

E-pistle



Saint Andrew's Parish
Kent, Connecticut

This Week & Weekend at St Andrew's

St Andrew's Church

1 North Main Street
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Kent, CT 06757

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(facsimile)
st.andrew.kent
@snet.net

Visit St Andrew's
website at
www.standrewskentct.org

The Episcopal
Church in
Connecticut
www.ctepiscopal.org

Service Schedule

-Sunday-
Holy Eucharist
8.30 a.m. & 10.30 a.m.
Rite I at 8.30, First Sundays;
Healing Service at 8.30,
Third Sundays

-Wednesday-
Holy Eucharist
6.00 p.m.

-Friday-
Prayer & Meditation
5.30 p.m.

*Holy
Days as announced.*

Thursday, 2 January

A.A. at 7.30 a.m. (Parish House)
Parish Office Open 10.00 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Al. Anon. at 7.00 p.m. (Vestry Room)

Friday, 3 January

Prayer & Meditation at 5.30 p.m.

Saturday, 4 January

Choir Rehearsal at 9.30 a.m. (Choir Room)

Sunday, 5 January

Second Sunday after Christmas

Holy Eucharist at 8.30 a.m.

Choir Rehearsal at 9.30 a.m.

Holy Eucharist at 10.30 a.m.

Coffee & ...at 11.30 a.m.

Best of Baroque Concert at 4.00 p.m. (Nave)

Tuesday, 7 January

Parish Office Open 10.00 - 2 p.m.

Wednesday, 8 January

Holy Eucharist at 6.00 p.m.

A.A. for Women at 7.00 p.m.

Calendar

Sunday, 5 January
Sherman Chamber
Ensemble
presents
Best of Baroque
(Nave)
4.00 p.m.

Sunday, 26 January
Annual Meeting
11.30 a.m.
(Nave)
Snow day: 2 Feb.

Twelve Step Groups

Wednesdays
7:00 p.m.
A.A. for Women

Thursdays
A.A. at 7.30 a.m.
(Great Room)
Al-Anon. at 7.00 p.m.
(Vestry Room)

Parish Staff

Thomas W. Holcombe,
Organist & Director of
Choirs

Margie O'Brien,
Director of the Children's
Choir

Heather Scofield,
Parish Administrator

Joan I. Cassel
Financial Secretary

Bill McLaren,
Sexton

Randy Osolin,
Vergers

From the Senior Warden

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Over the past couple of weeks, you have heard from James with updates on pledges for "the every member canvass," which are coming in slowly. As Treasurer, he gives us amounts and participation numbers compared with years past.

My sentiments and concerns are of a different nature. While the dollars are important to budgeting and continuing our church's ministry, I am focused on pledges as a concrete measure of our commitment to St. Andrew's. Right now, we are in a period of uncertainty, which is exactly the time when we need to reaffirm our support for our parish. Pledging (of any amount) is our promise to sustain this cornerstone of our lives. Because of what it represents, for the same reason robust pledge participation is an important parish asset that priest applicants consider.

I realize that many of you give generously without making formal pledges, but I ask you please this year to make the statement that a pledge makes. For those of you who are unsure about the future of St. Andrew's and have not yet pledged, please consider that we can't sit back and let our future happen to us. We must make it happen by demonstrating our support for our church.

A pledge is not binding, rather it is an intention of giving. More than anything it is a sign of your commitment, love and faith in St. Andrew's.

Happy New Year,
Charmian

[Altar Flower Memorials for 2020](#)

Please click the link below if you would like to make requests for Altar Flowers Memorials in 2020.

The Altar Guild requests a \$50 donation for each Sunday, but any amount greater or less is gratefully received.

[Altar Flower Memorial 2020](#)

**Annual Meeting
26 January**

***THE ANNUAL MEETING
of
ST ANDREW'S PARISH
will be held on***

SUNDAY, 26 JANUARY at 11.30 a.m.

The purpose of the Meeting is to receive reports, to receive the Budget for 2020, to elect Officers and the members of the Vestry Class of 2023, and to transact any other such business as may properly come before the Meeting.

There will be light refreshments in the Parish House at the conclusion of the Meeting.

Snow date: 2 February at the same hour.

