

# The Messenger

Advent, Christmastide & Epiphany Issue

## The Church of the Messiah

114 North Third Street at Madison

Pulaski, Tennessee 38478

The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee

John C. Bauerschmidt, Bishop

*The mission of the Church of the Messiah is to be a growing witness of  
our Faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of the community  
through worship and sacrament in the Episcopal tradition.*

### Our leadership:

- ✘ The Rev. Jess Reeves, Priest-in-Charge
- ✘ Pat Woolard, Music Director
- ✘ Senior Warden, Dr. Ken Vickers (18)
- ✘ Junior Warden, Dr. Grace Meier (20)
- ✘ Secretary to the Parish, Marquenda Dunnivant
- ✘ Clerk of the Vestry, Sandy Ring Hall
- ✘ Treasurer, Kristi Watson
- ✘ Vestry members: Pat Dunnivant (19), Angela Hallmark (19), Solon Holt (20),  
Hatherine Steever (19), Rich Woolard (18).

## MAKING SENSE OF SALVATION

One of the first and most sympathetic questions that greets my settling in to every pastoral cure is not really one of the more difficult ones, but it surely smarts. It is the concern for the scope of salvation:

*Is Jesus the only way to God?*

*Are those who have not heard of Him damned?*

*Are those who reject Him as the Son of God damned?*

The answers, to the best of my poor expression but basically passing along a Biblical worldview, are, *yes, no* and *when?*

*Yes.* The language of the Bible, as well as reason and Tradition, all within a Christian context, support the contention that Jesus Christ is the Way, the truth, and the life. We believe that God acted once for all humanity and for all time in the Incarnation and Redemption of Jesus. This act of recreation had to be done in time and space to redeem time and space; it had to be done in mankind to save mankind. That it happened that salvation issues through the Jews is not at all to their credit or to the diminishment of any other language, race or culture. In view of the repeated insistence in Scripture that God takes what is weak and lowly and fallible to show how great his power truly is should make anyone who has ears to hear know that such abolishes all semblance of meritorious preference attached to the Jews, or the Christians.

*No.* Then how can it not prove damning to have failed to ever hear of Him? Well, if your salvation depends on your sense of hearing or where you were born, you really are in dreadful jeopardy, but surely God who created all is not of that mind. Believing in a God who created and sustains has always seemed to me to render this question rather silly. Surely God will not damn those who cannot, owing to limitations or coercions of whatever sort, choose to love and obey God. Although we have no crystal-clear sense, when we say that Jesus descended to the dead, into Hell, after Resurrection and before Ascension, that means God intends to redeem those who have not had the opportunity to meet Christ. So, for those who do not yet know Christ, we can safely leave them in God's hands; He will find a way and a space in every heart to

offer Himself. This the apostles understood: *I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ... and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* <sup>1 Timothy 2</sup>

*When.* Perhaps we each and everyone have a chance at some point to make a choice: my will or God's will; am I the most important person of my universe or is God, and my neighbor? Whose love can I not live without? God's? or someone else's? Like a child or mate or.... The Bible states that when we all, every human being past, present, future, finally come before the throne of God we will find Jesus there. If then we choose to reject God's ways and means of salvation when we have had the gracious opportunity God will surely allow, then God will respect our dignity and integrity and leave us to our choice. If *my will be done* is my last heart's determination, then I and I alone will have removed myself from the orbit of love and life of God and grace.

If I am wrong in this, God have mercy on my ignorance and misreading of what seems patently obvious in God's Word and has been the essential understanding of the Church for generations. If anyone of us must finally have it our way and refuse to accept God's offered relief, that may prove a hurdle God shall graciously, though with regret beyond our comprehension, forego. But if the free offer of salvation means anything, and our choices amount to anything, then there must finally be a Heaven and a Hell, I fear, I fear, as it is a most serious and fearsome thought. A dreadful prospect which is better contemplated as little as possible but only foolishly denied.

**JLR**



DECEMBER 24, CHRISTMAS EVE  
SERVICE, CAROLING 10:30 PM, HOLY  
EUCARIST 11:00 PM.

ANNUAL MEETING, SUNDAY, JANUARY 27,  
FOLLOWING CHURCH SERVICE.

### ADVENT Prayers for families

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ.  
 He is Emmanuel, the hope of all peoples;  
 He is the wisdom that teaches and guides us;  
 He is the Savior of every nation.

O God, let your blessing come upon our family gathered here before you.

*If you have candles and/or a wreath....*

Bless us (+) and our advent wreath (+) [light candle(s)]

May the light that shines forth from them illumine our way as we journey  
 towards Christmas;  
 may the light that shines forth from them illumine our lives as we wait in hope  
 for the birth of the Christ-child.

