



Messenger

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Published by Trinity Episcopal Church — on the Green in Branford, Connecticut

December 2013/January 2014

Christmas Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve

- 5:00 PM Family Service
10:30 PM Christmas Concert
11:00 PM Festival Candlelight Eucharist

Christmas Day

- 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist with Music

Inside this issue:

Advent Into Christmas	2
Worship Ministry	4
Parish Life Ministry	5
Outreach Ministry	6
Christian Education Ministry & Finance Ministry	6
Stewardship	7
Leadership	7

Hope, Peace, Joy and Love

The Church Year begins with the Season of Advent in November/December, on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, the Sunday closest to November 30. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." It is the time of waiting for the coming of the Messiah that is celebrated at Christmas; thus it is known as the season of anticipation and hope. Advent symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and congregations, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power.

The primary color of advent is blue, which means hope and waiting, and aligns with the seasonal meaning of Advent. Advent used to have more emphasis on penitence and fasting; and at the third week rejoicing began that the fasting was almost over; and so the rose colored Sunday Advent candle turns attention to the rejoicing.

The Advent wreath came to America from

Protestant Germany in the 1930s; but there are differing opinions about the origination. Some say it was a symbol in Europe long before the arrival of Christianity, others that it was in common use in the Middle Ages, still others that it was not invented until the 19th century in Germany. We know it as a Christian tradition that marks the journey of the four weeks of Advent.

The wreath is made of evergreens with four candles in the circle, symbolizing the eternal cycle of the seasons, and a fifth, white candle in the center, known as the Christ candle.

(Continued on page 2)



From the Rector



Dear Trinity Family,

'Tis the season to be holy—that is, after all, the purpose of Jesus' incarnation: to reveal humanity's inherent unity and holiness.

How blind we have been, and how gracious God is to continue to pursue and invite us into this knowledge.

What a gift to be given love and acceptance when we feel that we don't merit it, or even have any reason to expect it.

We begin with the mysterious anticipation of Advent, receive the quiet joy of Christmas, and then the shout of Epiphany, when the whole world is told: God has come to unite us all; not just Chris-

(Continued on page 2)

From The Rector

Submission deadline for the following *Messenger* is the 15th of the current month. Please e-mail to **communication@trinitybranford.org**. Photographs are welcome. It is respectfully requested that material not be formatted (no bolds, underlines, bullets, truncated lines, unusual spacing, etc.), since graphic design software doesn't know what to do with it!)

Articles and event notices will be reviewed by an editor. Editorial rights are reserved for clarity, and to fit space constraints.

Messenger Contributors

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A color issue is on trinitybranford.org/news

Trinity Leadership

Senior Warden: Mark McElrath

Junior Warden: Rodney Hayes

Parish Clerk: Ellen Shirey

Treasurer: Michael Freeman

Assistant Treasurer: Katherine Rowe

Vestry

Andy Campbell, Janet Daley, Dru Dodd, Terry Kron, Maureen McGuinness, Ed Monico, Peter Otis, Kathy Sanchez, Carol Schaller

Staff

Parish Administrator: Jane Dougherty

Sexton: Nancy Williams

(Continued from page 1)

tians or Jews, but our Muslim brothers and sisters, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Pagans, and non-believers, into the realm of love.



It's such a big idea that it takes three seasons to give us the whole story. Pay attention, receive the gift in gratitude and then share it with the world. Happy Holy Days!

Peace,

Sharon +

(Continued from page 1)

Hope, Peace, Joy and Love

The light of the candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world, dispelling the darkness. Beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, one candle is lit each week until, by the last Sunday before Christmas, all four candles are lit, and the Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve. The first candle is hope, the second is peace, the third is joy, and the fourth is love.*

The emphasis for this season is contrary to the media message. It is for slowing down, simplifying, creating quiet for reflection, and allowing the hope, peace, love and joy to be born in us.

