



2021

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Mini-Newsletter+ January 10, 2021 + 1st Sunday of Epiphany

Dear Friends – Our hymn #598, *Lord Christ, when first thou cam'st to earth*, includes this verse:

New advent of the love of Christ, shall we again refuse thee,
till in the night of hate and war, we perish as we lose thee?
From old unfaith our souls release, to seek the kingdom of thy peace,
by which alone we choose thee.

In what sense could we lose the new advent of the love of Christ? I think the Gospels give us a tremendous illustration: Where are the stories of Jesus from his infancy until his adult Baptism by John, his adult ministry, dying and rising? There is only one story in the Bible, of the twelve-year-old boy going with his parents to Jerusalem, then being left behind because he is busy talking with the elders in the synagogue. Some of the gospels that are not included in the Bible have fantastic or quaint stories of the growing boy, and legend says he traveled to England with Joseph of Arimathea.

Nevertheless, we go from Baby Jesus in the manger – Matthew's story of the Magi followed by the Family's escape to Egypt as Herod murdered all the boys under two years old – to Jesus' adulthood with an abrupt thud. What happened to

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever, and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care & take us to Heaven to live with Thee there

Our entire Biblical, Christian tradition has lost Jesus from his infancy through his being thirty years old. These missing years in the story become – for me, at least – a mirror where I can ask what happens: Why is Jesus ignored or missing so much of the time? What would it mean if he were with me, with us, all the time, not just re-entering with a thud after long lapses? Or, in fact, is he here all along – growing and learning all along? Working and sharing all along? Serving and speaking all along?



If so, the possibility is to take the Little Boy, Jesus, by the hand. If so, the challenge is long debates with the Teenager at the dining room table long after the food is finished. If so, the question is how we work alongside him, and discover him along our paths. Let us renew our own prayers to remain in the company of Jesus, to be released from our unfaith to seek the kingdom of his Peace. As we say such prayers, I offer this picture of one man in whom I have seen Jesus this week – here is NJ Congressman Andy Kim helping clean the Capitol Rotunda floor. The Peace of Christ be with you all.



Concerning Arrangements – Many have asked about arrangements and services in memory of Fern Jones, who died on December 30th. There will be a private, family service later this month. Fern’s daughter, Leslie Massey, hopes we can share a larger celebration of Fern’s life sometime in June, near her birthday.

PRAYER LIST – Please send updates to the prayer list or prayers you find helpful!

In Our Prayers: Please remember all who have died, particularly Bob Hughes’s friend Irene Fuoco, and US Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick. Pray for all who are injured, ill or infirm, including those dealing with COVID-19, especially The Reverends Robert and Jennifer Stiefel, and for Greg (Dawn MacKechnie’s friend), Adrian Pike, Beatrice Wright, Karen Brown, Karenina Armstrong , Rhonda, Santos Lara Sr., Kirsten Draba, Julia DiStefano, Denys Ruel, Marjorie Johnston, Steven Lassey, Elvira Lassey, Larry Carpenter, Alfred Panela, Jim & Margo Barbotsina, Rick Fiacco, Daniel Parada, Mark May, Stephanie Holdgate, Nancy and Mike Colombo, Valerie Neill, Bill Lambrokous, Margaret Makowski Saunders, Mark Carter & Family, Anne & Paul Makowski, Steve Blotcky and Rachel Osborne. We pray for: those who seek well-being for others, including Merrimack’s Police, Fire and Rescue personnel; all medical workers; and all the “essential workers.” We also remember Bishop Hirschfeld and the Episcopal Church in NH; our Prison Ministries; the St. Petersburg Men’s Ensemble; the Turkish Cultural Center; 4 Directions Outreach; our Food Pantries; Wheeler Memorial Chapel Trustees; our AA groups; Congregation Betenu, Qodesh Family Church & all of Merrimack’s Faith Communities.

A Prayer During Pandemic by The Most Rev. Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation. In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross, but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

→ For the Nation

Lord God Almighty, who has made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



The Annual Meeting of Faith Episcopal Church will be at 10:00 Sunday morning, January 24, 2021 via Zoom. **Nominations** for two members of the Bishop’s Committee are in order: Bob Hughes is completing two terms as clerk, and Rita MacAuslan has completed an unexpired term serving At Large. We also must elect two delegates and an alternate to Southern Convocation/ Diocesan Convention. Please contact Rita, Bob or me with nominations. **Annual Reports** need to be sent to vicar Pat **by Wednesday** this week are welcome on any aspect of our church’s life and ministry in 2020. **We also need your PLEDGE SHEETS so we can include your gift in the 2021 budget as it is presented to the Annual Meeting. Printed copies were included with your Christmas letter – an envelope addressed to the church and stamped was also included. If you need a new copy, please notify Vicar Pat.**





Take a look – These are the lessons for today, the 1st Sunday after the Epiphany. See that we have totally skipped to 30-year-old, adult Jesus –

The Collect

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.



