



Christ & St. Luke's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, & EPIPHANY —2024-2025—

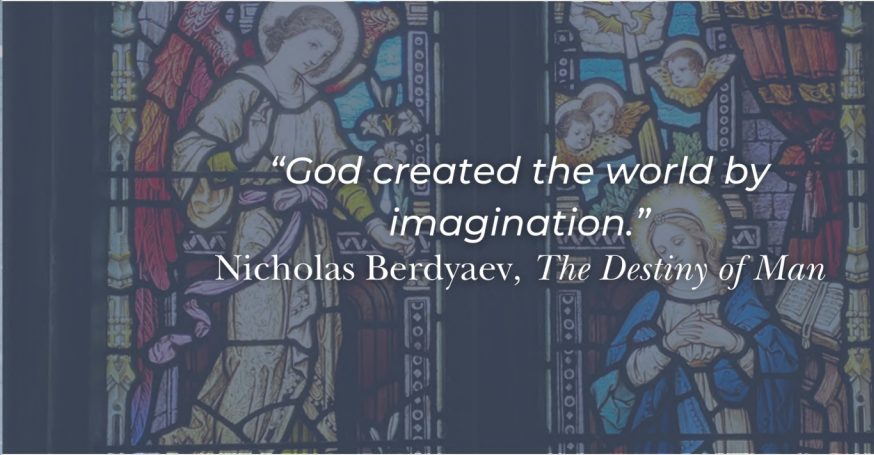


KEEPING
COMMUNITY



Igniting the Spiritual Imagination

Fr. Noah Van Niel



“God created the world by
imagination.”

Nicholas Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*

In her book *Mind of the Maker*, Dorothy Sayers expounds upon the creative act as an expression of the triune God which the Christian faith professes belief in. There is the idea (God), then the energy (that idea put into form through effort—Jesus), then the power (the effect that effort has on others—the Holy Spirit). The creative process, she argues, is our experience of the truest nature of God, the closest approximation of what it must be like to be The Creator. And when we exercise our spiritual imaginations, we are experiencing and expressing something true about God. In their own ways, art and artists are prophets who, in their creative capacities, reveal to us some element of our human soul and psyche that still echoes with elements of the divine.

Following this line of argument, it is not a surprise that one of God’s most profound acts of creating, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, has sparked the spiritual imaginations of artists for the last two thousand years. Some of the greatest works of art that humanity has produced take as their source material the story of Christmas. The creativity of God radiates out from that stable, and by their artistic efforts we

are inspired to believe and believe again that God was, is, and will be with us in the one we call *Emmanuel*.

In preparation for this great moment of incarnation at Christmas, we are hoping to spend this Advent sparking our own spiritual imaginations here at Christ & St. Luke's. Starting in early December, two volumes of *The Saint John's Bible* will be in residence with us for the next five months. *The Saint John's Bible* is one of the most incredible works of religious art created in the last 30 years, and we are going to be able to see it, touch it, use it, pray with it, and let it inspire us.

We will also be blessed, as always, by glorious music with our Advent Lessons and Carols service, and a visit from the Virginia Chorale for their seasonal concert. And we will explore the art of stained-glass when the Director of Art Development at Willet-Hauser, which recently restored our *Te Deum* window, comes to teach an adult forum with us.

We hope all of these events, in addition to our seasonal observances during Sunday morning services, will make this Advent one in which your own spiritual imagination is ignited so your life can be changed at the arrival of Jesus Christ into this world and into your heart on Christmas Day.



The Saint John's Bible on Display at Christ & St. Luke's

We are delighted to announce that this Advent two volumes from *The Saint John's Bible* will be coming to Christ & St. Luke's. We will be hosting the book of the Prophets, and the Gospels and Acts. These two volumes will be on display for the enjoyment and enrichment of our parishioners, cross-denominational partners, and the larger community through the end of April 2025. Our hope in bringing into residency what has been called "America's Book of Kells" is to offer opportunities for engagement that will inspire our spiritual imaginations, draw us into deeper reflection of Scripture, and foster our connections to God and one another.