* Source: Religion and popular Culture (Episcopalian)

Advent Into Christmas

December 11 and 18, Advent Suppers

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light," "the lion shall lie down with the lamb," "swords into plowshares," and the "little child shall lead them." These great images from Isaiah will form the Advent conversations. What did they mean then, and what do they mean now? What is our role? Supper is at 6:00 PM in the Parish Hall, conversation to follow. All are invited.

December 14, Sandy Hook Remembrance

We will keep the church open for quiet reflection on the anniversary of the loss of lives at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown.

Poinsettias on the Altar for Christmas

Last spring, we introduced a new process to keep track of the annual Easter lily and Christmas poinsettia memorials. All of the memorials were recorded in a database, noting whether or not the donor participates at both Easter and Christmas, and whether the memorial names were the same or different for each memorial.

Advent Into Christmas *continued*

Everyone who donated lilies at Easter (and submitted a list of memorials), will receive a letter with instructions on how to continue their memorial(s) for Christmas. Simply return the letter to Trinity Church, along with your donation for the poinsettias. You can, of course, add or delete names. Donors who specified different names for Easter and Christmas will receive a letter listing the Christmas names.



For parishioners who have not had plant memorials before, there will be a form to complete. Beginning Sunday, December 1, forms will be at the back of the church, and on the table in the Parish Hall lobby. To ensure inclusion in the Christmas list, please note the submission deadline is no later than **Wednesday, December 18, 2013.**

If you have any questions about the poinsettia memorials, or weekly altar flower memorials, please contact Ruth Knowlton at altarflowers@trinitybranford.org, or call her at home, she is in the directory.

December 22, The Christmas Pageant

At 5:00 PM, the angels and shepherds will don their costumes and tell the beautiful story. We will help them with the hymns that fill out the drama. Then we'll eat together. Please bring a side dish or dessert of your choice, to share. It's all a part of the tradition. Do plan to join us for it.

Pageant rehearsals, costumes and part assignments happen on Sundays, **December 8 and 15**, after the 10:00 AM service. Parents and children please come to the undercroft.



December 24, Merry Christmas from Trinity Church

The Christmas wafer, as they are known, is a tradition from Eastern Europe. At your Christmas meal, the eldest person present wishes all "Happy Christmas, may God grant us all blessings and peace in the year ahead." The wafer is broken and shared around the table, with each person offering a Christmas wish. Wafers will be distributed at worship on Christmas Eve. Merry Christmas!

December 24, Early Evening

At 5:00 PM, a special service designed with excited children in mind will set the right tone for Christmas. Music, a reading from *The Velveteen Rabbit*—the telling of Jesus' birth—and the holy meal at the Lord's Table, all make for a very Holy Night.



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Worship

The church will be transformed from the mysterious blue of Advent to the glorious white and gold, accented by the red and green of Christmas flowers. At 10:30 PM, the Trinity Choir will sing Christmas anthems in a variety of musical styles. The concert will be followed by a Festival Eucharist at 11:00 PM.

Come and celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Worship Ministry



Sandy Baldwin
Chair

December 1, Advent Begins

The silent procession to the slow steady beat of chimes sets the stage for our Advent worship. The parts of the service that we always sing—known as the "service music"—change: instead of the celebratory *Gloria*, the choir will alternate two different settings of the *Kyrie*, both rich with harmony and mystery. The *Sanctus* (*Holy, holy, holy*) will change to the familiar setting by Franz Schubert.



The Fraction Anthem at the Breaking of the Bread will also be different, but follow the same pattern, with parts for you to sing. The tune for our Lord's Prayer will be a traditional plainsong chant. But the true star of Advent worship is the hymnody. Advent hymns are the most beautiful, haunting, and evocative of the whole year.

Music at Trinity: Manhattan Soloists Exceed Expectation!



We were promised an evening of spice and variety of music from David Glukh (playing the trumpet) and his associates, known as Manhattan Soloists. The combination of piccolo trumpet, cello, and two violins, worked beautifully, whether the piece was a Sonata by Handel or a

jazz treatment of *Summertime* by Gershwin. They are truly gifted musicians. The evening was a real treat, thoroughly enjoyed by all!