We ask this through Christ who is the Light of the World.  
**Amen.**

### **Studies in Jesus according to Luke and in the Old Testament for Advent and Epiphany**

Wednesday evenings, 5:45-6:45, November 28, December 5, 12,& 19, we will have a special **Advent Bible study** of an introduction to Luke's Gospel, the Gospel highlighted in the Church year that begins Advent 1 [December 2]. Make plans to attend as part of your seasonal preparation!

Beginning January 9, 2019, and continuing for 6 weeks we will have a very special Bible study on how Jesus Christ is prophesied, active, and anticipated in the grand sweep of the Old Testament. This should make for a deeper and more powerful appreciation of Lent, which starts on March 6, Ash Wednesday, and Easter, its culmination on April 21, 2018.

### **Season's Greetings....**

During this holiday season of thanksgiving, remembrance, and giving, please take time to carefully consider your annual pledge to help the Church of the Messiah to further God's Kingdom. While we give thanks for our blessings, honor the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and celebrate the coming of a new year, let us remember also our mission to be "a growing witness of our faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of community through the worship and sacramental ministry in the Episcopal tradition, "and that "as a community of faith we seek to grow spiritually, in our Lord Jesus Christ, through worship, study, fellowship and outreach." Let us not forget to give back for the blessings we have received.

Happy Holidays,  
 Ken Vickers, Senior Warden

### **Acolytes...play with matches....**

The ministry of **acolytes** exists at the heart of worship. In any parish, the primary duty of an acolyte is to serve God in His Church, particularly by assisting the priest in whatever way he prefers in the conduct of Sunday service. The parish is currently in need of several more acolytes to schedule, as we intend, once a month. The requirements are few but indispensable: the acolyte and/or family must worship here regularly, i.e., often; the acolyte must be 14 years old or approaching within 3 months that age; the acolyte must attend a training session by the priest in charge and then be scheduled for the first few months assisting an already veteran acolyte as understudy. Please consider this important leadership role and commend it to your children.

Thank you.

Fr. Reeves



#### *Messiah Ministries*

- *Morning Prayer, Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m.*
- *Sunday, Holy Eucharist, 10 a.m.; refreshments following service*
- *Wednesday, 7 p.m., Holy Communion*
- *Seasonal Bible Study, Wednesday, 5:45 p.m.*
- *Vestry meeting, Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.*
- *Luncheon, Second Sunday of the month, except special occasions*
- *Nursing Home Ministry: First Tuesday, NHC, 10:30 a.m.; Second Tuesday, Keestone, 10 a.m.; Third Wednesday, Ivy Crest, 10 a.m.; Fourth Wednesday, Meadowbrook, 10 a.m.*
- *ECW First Thursday, 11:30 a.m., lunch at various locations.*
- *Monthly Adult Christian Book Club, First Sunday of the month, 4:30-5:30 p.m.*
- *Choir Practice, Sunday, 11:30 a.m.*



### **Altar Guild....**

The service of the Altar, for us Evangelicals, The Lord's Table, is one of the greatest honors among ministries, to actually serve the Lord. Would you like to join, be schooled, and serve once a month? Contact Catherine Dunnivant, [cldunnivant@gmail.com](mailto:cldunnivant@gmail.com), if so.



The more you give, the more comes back to you, because God is the greatest giver in the universe, and He won't let you out give Him. Go ahead and try. See what happens.

*From Randy Alcorn*

**RFD Schedule:** December 20., Thursday, 6:00 p.m. sorting/repacking food, Sharp Annex; December 22, Saturday, 8:30 a.m., distribution, **Bridgeforth Middle School, Pulaski**; January 17, Thursday, 6:00 p.m., sorting/repacking food, Sharp Annex; January 19, Saturday, 8:30 a.m., distribution, **Sarge's Restaurant, Frankewing**; February 21, Thursday, 6:00 p.m., sorting/repacking food, Sharp Annex; February 23, Saturday, 8:30 a.m., distribution, **Elkton School, Elkton**.

**SERVING OUR WORSHIP---=---THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH:**  
PLEASE CONTACT ME IF THIS ORDER IS INCONVENIENT OR MIGHT BENEFIT  
FROM YOUR ADVICE. JLR

**December 2:** Acolyte: Logan Dubberley; Chalice bearer/reader: Mary Dubberley; Altar Guild: Ken & Mendy Vickers; Greeter: Angela Hallmark; Flowers: Pat & Catherine Dunnivant in thanksgiving.

**December 9:** Acolyte: Jackson Hughes; Chalice bearer/reader: Ken Vickers; Altar Guild: Marqueda Dunnivant/Connie Baker; Greeter: Hatherine Steever.

