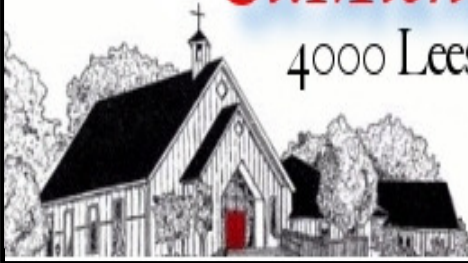


St. Michael's Episcopal Church

4000 Lees Summit Rd, Independence, MO

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A monthly newsletter of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Independence, MO

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Vicar's Reflection ...

Treasures Old and New

In this season of Christmas and Epiphany, I was reflecting on what I treasure. I started to make a list of treasured things by category just to make it easy. I treasure God's presence in my life. I treasure my good health. I treasure friends and family, and I treasure the St. Michael's church family. I treasure a warm house in winter and a cool one in summer, as well as food which I like to eat. I treasure my books, my computer, my TV, my parents' photos, my Dad's paintings, my snow globes, my grandfather's old clock ... and suddenly I realized that the list was quickly becoming too long to continue writing down. There are more treasures in my life than I can count.

This is the season in which we consider our treasures and the season of Epiphany is when we are reminded of the Magi who brought some of their treasures to the newborn king. Treasure means different things to different people, but treasure is always something that we value. My treasure may be someone else's trash and my discards may become someone's treasured possession. Much of what we treasure are material things, yet when we make our lists, the items at the top of the treasure list are often treasures which can't be touched or seen. Treasures like love, joy, health, and God's grace.

We know what treasures the Magi brought to the baby Jesus—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Those didn't make my list of treasures. But those gifts do represent some of what we treasure or what that treasure can obtain. Gold represents money and what money can provide, such as shelter, food, clothing, and other essential items. Frankincense is a resin which is usually burned for incense, and it represents the intangible fragrances of our lives, not literal smells, but the hint of love and friendship, the presence of God, the experience of forgiveness, and the feeling of joy which wells up in our hearts. While myrrh is a fragrance used in ointment or perfume, it can also be burned as incense. Many think that the myrrh which the magi brought was meant to foreshadow Jesus' death, but perhaps it was meant to provide a balm or salve to keep the skin moist and heal wounds. Myrrh for us may be those things which heal our bodies and our souls, those treasures which don't seem to have value to anyone but us.

Treasures old and new. This season invites us to recognize our treasures and to use them wisely. This season also challenges us to find and use the old treasures that we have collected in our lives. Renew a friendship, mail a card to someone you have lost contact with or simply re-read a good book. Treasures old and new. Be on the lookout for new treasures which come to us each day. The smile of a friend, the excitement of good news, the joy of a child's curiosity, or the simple pleasure of a hobby we had forgotten to enjoy.

Take the time to cherish your treasures both old and new. Remember to keep or find treasures which support and strengthen your spiritual life also. Read your favorite Bible passage or find a new favorite,

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pray a familiar prayer or write a new one, listen to music which lifts your soul, or perhaps you want to meditate on a favorite icon or spiritual picture. Treasures old and new. Like the Magi, use your treasures to connect with the presence of God, and offer some of your treasures to the newborn king. Offer your treasure of time to God in worship and prayer. Offer your treasure of gold in support of God's work at St. Michael's, and offer your treasure of myrrh as you serve in ministries which seek to serve those who need God's healing presence.

I treasure each of you. Mother Pat+

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY CONCERT

January 25, 2009

7:00 p.m.

Come and support Habitat for Humanity in Independence and bring a friend!!

A big audience is needed.

Contact Rachel Swaney if you can help.

From Deacon Larry

Do We Need the Dark?

In many ways, we may see darkness as a hindrance, somewhat bothersome. In the dark, without light, it makes navigating even a familiar room difficult. For me, trying to find an unfamiliar location in the daytime is a challenge, let alone at night when landmarks are hidden in shadows. Most of us want as much light as possible to illuminate our way, and many of us have night-lights to help us get about at night if the need arises. Many of us even illuminate areas around our homes to discourage thieves.

National Geographic magazine, in its November 2008 issue, had an article entitled "The End of Night—why we need darkness." The article brought up issues about the dark that I had not previously considered. Darkness is a normal part of the 24-hour cycle of our life. Without the cycle of day and night our biological clocks can get out of whack. The article says, "So fundamental are these rhythms to our being that altering them is like altering gravity." We have tried to shorten the night by lighting up our cities. This has had disastrous consequences on wildlife. Lighted skyscrapers at night, or their reflected light from the glass during the day, has had a disorienting effect on birds. It is estimated that 100 million birds have died either flying into buildings or from exhaustion trying to escape the maze of buildings. Birds such as blackbirds and nightingales sing at unnatural times because of lighted night. Breeding schedules of birds have been disrupted and migration times affected because of artificially lengthening the day through the use of internal and external lights. Other nocturnal creatures such as fruit bats, desert rodents, and opossums are in greater danger from predators as they forage for food because of the lighted night sky caused by the cast off light of the nearby city. Nesting turtles are finding fewer dark beaches to lay their eggs. Newly hatched turtles are confused by the lighted night sky behind the beach. In Florida hundreds of thousands of hatchling turtles are lost every year simply because of light pollution.