Many thanks go to Ron Baldwin, MC and organizer of the evening; Ken Sause, reception host (who really knows how to throw a festive party!) and assistant Sandy Baldwin; and Peter Schuller, official guests greeter at the door.

A Celebration of Music

Trinity's Music Ministry is dynamic, harmonious, stirring, uplifting ... and it just keeps getting better. New music, different anthems, new instruments, and gifted parishioners. And, as if all this energy and talent might go unnoticed, now there are new cassocks for the choir, in colors that complement the seasons of the church. In addition to seeing blue or black cassocks, expect to see the choir wearing a rich red or gorgeous green.



Behind the new vestments, and a pile of new music, is the energetic support of Ken Sause. A friend and admirer of Ron's musical gifts, and all that Ron contributes to Trinity, Ken has applied himself to building up the Baldwin Music Ministry Fund. His method is ingenious—he has sold innumerable playbills on eBay and Craig's List, and fills the Music Fund coffer with the proceeds. Gratefully, other parishioners have also contributed to the Fund, which gives Ron resources beyond the limits of the church budget.

Thank you Ron, for your years of devotion to the music ministry; to Ken for being a man of action and a good friend; and to the choir and musicians who so enrich Trinity's worship for everyone who attends. (see photo album at trinitybranford.org—News & Events)



(Continued on page 7)

Parish Life Ministry



Peter Hayes
Chair

Trinity's Open House, November 30

The community is invited to Trinity's Open House, on the Town's Tree Lighting Night, November 30.

~ Celebrate the newly-installed Archie Hanna Window. Meet Debora Coombs, the artist of this beautiful glass-painted original design, who will be present from 3:00 PM.

~ Enjoy hot chocolate and home-made cookies (and if you can bake some wondrous delights, that would be much appreciated!)

~ Be someone's angel! Shop for holiday gifts and make a donation, either in your name or someone else's, that will reach those who really need your help, such as Operation Fuel, Branford Food Pantry, the Crow Reservation, Heifer International, and more. Team leader is MaryAnn Allen, Outreach Ministry, who can be reached at openhouse@trinitybranford.org.



Please join in to extend hospitality and a welcome to all.

First Sunday Breakfast, December 1 & January 5

Gather together at 9:00 AM in the Undercroft for a delicious breakfast and fellowship. On the December menu is cinnamon French toast and (real) bacon, juice, coffee, tea or milk. \$3.50 per adult, \$2 per child, \$10 family maximum. *Please* sign up in the foyer, call the office, or email, firstsundaybreakfast@trinitybranford.org.

Thank You! to the anonymous and kind benefactor of First Sunday Breakfast in November. Everyone ate for free and was pleased to do so!

Trinity Book Group, December 4

This month's book is *Touching Them All*, by our own Peter Schuller. This is the first book of a trilogy that engages many of life's most intriguing questions, both practical and metaphysical. Charlie How-

ell is a baseball player who is fascinated by the working and capabilities of the human brain. As a young student he immerses himself in the discipline of neuroscience, which he uses as his framework to analyze and understand the world he lives in. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion, which starts at 7:00 PM in the Guild Room. The next book group is in February. See the 2013/2014 schedule at trinitybranford.org/ministries/parishlife.html.

First Friday Family Night, December 6, 5:30 PM

This is a chance for parents to get together, have a free pasta supper and let our kids enjoy activities and a movie together. There will be a group discussion on important issues for parents. This is open to families at Trinity and in the community. Please share and spread the word. Mark your calendar now!

December 15, Holly Party at the Rectory

Rev. Sharon and Peter invite you to join them in this (now) traditional December fellowship. Between 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, enjoy an outrageous array of homemade cookies and a glass of mulled wine.



And please, take home some holly!

Twelfth Night Celebration



Save the date! **January 5, 2014, 6:00 PM.** Since a festive time and a delicious meal is had by all year-after-year, this event is a keeper! Volunteers welcome! Watch for details to follow.

Outreach Ministry



Janet Constantino
Chair

Neighbors remembered

Thank you! Trinity Church did it again! 104 Thanksgiving turkeys will make a big dent in the Branford Food Pantry's appeal for 500.

