



December 2010

NEWS FROM EMMANUEL

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The Rev. Tom Sinning, Deacon

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT: Reflections by the Rev. Kathryn Jeffrey

Dear Friends,

In Advent, we are preparing to enter the Christmas season in which we hear and see the traditional Christmas wish echoing in store music, on Christmas cards, and our scripture lessons, "Peace on Earth, good will towards men." Shall we take a moment to reflect on this wish for peace as we express it in our liturgy each week?

The custom of offering the Sign of Peace, sometimes called "the Kiss of Peace," is Biblically mandated. Some variant of the statement "Greet one another with a holy kiss" is found in Romans 16:16, I Corinthians 16:20, II Corinthians 13:12, I Thessalonians 5:26, and I Peter 5:14. Reflecting this apostolic teaching, the custom of passing the peace was established in Christian Eucharistic liturgies very early on. At first, it was reserved only for mature, fully professed Christians; new converts still preparing for baptism (the "catechumens") were dismissed before the peace was passed.

St. Augustine preached about the custom extensively:

"After [the Lord's prayer], the 'Peace be with you' is said, and the Christians embrace one another with the holy kiss. This is a sign of peace; as the lips indicate, let peace be made in your conscience, that is, when your lips draw near to those of your brother, do not let your heart withdraw from his. Hence, these are great and powerful sacraments."

Augustine's comment reflects the placement of the Sign of Peace after the Lord's Prayer, a location carried over in Roman Catholic churches to this day. Although our Episcopal liturgies place it earlier, just before the offertory, the purpose is the same: symbolically expressing our charity and good will towards each other as preparation to receiving the Prince of Peace in our mouths, and in our hearts.

Particularly in smaller churches, sometimes the Sign of Peace evolves into an extended time for catching up with each other. It is lovely and cheering to hear things like "Glad to see that you've gotten over the flu!" or "How was your vacation?" Still, it's important not to skip over the prime purpose of the Sign of Peace: affirming our intention to live in love and charity with our neighbors by wishing them God's peace, deep shalom, the very peace of God that passes understanding. What an amazing thing! Such a privilege! Why would we want to trade that for a mere "Good morning" or "Hi, how are you?" We can do both!

So--let's embrace the symbol of peacemaking as Christmas approaches. Let's yearn for peace, work for peace, and in those ancient words, wish each other peace, with all our

hearts. The peace of the Lord be with you always [and also with you!]

In Christ,

Kathryn+



From the Bible...the birth of Jesus.

Did you know that the birth of Jesus is recorded in only two on the four Gospels: Matthew and Luke, and both stories are quite different.

In the first chapter of Matthew we have the angel appearing to Joseph in a dream saying, *“Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins,”* and it is in this Gospel that three wise men are sent by King Herod to find Jesus.

In the first chapter of Mark, the angel Gabriel is sent to Mary before she is pregnant, and ties her to Elizabeth who is pregnant with John the Baptist. In Mark, we have shepherds in the field to whom an angel appears, but no wise men.



Both Gospels do agree that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Mark, the barest of the Gospels, doesn't see fit to include Jesus' birth at all.

Then John begins his Gospel with the greatest poem of all time: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the word became flesh and dwelt among us...”*

From conversations with Laird Barber



Thanksgiving for the Thanksgiving Feast Volunteers!

Thank you to all those who worked to make our Thanksgiving Feast so enjoyable, including turkey roasters, dressing stuffers, potato mashers, gravy makers, salad tossers, pie bakers, and all the kitchen cleaner-uppers! Thanks to all 79 persons who came to partake! Special thanks to Mary Lu Rich, who led us in Evening Prayer, and fed us with God's word before our wonderful feast downstairs. We welcome Mary Lu, who has completed a Masters in Pastoral Ministry at Trinity Seminary in Pennsylvania.

Thanksgiving for
Thanksgiving
At Emmanuel
On November 17th



**Letters to Emmanuel
From Sheila Stanton:**

Hello my dear Emmanuel friends,
I will be thinking of you and
wishing you a fine Thanksgiving
feast. I am becoming a member
of Grace Episcopal church here
where they have 3 Godly play
classes. I hope to learn a lot
before May. My love to all of
you.

From Mary Baker:

Wish I could be there. Say
hello to all my friends for me.
Bestest, Mary Jean



Mary Sinning at the sink!

Josie Heegaard at the table!



Welcome Wendy Zander, our new newsletter editor!

Wendy has graciously agreed to assist with putting the newsletters and bulletins together. Thanks, Wendy: You may continue to forward newsletter articles, recipes, and updates to rector@rea-alp.com or you may contact Wendy directly at wendyjzander@yahoo.com.

DeAnn Runge will continue as church secretary in all other respects - including e-mailing out announcements and newsletters, and serving as a clearinghouse for members' contact information. She's the go-to gal if your e-mail address or other contact information has changed or if you can't locate your church directory and you need a phone number! Thank you DeAnn for all your good work.

JoEllen Doebbert, Sr. Warden