Ordination of Tara B. Shepley

By the grace of God

*The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens
Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Church in
Connecticut
will ordain*

Tara Boyd Shepley

*to the Sacred Order of Priests
in Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic
Church*

***Thursday, the sixteenth day of January
in the year of our Lord 2020
7:00 o'clock in the evening***

***St. George's Church
Tucker Hill Road and 188
Middlebury, Connecticut 06762***

*Your prayers and presence are requested
Clergy: Red Stoles ~ Reception to Follow*

Refreshments after the 10.30 a.m. Liturgy

There is a sign-up sheet on the pass-through into the kitchen for volunteers to be responsible for both brewing the coffee and bringing light refreshments.

Included with the sign-up sheet are Instructions on "How to do Coffee Hour" with where to find supplies and instructions for coffee brewing...makes it really easy!!

During the time of transition between rectors, Coffee Hour is an especially important time for members of the parish to be together: please help by bringing in some coffee cakes, cookies, &..., to make the social time more enjoyable!

The Prayer List During the Time of Transition

During the transition time, Heather Scofield, our Administrator, will be maintaining the parish Prayer List. Please call her and ask her to add names to the list, remembering to tell her at which service --8.30 or 10.30-- you would like the prayers offered. If possible, please indicate for how she should keep the name(s) on the List. And please remember to let her know when she may remove the name(s).

*You may also write to Heather at
st.andrew.kent@snet.net*

Please be sure to provide her with a telephone number so that she may be able to ask if she has any questions.

We remember the faithful departed during the week after their deaths, and on those Sundays when you ask for their names to be included.

A Prayer for Change

This prayer has been used several times since this summer at Eucharist and several of you have asked that we reprint it again. It was developed by The Women's Prayer Circle of St John's Church in North Guilford, as a reflection on the state of the world and how to bring God's love. Their hope is, as more people and churches use and share it, the prayer will create an energy that will be a force for loving change.

A Prayer for Change

*Loving God,
You have made the whole of human life in your image;
each one of us shaped in love.
Your goodness is ever-present within us all.
But, there is so much evil and pain in our world,
it comes at us from every direction.
Teach us how to rediscover Your love within us,
to use that love as a force for good.
help us to turn our hearts toward the world in hope,
Praying for each other, regarding each other as treasure.
Join us all together in prayer, that we might be the light which
darkness can never overcome;
through Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen.*

Homily

Christmas Eve at St. Andrew's Church, Kent

The Rev. Stephen B. Klots

Luke 2: 1-20

In the Name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

My Christmas break from South Kent School began a mere six days ago, which was a bit later than usual, and I began it by doing that most obvious of tasks: I made a "to do" list.

I am guessing that I am not the only one here tonight who at some point made a "to do" list to bring order to the busyness of this holiday season and life in general. I'm sure there were some

common items on our lists. I, of course, had to make a list of all the people for whom I needed to buy gifts since I'm not the sort of person who goes Christmas shopping in July. Maybe that was on your list. I had to at least get started on sending out Christmas cards—also a common “to do” list item at this time of the year. However, as chaplain, I had to plan for the school's celebration of Christmas in the chapel this afternoon, and I had to plan and shop for the potluck dinner that we held after the service this evening before I came here. Getting ready for St. Andrew's was also on my list—coming up with something to say in this moment that wasn't complete blather. I even had some more mundane tasks on my lists—items not at all in keeping with the holiday spirit such as going to the DMV—that was fun—and having minor knee surgery this past Friday to take care of a torn meniscus—tasks I did not have time to do when school was in session. I guarantee you the DMV would not have been impressed if I had said I was too busy during this holiday season to register my car, and could I come back in January. I had to knock that one off of my list.

Overall, it was a long “to do” list, but now, thanks to it, and the good order it brought to my life at this chaotic time of the year, I'm pretty much on top of things. I've struck most items off the list, although I still have some Christmas cards to write, and now I'm ready to celebrate Christmas in a good and orderly manner. I'm ready for the holidays.