Operation Fuel

Kindly remember to check the Add-A-Dollar box on your utility bill. All Add-a-Dollar contributions are matched by the utility company. All the money goes to CT families who fall through the gaps.

Trinity's Giving Tree Program

We continue our Giving Tree tradition of buying Christmas gifts for children in need; but this year we will stay close to home in Branford, as there are many children on the list at the Branford Counseling Center. As always, please help yourself to a paper angel on the tree in the Parish Hall. The tree will be up in early December. **Wrapped gifts** must be brought to Trinity no later than **December 15** to be sure to make Santa's sleigh. Thank you!



Christian Education Ministry



Martha Monico
Chair

Youth Group (Middle School, High School and College)

January 12, 4: 00 PM—7:30 PM

We plan to meet at Trinity and then go to the 5:00 PM service at the Episcopal Church at Yale. Following, we will have dinner together in New Haven. Please RSVP to Jen Zehler, godlyplay@trinitybranford.org, so that we can arrange enough transportation

Adult Forums

Saturday, December 14, 10:00 AM

Affordable Care Act: Information about the who, what, when and how of signing up for health insurance in CT. Presented by Community Action Agency of New Haven, in the Trinity Church Parish Hall.

Sunday, January 12, 9:00 AM Haiti Mission Trip

Janet Constantino and Rev. Sharon will update us on what they found in Haiti this past November: the people they met, and the activities they were involved with for nine days.

For Children

See the articles, **The Christmas Pageant**, and **December 24, Early Evening**, for details.

Finance Ministry



Bill Baskin
Chair

Stock Gifts to Trinity

Many of you generously donate stock to Trinity as part of your annual pledge. When you make your request for stock to be transferred to Trinity, it takes weeks for the funds to actually reach us; and we cannot credit your giving statement until the funds have actually been received. So please make your donation in plenty of time for the funds to reach us before year's end. Any funds received after we close the Trinity books for the year (which is shortly after mid-January), will be applied to next year's pledge. Thank you!



May God's love surround,

God's grace abound,

And heavenly peace

Be all around.

With Blessings for the Season

Worship Ministry *continued*

Leadership

A Visit from the Bishop, January 19

The word *episcopal* comes from the Greek *episkopos*, meaning bishop. We are a church that has a structure organized around geographic regions called dioceses, which are headed by bishops. The bishops connect us all. Like rectors, bishops are selected and elected by the people's representatives.



The Right Reverend Ian T. Douglas is the 15th Bishop of the Diocese of Connecticut. He is the first to have been elected from outside of Connecticut. We went all the way to Massachusetts to find him. Bishop Douglas will be visiting us on January 19, to preach and celebrate. He will also confirm those who wish to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church, or receive those who have been confirmed elsewhere and wish

to make their commitment to Trinity Church officially Episcopalian. If you are interested, please see Rev. Sharon.

Episcopalian 101

In preparation for Bishop Douglas' visit, Rev. Sharon will be offering *Episcopalian 101* for any who wish to know more about our quite wonderful tradition. The sessions will be at 9:00 AM on Saturdays, **January 4, 11 and 18**, with coffee and something appropriately breakfast-y. Please confirm your attendance by calling the office. Materials will be prepared for you.



Stewardship

The annual appeal was mailed mid-November, with a return date for pledge cards by **December 1**. If you did not receive the appeal packet, please contact the office.

2014 giving envelopes will be available for pickup at church beginning Sunday, December 8. If you return your pledge card after the 1st deadline, there may not be envelopes for you. Just add your name to the sheet on the table, and an envelope packet will magically appear the following Sunday!

2013 giving statements will be mailed out before the end of January.

Questions? Please contact the office. Thank you.



