

DECEMBER 2017



St. Cross  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# Crossroads

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. CROSS EPISCOPAL CHURCH



3

BAPTISMAL BOWL



5

REFLECTING ON GIFTS



7

USHERS

## Advent Calendars

REV. RACHEL

I have always loved a good Advent Calendar. I think it started as a child, not with one filled with chocolates (I actually don't like those), but with the one my mother made of felt (it was the 70's) with ornaments we would hang on the tree. The tradition was that mom would lay out all of the choices and my sister and I would pick the ornaments we liked and put them in odd or even pockets that meant it was our day to hang it on the tree. I also loved the sappy scenes of (supposedly) the Middle East, covered in glitter with some beautiful drawing (to a

young child) that has a symbol of Christmas behind the door. As I have gotten older, I still pull out the one my mom made. I have had to replace a few of the ornaments and also I am not as expectant about hanging an ornament each day (occupational hazard). I have eyed some of the "adult beverage" Advent calendars, but not really sure that a dram of scotch or gin is really the way to prepare.

You see, the reason that I love a good Advent calendar is that it keeps me focused on the season. We have seen a plethora of cartoons online about turkeys confronting Santa to back off until after Thanksgiving. At the same time, I often feel that I need Jesus to do the same in my heart. Advent calendars, along with other devotionals I have picked up, keep me focused on Jesus. They keep me focused on my faith and not on the presents. They keep me focused on my relationship with God, not my relationship with Target.

So as we go into this season of preparing for JESUS along with whatever else we may have on our plates (family, parties, lights, trees, presents, friends), I pray that each of us will find a way to mark the time, in fact mark each day as we prepare



## WORSHIP SERVICES

### SUNDAY

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
10:00 AM Choral Eucharist

### WEDNESDAY

8:30 AM Centering Prayer  
7:00 PM Holy Eucharist

## CLERGY

### RECTOR

The Rev. Dr. Rachel A. Nyback

### ASSOCIATES

The Rev. William Stanley  
Pastoral Care

The Rev. Robin Denney  
Christian Formation

### ASSISTING

The Rev. Cn. Robert Cornner

### DEACON

The Rev. Patti Angelo

### RECTOR EMERITUS

The Rev. Cn. Dr. Paul D. Lawson

St. Cross Episcopal Church  
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MORE ON PAGE 3

## WEEKLY EVENTS

### MONDAY

10 AM: Listening Hearts  
1 PM: Staff Meeting  
1 PM: History Committee \*  
4 PM: Temple Shalom  
7 PM: Tai Chi  
7 PM: EfM

### TUESDAY

9:53 AM: Sewing Group

### WEDNESDAY

8:30 AM: Centering Prayer  
9 AM: Women's Bible Study  
5:45 PM: Men's Bible Study  
7 PM: Holy Eucharist

### THURSDAY

6:15 PM: Bell Choir Rehearsal  
7:30 PM: Choir Rehearsal

### FRIDAY - Office Closed

11 AM: Sociable Seniors \*\*

\* 2nd and 4th Monday

\*\* 2nd and 4th Friday

### WEEKLY 12-STEP MEETINGS

Sun: AA 7 PM

Mon: Al-Anon 7 AM  
CODA 7:30 PM

Tue: Serenity 7 PM

Wed: Al-Anon 7 AM  
CEA 7:30 PM

Thu: Al-Anon 12 Noon

Fri: AA 8 PM

Sat: Al-Anon 10 AM

More info: (310) 376-8989 or  
info@stcross.org

# December 2017 Calendar

12/01-02: Diocesan Convention  
12/03: St. Clare's Parent Gathering, 9 AM, Rm. 4  
12/03: The Upper Room, 5-7 PM  
12/03: Men's Christmas Dinner, 6 PM  
12/07: Neighbor to Neighbor, 4 PM  
12/08: Sociable Seniors, 11 AM, Parker Hall  
12/08: Book Club Christmas Party, 5:30 PM  
12/10: Youth Choir Recital, 12-4 PM  
12/10: OSL Healing Service, 5 PM, Guild Room  
12/12: St. Monica's Meeting, 6-9 PM, Parker Hall  
12/13: The Longest Night—Blue Christmas, 7 PM  
12/16: Pageant Rehearsal (No Chorus), 9-11 AM  
12/17: Vestry Meeting, 9 AM, Room 4  
12/17: Pageant Dress Rehearsal, 3 PM  
12/17: Christmas Pageant, 5 PM  
12/18: Women's Interfaith Tree Decorating, 7 PM  
12/24-25: See Christmas Services, This Page  
12/27: Laundry Love, 7 PM, Clean Scene Laundry

## Christmas Services

**Christmas Pageant:** 12/17 at 5 PM

Read more about the Christmas Pageant on page 5!