In a way, isn't that something we all strive to do as good and responsible citizens and persons all the time? It's not just a Christmas thing. Whether it's by a digital planner or a good old fashioned “to do” list, we want to be on top of our lives and our responsibilities at any time of the year. We want things to go according to plan. We yearn for good order rather than chaos in our lives, and we take measures to make sure that our lives run smoothly—that we know what's going on and have no surprises. Furthermore, we have a sense that, if we work very hard, if we strike enough items off some sort of cosmic “to do” list, then somehow all will be well. So we follow the news, we strive to live as engaged citizens, we vote, we pay our taxes, we get to church, we give to charities, and we make sure our houses are kept reasonably clean and the lawn is tidy and orderly. We are responsible. And, if we do a particularly good job, there is a temptation to measure and even boast about our success at living good and productive and orderly lives. We post images of them on Facebook and Twitter and Instagram, and wait for the likes to pour in, telling us that our efforts at productivity, success, and good order matter.

I mention this because here's a bit of this going on in tonight's Gospel. Says Luke, "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria." There is, in short, a census going on—the Emperor wants to know exactly who is living in his empire—and where—because that will help him keep good order in the empire. Even—or perhaps especially—the emperor wants life to be orderly in his realm. In consequence, there at the top of the "to do" list of Quirinius the governor is the registration of all persons in their places of origin. I am sure Joseph wasn't too thrilled to be told that he and his betrothed wife Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, but it was all for the sake of keeping good order in the empire. The Romans issued the decree, and Joseph had to do what he had to do as a resident of the Roman Empire.

Isn't it striking, though, that God came to Bethlehem—and into the lives of Mary and Joseph and the shepherds—not because of this attempt at good order, but despite it? These were people whose lives, in a way, were not going according to plan. These were people who, in one way or another, were living in turmoil or darkness.

First there's Mary. She thought she had things figured out. She was betrothed to Joseph—and undoubtedly she had a vision of how her life would turn out. Then came that unplanned visit from the Angel Gabriel and his very surprising news that that she would conceive and bear a son—that the Holy Spirit would come to her, and that the child would be called Holy, the Son of God. That certainly was not on her "to do" list. I invite you to imagine the trepidation that was going through Mary's mind as she with Joseph approached Bethlehem. She was a young woman who clearly was pregnant before Joseph took her as his wife. Yes, she was full of grace, and she had assented to Gabriel's news. "Let it be to me according to your word," she had said. But what would the people in Bethlehem—relatives—say about her? As a woman, who would believe her and what Gabriel had said to her? Those fears—and the edict that she would have to travel to Bethlehem so late in pregnancy—must have been an emotional and physical burden.

And then there's Joseph, the simple carpenter from Nazareth. He undoubtedly had a plan too—to get married, raise a family, and enjoy life. Then along came the news that his betrothed Mary was pregnant, and then he had his own visitation by an angel. Joseph, we are told in the Gospel according to Matthew, was a just man, and he accepted the angel's pronouncement that Mary's child was of the Holy Spirit—but what was going through

his mind as they set out for Bethlehem? Resentment? Anger? Confusion? Even so, he undoubtedly worked hard to make the mandated trip to Bethlehem as comfortable as possible for Mary, but, when they got to Bethlehem, all they found were No Vacancy signs. No one had a room for them, nowhere could they find a place to sleep, and so they ended up beside a manger, presumably in a stinky, smelly, noisy barn. So much for the best laid plans of Joseph.

And, finally, there's the shepherds—the nameless, anonymous shepherds living marginal lives on the edge of society—sleeping out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. They were on the opposite end of the spectrum from the emperor Augustus and Quirinius. They had no power, and they barely had any standing in society. They literally lived with the animals. Staring up into the stars at night, did they wonder if their lives had any purpose at all beyond keeping marauders from stealing their sheep? Did they have any plans at all beyond getting up in the morning and counting their sheep?

Mary and Joseph—in the eyes of the world, they were nothing, and any “to do” list they had for life had long been torn to shreds. But it was to them, and not to Augustus and Quirinius—not to those who had all their affairs properly in good order—that the Holy Child, the Son of God was born, and Mary wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in that manger because there was no room for them—and him—in the inn. And those shepherds—they too, in the eyes of the world, were nothing, but unto them the angel proclaimed, “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” “Unto you,” the angel said—unto you poor, lost, forgotten shepherds—you shepherds who wonder about life and wander about the fields at night. God has not forgotten you—this is good news for you too.