**December 16:** Acolyte: Logan Dubberley; Chalice bearer/reader: Cathy Roberts; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Grace Meier.

**December 23:** Acolyte: Jackson Hughes; Chalice bearer/reader: John Hughes; Altar Guild: Catherine Dunnivant/Rebecca Billard; Greeter: Rich Woolard.

**December 24, Christmas Eve Service:** Acolytes: Jackson Hughes, Logan Dubberley, Walker Hoover; Chalice bearer/reader: Andy Hoover; Altar Guild: All Altar Guild Members; Greeter: Pat Dunnivant.

**December 30:** Acolyte: TBA; Chalice bearer/reader: Rich Woolard; Altar Guild: Ken & Mendy Vickers; Greeter: Solon Holt; Flowers: Joe & Patti Stagner in thanksgiving.

**January 6, Epiphany:** Acolyte: Jackson Hughes; Chalice bearer/reader: Teresa Hughes; Altar Guild: Marqueda Dunnivant/Connie Baker; Greeter: Ken Vickers; Flowers: Pat & Catherine Dunnivant in memory of Martha Derryberry.

**January 13:** Acolyte: Logan Dubberley; Chalice bearer/reader: Mary Dubberley; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Angela Hallmark; Flowers: Rich Woolard in thanksgiving.

**January 20:** Acolyte: Jackson Hughes; Chalice bearer/reader: Rich Woolard; Altar Guild: Catherine Dunnivant/Rebecca Billard; Greeter: Grace Meier; Flowers: Marqueda Dunnivant in thanksgiving.

**January 27:** Acolyte: TBA; Chalice bearer/reader: Andy Hoover; Altar Guild: Marqueda Dunnivant/Connie Baker; Greeter: Pat Dunnivant; Flowers: Grace Meier in thanksgiving.

**February 3:** Acolyte: Logan Dubberley; Chalice bearer/reader: John Hughes; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Hatherine Steever; Flowers: Rich Woolard in celebration.

**February 10:** Acolyte: Jackson Hughes; Chalice bearer/reader: Teresa Hughes; Altar Guild: Catherine Dunnivant/Rebecca Billard; Greeter: Hatherine Steever; Flowers: Joann Bryant in thanksgiving.

**February 17:** Acolyte: TBA; Chalice bearer/reader: Cathy Roberts; Altar Guild: Marqueda Dunnivant/Connie Baker; Greeter: new vestry member; Flowers: Kristi & Dickey Watson in thanksgiving.

**February 24:** Acolyte: Jackson Hughes; Chalice bearer/reader: Ken Vickers; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: new vestry member; Flowers: Grace Meier in thanksgiving.

*Worship is our rehearsal for how to live today and how to glorify God in heaven. It is not merely a Sunday morning exercise meant to make us feel good. —Rosaria Butterfield*

***INCARNATION, and everything that proceeds from it***

**INCARNATION** is a big word, and not enough Christians either use it or know in depth what it means. It does not refer to the same thing as the Virgin Birth, though the latter is the means God chose by which the Incarnation took place. **Incarnation refers to the choices and acts of a pre-existent divine being, namely the Son of God, to become fully, truly human without ceasing to be fully, truly divine.** Divinity is not something Jesus acquired later in life, a shift in divine strategy, or even assumed before or after his death and Resurrection. From everlasting He has always been the divine Son of God, even before he became “Jesus,” a human being. Strictly speaking the name “Jesus” only applies to a human being, but before and after it is so much more, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow. It is the name the Son of God assumed as he became a human being in the womb of Mary, a name which He maintains now as He continues to be essentially human while fully divine.

Incarnation is not something that human beings can fully get their mental calipers around. It involves miracle and mystery far above our mentality, even for the brightest and most saintly. Even so, that doesn't mean however that God cannot give us some accurate understanding, and because He does just that, it is important that we attend and reverence it. As John Donne the great Anglican poet once said, *'twas much that we were made like God long before, but that God should be made like us, much more.'*

When trying to get some purchase on this mystery, choose to use the phrase **divine condescension**. If there is going to be a corporate merger between a divine being and a human nature, then the divine side of the equation must necessarily initiate such, experiencing certain limitations, e.g., growing, in order to be

truly and fully human. The next question is.... what does it mean to be fully human? It means being mortal in transition to the immortality intended by the Designer, to have limitations of time and space and knowledge and power. Jesus knew all these traits backwards and forwards. He was even tempted like us in every respect, yet resisted sin. What we should deduce from this is that sinning was never inevitably part of being truly human. Yes, it is a trait of all fallen humans, but no, it is not how God made us in the first place. It is our unfortunate add-on!

