's parents, and front and center, Mari Belle, Jamie and Derrick's six-year-old daughter. Rev. Fetz, is now Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in Buffalo, New York.



Mark your calendars for January

- Jan. 5 Regular service schedule
Vestry Meeting, Epiphany, following the service
- Jan. 12 Regular service schedule
- Jan. 15 Community Meal, Epiphany, 5-6 p.m.
- Jan. 19 Regular service schedule, Annual Meeting, Our Saviour,
following the service
- Jan. 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Jan. 26 Regular service schedule, Annual Meeting, potluck lunch,
following the service
- Jan. 27 Cluster Council Meeting, Epiphany, 5:30 p.m.
- Jan. 29 Community Meal, Our Saviour, 6 p.m.
- Jan. 30 Worship Committee Meeting, Epiphany, 5:30 p.m.
- Feb. 2 Regular service schedule
- Feb. 9 Regular service schedule

Sunday Worship Services: Our Saviour, 9:15 a.m., Epiphany, 11 a.m.

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