The Christmas story that we hear tonight, that we ponder tonight, that we give thanks for tonight, is a celebration of the in-breaking of God's grace into our realm, a grace that spoke to the nameless shepherds sleeping outside on the open ground, watching their flocks—shepherds who in their anonymity might have wondered why they were even born. That grace proclaimed to them that they had a savior, a purpose, a love beyond words telling them that they mattered to God, even if forgotten by society. We celebrate a grace that spoke to and strengthened the unwed mother who had said Yes to an almost unfathomable burden. That grace inspired her to hold in her heart the good news brought by those shepherds, that this indeed was the savior the Messiah. We celebrate the grace that inspired Joseph

to trust that angel, to stay true to his betrothed Mary, and to vow, when danger would arise, to protect that Holy Child Jesus as his own.

And we celebrate, ponder, and give thanks for that same grace, which says to us, here tonight, much as it was proclaimed to the shepherds, “You matter. I love you. I am here with you. I will strengthen you. I am a savior for you too.” For the fact of the matter is that, despite our “to do” lists, despite our constant attempts to live good and orderly lives, responsible lives, well-thought-out lives, aren’t we much of the time a lot like Mary and Joseph and the shepherds? Like them, do we not all sometimes feel lost and forgotten? Like the shepherds, do we not sometimes wonder if our lives have any meaning? Like Mary and Joseph, when our lives are thrown into disarray and our plans are disrupted, do we not get caught up in anger and fear and resentment? Despite our smiles and our confident posts on Instagram and Facebook—if we do social media—aren’t we more often an inward mess of self-doubt? Even worse, do we not fall short of being the people God calls us to be? Tonight that angel says to the shepherds and us, with all of our faults and flaws and doubts and fears, “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Sometime after Christmas, I will undoubtedly sit down and write out a “to do” list of all the things I have to do before the school year resumes in January—and I suspect I’m not the only one here tonight who will go back to relying on a “to do” list to keep a good and orderly life. That indeed is well and good, for there is nothing wrong with having plans, with keeping order, with anticipating the future. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with doing all the things that a good and responsible citizen does as part of his or her good and responsible life. But those plans and lists are not enough, so, tonight, let us heed the angel who proclaims the good news of our salvation—the news that God is with us and loves us in this holy child Jesus, in good times and bad. Let us remember Mary and Joseph and those shepherds, and how much we are like them. Let us ponder and celebrate the grace that came among us in that lowly manger in Bethlehem, a grace that can sustain us in all the hardships of life, even when our plans and our lives seem to be falling apart. Let us give thanks for the grace of that Holy Child Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. And having been blessed with this grace, let us go forth into the world to proclaim with the shepherds the good news of salvation and to embody that grace as a blessing to others in a hurting world—for unto us is born this day in the City of David a savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Amen

The Lections this Week

**The Second Sunday
after Christmas**

5 January

Year A

Jermiah 31.7-14;

Psalm 84;

Ephesians 1.3-6, 15-19a

Luke 2.41-52

Music in the Nave

**Sherman Chamber Ensemble
presents:**

Best of Baroque

Ring in the New Year!

*Music for piano, flute, oboe, and
strings*

**Meet and Greet to follow
Sunday, 5 January**

4.00 p.m.

\$30 adults

\$25 for seniors and students

tickets at the door

or reserve at 860.355.5930

or info@shermanchamberensemble.org

Announcements

A request from those who count the collection monies:

The counters ask us to help them by tagging our cheques so that they are certain as to how to receive them: as Pledge, as donations to the Capital Fund, donations to the Discretionary or Mission & Outreach Funds, etc.

Please remember that the loose offering on the first Sundays of the month

... is given to the Parish Discretionary Fund for those in any kind of need.

The Quality Thrift Shop

... at The First Congregational Church is very much an effort of the whole of our community to provide affordable clothing and household necessities to those who need them. Members of St Andrew's Parish and of Sacred Heart Church help out there, and more help is urgently needed! Whatever hours you can give will be appreciated, and so please call 860.927.3287 if you are able to assist!