Psalm 29

- 1 Ascribe to the LORD, you gods, *ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his Name; *worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; *
the LORD is upon the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice; *the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.
- 5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees; *the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
- 6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, *and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.
- 7 The voice of the LORD splits flames of fire; the voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
*the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 8 The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe *and strips the forests bare.
- 9 And in the temple of the LORD *all are crying, "Glory!"
- 10 The LORD sits enthroned above the flood; *the LORD sits enthroned for evermore.
- 11 The LORD shall give strength to his people; *he LORD shall give the blessing of peace.

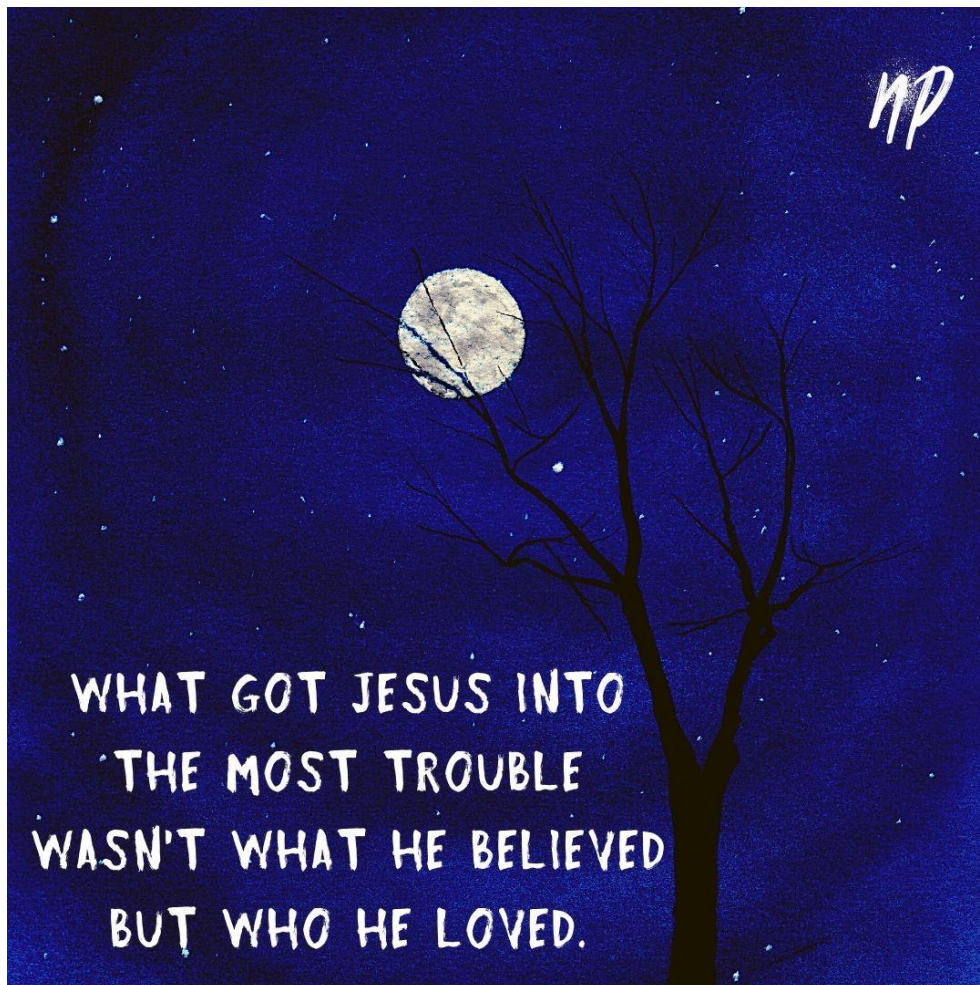
Acts 19:1-7

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— altogether there were about twelve of them.

The Gospel – Mark 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."



David Hayward's cartoon is used through purchased license for non-profits. (Note that his moniker "nakedpastor" has to do with a spiritual and theological stance and is not a threat to safe church concerns!)