Mark McElrath
Senior Warden

Vestry Nominations

The Nominating Committee for Vestry has been formed, and is currently seeking the names of individuals interested in becoming Vestry members and Diocesan Convention/Deanery Representatives. Those nominated will be presented and voted on at our next Parish's Annual Meeting, in January 2014. Desirable attributes are:

- † thoughtful, strong, forward thinking, and able to look at the big picture
- † will effectively represent the diverse composition and opinions of members of the congregation
- † capable of, and will make, thoughtful proposals that will enhance the spiritual well-being of our church community
- † will put in the time and effort required to be an effective member of the Vestry
- † willing to verbalize and support a conflicting opinion

The Nominating Committee welcomes all suggestions and recommendations. Please feel free to contact us to get more details.

Nominating Committee members:

Janet Daley	vestry2@trinitybranford.org
Peter Otis	vestry7@trinitybranford.org
Carol Schaller	vestry9@trinitybranford.org
Sandy Baldwin	worship@trinitybranford.org
Martha Monico	education@trinitybranford.org



Rodney Hayes
Junior Warden

The Junior Warden has the delightful task of handing out checks! In January, the second disbursement of the Shepard Fund Scholarships will be given out to our college students. We are so proud of all of them, and love to see their shining faces and hear how they are doing.

Your wardens, and the lay leaders of the congregation, work very closely with Rev. Sharon. Mark and I serve as listening ears, offer counsel, and work to keep Trinity moving along. We are also available to all members of the congregation should any issues arise. We are here for you.



**Trinity Episcopal Church
1109 Main Street
Branford, CT 06405**

**The Rev. Sharon Gracen, Rector
Ronald Baldwin, Music Director**

Parish Office 203-488-2681

trinitychurch@trinitybranford.org

www.trinitybranford.org

Worship at Trinity

Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II

**9:45 AM Sunday School and
Nursery Care**

**10:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II
With music and choir**

**Televised on Channel 18
And AT&T Channel 99
7:00 PM Sundays**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

December 2013 ~ Special Dates ~ January 2014

- 1 First Sunday Breakfast, 9 AM
Pledge cards to be returned
- 2 Columbus House, 4:00 PM
- 4 Trinity Book Group 7:00 PM
- 6 First Friday Family Dinner, 5:30 PM
- 8 Pageant Rehearsal, 11:30 AM
Outreach Meeting, 11:30 AM
- 10 Pastoral Care, Noon
- 11 Advent Supper, 6:30 PM
- 14 **Saturday**, Affordable Care Act Presentation, 10:00 AM
Church open—Sandy Hook School Remembrance
- 15 Adult Forum, 9:00 AM
Pageant Rehearsal 11:30 AM
Holly Party at the Rectory, 3:00-5:00 PM
- 15 **Giving Tree Gifts Due Back**
- 18 **Altar Poinsettia checks/Memorial lists due**
Advent Supper, 6:30 PM
- 22 Pageant and Potluck Supper 5:00 PM
- 24 Family Service 5:00 PM
Christmas Concert 10:30 PM
Festival Eucharist, 11:00 PM
- 25 Eucharist 10:00 AM

- 3 First Friday Family Night, 5:30 PM
- 4 Episcopalian 101, 9:00 AM, 1 of 3
- 5 First Sunday Breakfast, 9:00 AM
Twelfth Night Dinner, 6:00 PM
- 6 Columbus House, 4:00 PM
- 7 Pastoral Care, Noon
- 11 Episcopalian 101, 9:00 AM, 2 of 3
- 12 Episcopal Church @ Yale, Youth Group, 4:00 PM - 7:30 PM
Adult Forum: Haiti Mission Trip, 9:00 AM
- 17 Vestry Meeting, 7:00 PM
- 18 Episcopalian 101, 9:00 AM, 3 of 3
- 19 **Bishop Ian T. Douglas Visit/Confirm & Receive**
- 20 Office Closed / Martin Luther King Day

26 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

There will be one 9:00 AM service on this last Sunday in January, immediately followed by the Parish Annual Meeting. ***Everyone is invited to stay and participate.*** Hear about the state-of-the-parish; say 'thank you' to departing Vestry members and Officers; exercise your vote and elect your new Vestry members; hear about Outreach, ask questions; let your voice be heard!