Cities have changed a great deal in regards to lighting during the past two hundred years. In 1800 London, which at the time was the most populated city in the world, people made their way around town with candles, torches, and lanterns. Only a few homes were lighted with gaslights, and there would be no gaslights or London city streets until 1807. Much of our problem with city lighting is the light reflected back into the night sky. Flagstaff, Arizona began its effort to reduce lighting the night sky fifty years ago to

From the Deacon (Continued from Page 2)

protect the view from Lowell Observatory sitting high above the city. In 2001, it was declared the first International Dark Sky City. There is a concerted effort from other countries and cities to reduce night light pollution.

Some things we can do is to use lower intensity lighting outside that reflects down on the ground or on the detector light that shines down. It remains on for only a short time unless there is activity. The old style street lamps with the decorative glass globe are pretty, but put light into the sky as well as on the street. Covered street lamps would do much to reduce night-light pollution. It may be that city leaders could be made aware of lighting changes that are needed where we see the night sky diminished. At St. Michael's we have shielded parking lot lights and we have attempted to focus our landscape and security lighting to minimize light pollution and to save energy.

Light is a good thing. But too much of a good thing, such as too much lighting of the night sky, can be harmful.

During this time of Epiphany when the hidden divine has been revealed to us as the light of Christ, we are called to shine our lamps to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Unlike ordinary lights, which can pollute the night sky, the light of Christ shining in us is the purest of lights. There is no need to hide God's light. Let us share the joy of our salvation with others. God's Peace, Deacon Larry

HAPPY NEW YEAR

This newsletter is a publication of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 4000 Lee's Summit Road, Independence, MO 64055. The telephone number is 816-373-5333. The newsletter is sent to all members of St. Michael's Church and to friends of the church. If you would like to be included in our mailing list, please contact the church office. Mail all news items to the church office at the address above or email to Shirley Nelson by the 15th of the month at shrl12nelson@sbcglobal.net Or drop off at the church office..



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 18 St. Michael's Annual Meeting Potluck After Second Service

January 25 Habit for Humanity Concert St. Michael's

February 24 (Tentative) Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner; Feast of St. Mathias

What can I give Him
 Poor as I am?
 If I were a shepherd,
 I would give him a lamb,
 If I were a Wise Man,
 I would do my part,—
 But what can I give Him,
 Give my heart.

Christina Rossetti

FUNNY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NEW YEAR

Brooks Atkinson

Drop the last year into the silent limbo of the past. Let it go, for it was imperfect, and thank God that it can go.

Bill Vaughan

Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to.

James Agate

New Year's Resolution: To tolerate fools more gladly, provided this does not encourage them to take up more of my time.

Eric Zorn

Making resolutions is a cleansing ritual of self-assessment and repentance that demands personal honesty and, ultimately, reinforces humility. Breaking them is part of the cycle.

Bill Vaughan

An optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

Mark Twain

New Year's Day ... Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual.

Joey Adams

May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions!

Oscar Wilde

Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account.



Chance Parsons	1/22
Aneta Ireland	1/23
Jay Kilpatrick	1/26
Patricia Aker	1/30
Sue French	1/30
Ann Prettejohn	1/31

**And Jesus grew in
wisdom and stature,
and in favor with
God and men.**

NIV Luke 2:52



Nickole & William Hayden 1/1

You will never be sorry—
for thinking before acting,
for hearing before judging,
for forgiving your
enemies,
for helping a fallen brother,
for being honest in business,
for thinking before
speaking,
for being loyal to your
church,
for standing by your
principles,
for stopping your ears to
gossip,
for bridling a slanderous
tongue,
for harboring only pure thoughts,
for sympathizing with the
afflicted,
for being courteous and kind to
all.



Kelly Arias	1/11
Mary Johnson	1/19
Isaiah Barclay	1/23

JANUARY FEAST DAYS

Thursday, January 1
The Holy Name of Our Lord
Jesus Christ 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 6
The Epiphany of Our Lord
Jesus Christ 6:30 p.m.

Monday, January 19
The Confession of Saint Peter the
Apostle 6:30 p.m.

Monday, January 26
The Conversion of Saint Paul
The Apostle 6:30 p.m.



HIS ENTRANCE

*“Where is the dwelling of God?”
This was the question with which the Rabbi of
Kotzk surprised a number of learned men
who happened to be visiting him.
They laughed at him. “What a thing to ask!
Is not the whole world full of his glory?”
Then he answered his own question. “God dwells
wherever man lets him in.”*

Martin Buber