St. Paul, in a hymnic portion of Philippians (2) describes the Incarnation as follows:

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

*<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

*<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

*<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,*

*<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

*<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* <sup>NIV</sup>

While the hymn is clear that the Son was ‘in very nature God; at the same time he chose in becoming human not to take advantage of his divine prerogatives. What were those? I call them the Omni's -- omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, i.e., all knowing, all powerful, all present. What does it mean, though, for the Son of God to

ut aside all of that, so to speak, to not draw on his omni-competencies?

Look at the temptation scenes in Lk. 4 and Mt. 4, which always begin our Lenten observance. Now a moment's reflection will show that these are no mere normal temptations. The Devil is saying 'if you are the divine Son of God, then turn these stones into bread'. Jesus was tempted to act in such a way that he would obliterate his true humanity. Jesus resisted temptation using the same two resources we also have—the Spirit of God and the Word of God. You notice Jesus doesn't say to the Devil 'I'm God, God can't be tempted', ergo I am blowing you off and ignoring you.' No, Jesus' temptations were quite real, and he could have failed the tests. They were real because Jesus was truly and fully real in the way we are.

Notice however that that is not all there is to this Christ hymn. It says not only that He stripped himself of His divine prerogatives, but even more, He became a slave, a servant among humans—the least person of all. One preacher once said about this that Jesus became the lowest of the low to show us [among many other major benefits of His Passion] that no one is beneath His dignity, that every human is worth saving *because He so said and acted*, and therefore has sacred worth.

This is what Paul is driving at when he says *'have this mind in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus'*. It says that He 'humbled himself', and He is our model! Now contrary to what the world may think, humility has nothing to do with feelings of low self-esteem or low self-worth. If Jesus is the model of true humility, it can't have anything to do with those things, because Jesus surely was the one person who walked this earth who did not have such deficiencies, did not have an identity crisis, and so on. Humility is the posture of a strong person who steps down to serve others, as Jesus did.

We talk a lot about servant leadership, but you only rarely meet ministers who are actually prepared even to deny themselves and give 'til it hurts for their flock. In so many cases in America the phrase *servant leader* is bandied about that is has become an oxymoron— a contradiction in terms. What the Christ hymn in Phil. 2.5-11 tells us is that we should leave the exalting to God, just as Jesus did. Jesus was no glory grabber; he was a glory giver. Jesus was not all about himself; He sacrificed Himself and came 'not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for the many' which is to say everyone other than Himself. Jesus is the one person for whom Jesus did not need to die. Think of that.

At the heart of Incarnation (and all the seasons that follow) is total self-sacrifice, total self-giving, becoming a servant of others for the sake of their redemption... and letting God do the glorifying and exalting, not human beings. When Christmas, as well as anything else, becomes about fulfilling our own narcissistic little dreams, it has become something antithetical to the real meaning of Incarnation, and thus God's Will.

Borrowed, battered, and bruised from multiple sources **JLR**



*"I keep returning to this simple question: is Jesus Christ the lord of the church, so that it submits to his teaching however unpalatable, or is the church the lord of Jesus Christ...? Will the church listen humbly and obediently to Jesus Christ, or will it behave like the brash adolescent it often seems to be, contradicting its master and putting him right when he is wrong? Is the church 'over' or 'under' Christ?" – John Stott*

**REFRESHMENT SERVERS:**

|          |           |                             |
|----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| December | 2         | Rich & Rebecca              |
|          | 9         | Andy                        |
|          | 16        | Pat & Kelly                 |
|          | 23        | Ken & Hugh                  |
|          | 30        | Allen & Gene                |
| January  | 6         | Donny & Samantha            |
|          | 13        | John H. & John D.           |
|          | 20        | Rich & Rebecca              |
|          | <b>27</b> | <b>ANNUAL MEETING/LUNCH</b> |
| February | 3         | Andy                        |
|          | <b>10</b> | <b>LUNCHEON-POTLUCK</b>     |
|          | 17        | Pat & Kelly                 |
|          | 24        | Ken & Hugh                  |

**ALTAR FLOWERS:**

|          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| December | 2  | Evergreen Arrangement given by Pat & Cat Dunnavant |
|          | 9  | Evergreen Arrangement                              |
|          | 16 | Evergreen Arrangement                              |
|          | 23 | Evergreen Arrangement                              |
|          | 30 | Joe & Patti Stagner                                |
| January  | 6  | Pat & Catherine Dunnavant                          |
|          | 13 | Rich Woolard                                       |
|          | 20 | Marqueda Dunnavant                                 |
|          | 27 | Grace Meier  |
| February | 3  | Rich Woolard                                       |
|          | 10 | Joann Bryant                                       |
|          | 17 | Kristi & Dickey Watson                             |
|          | 24 | Grace Meier  |