These exceptional volumes are not just to be observed, they are meant to be used. So in the coming weeks you will see us utilize them in worship, for Bible studies, and adult formation classes. There will also be scheduled times for you to look at and be led through the books by trained docents from our parish.



Suffering Servant, Donald Jackson, © 2005 *The Saint John's Bible*, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Used with permission. All rights reserved.



Adult Forum: Art in Advent

Sundays, 9:15 a.m., December 1, 8, 15, 22

Advent is a season when we celebrate God's divine creative capacity, a capacity on display from the beginning of time and shown most fully in the incarnation of Jesus. To honor that divine creativity percolating at this time of year, we will once again be using our Advent Adult Formation sessions this month to look at "Art in Advent."

We will start on December 1 with a visit from Kathy Jordan, Director of Art Development at the Willet Hauser Architectural Glass Studio. Kathy oversaw the recent restoration of our *Te Deum* window and will be here to talk about how stained-glass has been used to tell the story of Christ's birth in our church and elsewhere.

On December 8, Brad Neary, Director of *The Saint John's Bible* Heritage Program, will be here to introduce us all to *The Saint John's Bible*.

And our final two Sundays of this series will be spent celebrating the spectacular music and poetry this season of divine creativity has inspired.

- December 1: Kathy Jordan, A Study of Our Stained Glass
- December 8: Brad Neary, An Introduction to *The Saint John's Bible*
- December 15: Music of the season
- December 22: Poetry of the season



December Events

Sunday, Dec. 1 11:45 a.m.	Advent Wreath Making
Sunday, Dec. 1 5:30 p.m.	Advent Lessons & Carols
Thursday, Dec. 5 5:30 p.m.	First Thursday Supper at Martin Mansion
Saturday, Dec. 7 9:00 a.m.	<i>The Saint John's Bible</i> Orientation
Sunday, Dec. 8	<i>The Saint John's Bible</i> Displayed and Adult Forum
Sunday, Dec. 8 4:00 p.m.	Virginia Chorale Concert
Sunday, Dec. 15 3:00 p.m.	Caroling & Cocoa
Thursday, Dec. 19 5:00 p.m.	The Williams School Celebration of Light
Friday, Dec. 20 6:00 p.m.	Blue Christmas Service
Tuesday, Dec. 24 4:30 p.m.	Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist with Christmas Pageant
Tuesday, Dec. 24 10:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist with Full Choir and Brass (musical prelude at 9:30 p.m.)
Wednesday, Dec. 25 10:15 a.m.	Christmas Day
Sunday, Dec. 29 8:00 a.m. & 10:15 a.m.	Christmas Lessons and Carols



Christmas Party at the Martin Mansion

December 5, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

This December will be a special Christmas edition of our First Thursday Supper. We will have a parish-wide Christmas Party at the historic Martin Mansion at 524 Fairfax Avenue. Mark your calendars for an evening of food, friends, and carol-singing in a beautiful, historic home decked out for the holidays.

Children's Christmas Pageant

December 24, 4:30 p.m.

The story of the birth of Jesus is always one of joy, wonder, and love. All children ages of 3-18 are invited to be part of telling this great story at the 4:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service. There will be five rehearsals: December 11, 15, 18, 22, 24. Please watch the announcements for more details. Sign up by December 11. Contact kathy.hanna@christandstlukes.org with questions.

Advent Devotionals

This season as we embrace the creative power of God to inspire our own creative activity, we are offering two of our favorite seasonal books as a devotional from Advent to Epiphany.

