



The Archangel's Voice

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church E-Newsletter

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2019

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The Gift of Giving

As we Anglo-Catholics fight desperately to faithfully observe the Advent Season, slowly but surely, our attention is being drawn to the Christmas Season and the gift giving and gift sharing ritual we normally engage in at this time of year. There is every likelihood that some of us will again allow the television commercials to entice us into believing that we have to buy expensive gifts to "prove" our love and affection for those we hold dear in our lives. I pray that prudence will be our guide, and not allow us to do anything that could result in the lowering of our credit scores! Actually, there are other gifts available to us, that if and when we share them with others, are guaranteed to bring the same degree of joy and satisfaction – if not more.

Some years ago, a parishioner shared with me, a potential gift list that I feel compelled to share with you as Christmas is now at the door. The first is, **the Gift of Care**. For lots of people the approaching Christmas Season could be a painfully lonely time. So just think for a moment of those who recently lost a loved one. What do you think Christmas will be for them this year, particularly if they live alone? An appropriate gift could be an invitation for a meal or a family celebration of yours. If we know of someone who have had this recent misfortune, do not let them eat alone this Christmas. Offer them the gift of Care.

The second is **the Secret Gift** idea, one that leaves the recipient wondering who thought so much about them, and then went off and got them something inexpensive and yet meaningful. We are prone to say that the cost of the gift matters not, but rather the thought behind it. Those for whom the secret gift would be ideal are often too ashamed to ask, but live on in hopeful expectation. Others sometimes let us know. In my last parish, I received almost daily requests as Christmas Day drew closer from those who claimed that they needed to surprise their children at Christmas. One woman went so far as to suggest if I didn't mind, I should adopt her and the seven children she cared for! They certainly could have used a gift, secret or otherwise, but large enough to go around.

Finally, there is **the Gift of Forgiveness** – yes, forgiveness I said. The writer Mary Southerland from whom I have culled some of the ideas above, suggests that the Christmas holidays sometimes has a way of resurrecting past hurts. So, the greatest gift we can give ourselves and maybe others, is the gift of forgiveness, for as we choose to forgive someone, in the process, we free ourselves as well. She tells the story of how liberating such a gift proved for her. She says that her husband sold one of their old cars to a gentleman who worked in the church's maintenance department. A payment plan was created, the title was transferred and then the purchaser just walked away, without paying a red cent!! Mary remained furious as the months went by, thinking only of this man who had "stolen" their car. To make matters worse, the man left their church for another, and went to work at a grocery store that she frequented often. It seemed like every time she entered the store he would be standing there, smiling from ear to ear, so the mere sight of him caused her blood to boil. The husband instead decided to give him the car, shredding the agreement he had made with this erstwhile brother in the Lord. Mary was not ready to do so until one day, as she purchased her groceries, she walked up to him and said, "I hope you like the car. My husband and I have decided to just give it to you as a gift." She walked away feeling free of her hate for this man, leaving him standing there open mouthed, yes, holding his guilt in his hands. Some gift!

Is there someone in your life who can use the gift of forgiveness this Christmas? You do have a few days to think about it.

Blessing and peace,

Fr. Hugh+



KEY DATES

December 1-24
ADVENT

December 25
THE NATIVITY OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST:
CHRISTMAS DAY

December 26
SAINT STEPHEN,
DEACON AND MARTYR

December 27
SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE
AND EVANGELIST

December 28
THE HOLY INNOCENTS

January 1
THE MOST HOLY NAME
OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST

January 6
THE EPIPHANY

January 18
THE CONFESSION OF
SAINT PETER
THE APOSTLE

Upcoming Events



December 22, 10:00 am
 Holy Eucharist;
 Celebration of our Rector's
 41st Anniversary of
 Ordination to the
 Diaconate

December 23
6:00 – 6:30 pm
 Capital Campaign Evening
 Prayer

December 24, 10:00 pm
 Christmas Eve Service

December 27, 12:15 pm
 Feast of St. John, Apostle,
 Holy Eucharist

December 28, 10:00 am
 Feast of Holy Innocents

January 1, 12 Noon
 New Year Service
 followed by
 Community Potluck

January 3, 6:00 pm
 First Friday Prayer Service
 Historic Mt. Zion Primitive
 Baptist Church

January 4, 10:30 am
 Canon Pinder's 60th Year
 Ordination Celebration
 The Cathedral of St. Luke
 Orlando, FL

January 8, 6:00/6:30 pm
 Wednesday Bible Study/
 First Wednesday Supper at
 Kearney Center

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Around the Parish



2019 Thanksgiving Food Drive

The gift of giving began at **Thanksgiving**. Two dozen boxes packed with non-perishable foods and baked goods were assembled and distributed. Each box also contained a gift card for \$25, 21 of which were donated by a very generous benefactor.

December 7 – Riley House Museum Annual Rock-A-Thon



This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Rock-A-Thon, created in 1999 by The Tallahassee Links, Inc. to raise funds for The Riley House Museum. St Michael was pleased to continue its support of this event by signing a number of parishioners to "rock."

Collage (L) shows the decorated St. Michael rocker and two members "rocking."

ADVENT COMES...



December 8 – Second Sunday of Advent

Camille, Claire and Colton read lessons while Abigail lights the candle of **PEACE**.



December 15 – Third Sunday of Advent.

Nicolette, Camille and Omar read lessons while Hollis lights the candle of **JOY**.



Little drummer boys and girls perform during the offertory selection.

Liturgy of Advent Lessons and Carols



L: Sean, French Horn and Constance, Viola play *O Little Town of Bethlehem* after the reading of the Fourth Lesson.

Below: The Church School bell-ringers perform *There Will Be Joy* after the Fifth Lesson is read.