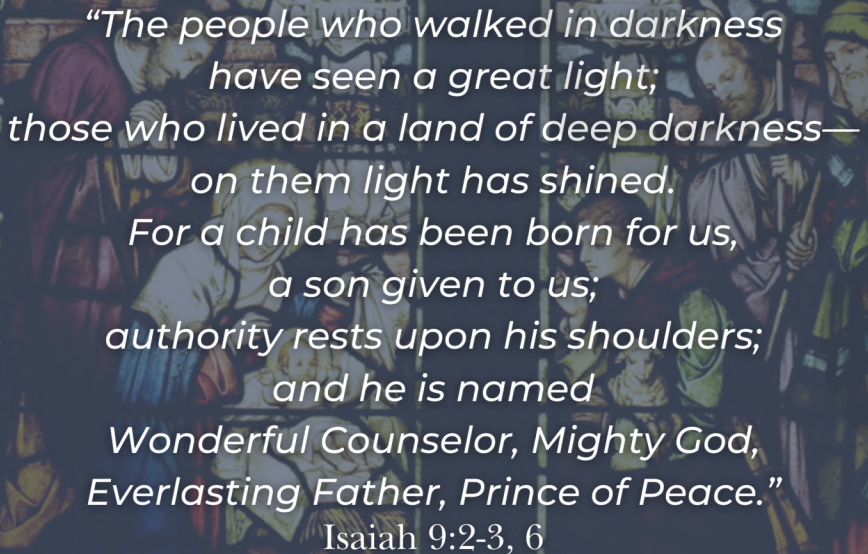
Waiting on the Word: A poem a day for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany by Malcolm Guite (\$10 suggested donation)

The Art of Advent: A painting a day from Advent to Epiphany by Jane Williams (\$10 suggested donation)

On January 5 at 9:15 a.m. we will discuss our reflections on these devotionals.

A Christmas Reflection

Fr. Jared Grant



*“The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*
Isaiah 9:2-3, 6

There's a silly Christmas book that we like to read in our family called *Humphrey's First Christmas*. It tells the story of one of the Magi's curmudgeonly camels as he follows the Christmas star with his fellow travelers. Humphrey doesn't understand why they are traveling so far out of their way. To make matters worse, Humphrey is forced to carry the three traditional gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in chests on his back - a task he finds below his status. At the very least, he has his trusted blanket which bestows for him a sense of comfort, security, and dignity.

After some antics and much traveling, the story ends with Humphrey arriving at the manger of the newborn Christ. The gifts of the magi are, at last, removed from Humphrey's back and presented to the baby Jesus. Humphrey, though, is no longer his angsty and anxious self. Here, in the presence of the Christ child, Humphrey is awestruck, so much so that he gladly

gives over his favorite blanket—an object that defines his sense of self—to warm the baby Jesus. Upon his encounter, he recites the famous words of Isaiah above, naming the child “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

I love the imagination in this story, breaking open a narrative we all know so well and reminding us of the marvel inherent in the Christmas story. Maybe his journey sounds a bit like ours. Humphrey spends the build-up to Christmas in a state of angst and anxiety. Humphrey finds it hard to see the true value of the journey he’s on. And yet, when he encounters the miracle of the incarnation, he is blown away. Something about being in the presence of Jesus allows Humphrey to understand perfectly who the Christ child is and what he has come to accomplish. And upon this beautiful realization, Humphrey gives of himself to Jesus.

We are a people who have walked in great darkness. And now, the great light of the world has come. Christmas is a time of joy because the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace has come into the world. God has come down into the darkness and walked with us. The God of Abraham, the God who speaks through Isaiah, the God who made the whole world—curmudgeonly camels included—has come to usher in the world God desires for us all. May we, as people who have encountered God incarnate, as people who see the true glory of what Jesus comes to accomplish, give ourselves over to the joy that has entered the world. Like Humphrey’s blanket, may our sense of selves be forever wrapped-up in the joy that now lies in the manger.



Epiphany Reflection

Kevin Kwan



*O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!*

John Henry Hopkins Jr., “We Three Kings”

The refrain of the beloved Epiphany hymn “We three kings” points us to the bright lit star that led the Magi to the baby Jesus. But Epiphany is more than one day; it’s a whole season! And this theme of light permeates throughout the season and is reflected in the feast days, readings, and music.

The season of Epiphany varies in length from year to year, depending on the date of Easter. This year (2025) we have an eight-week Epiphany season, which gives us more time to delve into the stories of Jesus’ life and ministry, including the Baptism of our Lord, the wedding at Cana (when Jesus turns water into wine), the Presentation (40 days after Christmas), the calling of the disciples, and other miracles and parables. The season culminates with the Transfiguration, when Jesus’ identity as the Son of God is dramatically revealed on the mountaintop.

One of my favorite hymns that encapsulates these themes is Hymn 135, “Songs of thankfulness and praise.” In it, Christopher Wordsworth names the successive manifestations of Christ which are presented during Epiphany season (Magi, Baptism, Cana, Healing), and anticipates the future and final “Epiphany,”



when Christ will be manifested to all
“at the sound of the trumpet.”

F. Bland Tucker (born in Norfolk in 1895) added the final verse to our present day version, but I would like to share the original fourth stanza by Wordsworth (omitted from our Hymnal 1982):

*Sun and Moon shall darkened be,
stars shall fall, the heavens shall
flee;*

*Christ will then like lightning shine,
all will see his glorious sign:*

*All will then the trumpet hear; all
will see the Judge appear.*

*Thou by all wilt be confessed God in
Man made manifest.*

So through the season of Epiphany, let us remember that we are called to be God’s light in this world. Your light, in whatever way you manifest it, is needed today just as much as the star’s light was needed 2,000 years ago.

*This little light of mine, I’m gonna
let it shine!*

January Events

Sunday, Jan. 5 5:00 p.m.	Twelfth Night Parish Potluck Dinner
Sunday, Jan. 12 9:15 a.m.	"The Prophets" Adult Forum Series Begins
Thursday, Jan. 16 7:00 p.m.	TENET Concert: Italian & English Baroque Music
Sunday, Jan. 26 10:15 a.m.	Orchestral Eucharist featuring Schubert's <i>Mass in G</i>
Sunday, Jan. 26 11:45 a.m.	Annual Parish Meeting

Twelfth Night Potluck

Sunday, January 5, 5:00 p.m.

How wonderful is it that the church year conveniently provides feasts to help us transition from the Christmas season into Epiphany and then from Epiphany into Lent? Twelfth Night marks the end of the Christmas season and the arrival of the Magi to see the Christ Child. We will celebrate on Sunday, January 5 with a potluck dinner, King's Cake, and other Twelfth Night traditions like the blessing of houses.



February/March Events

Sunday, Feb. 2 10:15 a.m.	Youth Sunday
Sunday, Feb. 2 5:30 p.m.	Choral Evensong for Candlemas
Friday, Feb. 7 7:00 p.m.	Cabaret! The Choir Tour fundraiser at the Norfolk Yacht & Country Club
Sunday, Feb. 16 4:00 p.m.	The Allen Shaffer Concert: Music of Charles Ives
Friday, Feb. 28 6:00 p.m.	Sarah McCammon's <i>Exvangelical</i> Book Discussion
Sunday, Mar. 2 5:30 p.m.	Choral Evensong for the Last Sunday of Epiphany
Tuesday, Mar. 4 5:00 p.m.	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Wednesday, Mar. 5 12:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Holy Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes
Wednesday, Mar. 5 5:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Family Service with Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes
Wednesday, Mar. 5 7:00 p.m.	Ash Wednesday Holy Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes





Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Tuesday, March 4, 5:00 p.m.

As the Epiphany season draws to a close and we are on the cusp of entering the penitential season of Lent, we get one more chance to feast before we fast. On March 4, we will once again engage in the eating of pancakes, the racing of pancakes, the burning of palms, and the burying of the alleluias to prepare ourselves for Lent. Join us for these wonderful opportunities for deepen our faith in fellowship this Epiphany!

The Exvangelicals: Loving, Living, and Leaving the White Evangelical Church

Friday, February 28, 6:00 p.m.

National NPR political reporter and Norfolk resident, Sarah McCammon has written a book about her experience growing up in and eventually leaving the Evangelical church, a story shared by many people in our parish. Sarah has graciously agreed to join us to talk about this book and her experience on Friday, February 28, at 6:00 p.m. Join us for this very special event!



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Worship Schedule

Sundays

Holy Eucharist, Rite I: 8:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist, Rite II: 10:15 a.m.

This service includes childcare, Children's Chapel, and choir.

This service is live streamed at christandstlukes.org/live.

Thursdays

Holy Eucharist, Rite II: 7:30 a.m.

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