**4th Sunday of Advent: Important!**  
*Note that we will have ONE morning service on December 24. That single service will take place at 9 AM.*

**Christmas Eve Family Service:** 12/24 at 4 PM

**Christmas Eve Caroling and Festival Choral Eucharist:** 12/24 at 9 PM

**Christmas Day:** 12/25 at 10 AM



**Christmas Pageant 12/17 at 5 PM**

## ST. CROSS History

Q ◆

**Do you know who the high school student was? And can you name the St. Cross outreach ministry that benefited from the class challenge?**

*Answer on page 6*



# ADVENT CALENDARS

From Page 1

our hearts and our homes for the birth of the Christ Child.

**Blessed Advent, Rachel+**

## Grand Theft Case

As many of you know, our former office administrator was arrested this past January for theft from St. Cross and Temple Shalom. The case has concluded with her pleading guilty to all counts. Final sentencing is in January, and an element of the sentence allows us access to her bank account records so that we can file with our insurance. We have obtained those records and have a pending claim with our insurance company. We will let you know the outcome of that claim when it happens. We also had an outside audit this year and no other discrepancies were found. With that audit we did an evaluation of the controls and systems in the office. Again, the auditor thought the controls

and systems we now have in place are appropriate for our parish. We thank you for your prayers and patience as we work through the many aspects of this challenge.

## Baptismal Bowl

On All Saints' Sunday, we blessed our beautiful new baptismal bowl. We thank Dick McCurdy for our previous bowl, a gold one that served us very well for ten years but was showing signs of wear. Altar Guild member Laura Geisel knew we were looking to replace it, and she asked if she and her husband Paul could donate a new one. She asked Kathy Shinkle if she recommended any artists, and Kathy mentioned Paul Brayton. He met with Laura and Paul Geisel and Rev. Rachel to discuss what we would like, and then he got to work. The results can be seen in the church as well as in a photo in Parish Life, page 7. Thank you to Laura and Paul Geisel for this lovely donation!

## Ministry Notes

### St. Cross Giving Tree

The St. Cross Giving Tree Ministry, which offers parishioners the chance to provide Christmas gifts to children in need this holiday season, is underway, with signup board available through Dec. 3rd. All wrapped presents must be returned that Sunday or, at the latest, Sunday the 19th.

St. Cross also provides each family with a grocery gift card and we enthusiastically accept monetary donations to help us provide these gift cards. We look forward to seeing you in Parker Hall. Help us give some families a helping hand this holiday season.

Learn more about Giving Tree in History, page 6.



*Sociable Seniors visit LACMA*

# Parents Gathering

**Dec. 3, 9-10 AM in Rm. 4**

Please join the St. Clare's Community of parents for our December Parents Gathering on December 3 from 9-10 a.m. in Room 4 while the kids are in Sunday School, or in the nursery for birth to 3 years. We will meet for an informal gathering in a quiet, safe space where we can support one another as parents, and just socialize and catch up! Light refreshments will be served. Please call Jeanne Ogar at (310) 853-0318 for more information. Hope to see you there!

# Thistle Farms

Thistle Farms is a nonprofit social enterprise that benefits women who have survived trafficking, prostitution, addiction, and abuse. Everything Thistle Farms does is rooted in the belief that LOVE HEALS.

The Reverend Becca Stevens, an Episcopal priest, author, and social entrepreneur, serves as Chaplain at St. Augustine's at Vanderbilt University. In 1997 she founded Magdalene, a residential community for women survivors of abuse. The women live together and support each other through their work producing handcrafted natural body and home products at Thistle Farms, a nonprofit business in Nashville.

The Thistle Farms mission for the last 20 years has been to Heal, Empower, and Employ women survivors by providing safe and supportive housing, the opportunity for economic independence, and a strong community of advocates and partners.

On November 12, St. Cross helped Thistle Farms launch its new digital fundraiser. We purchased a tester kit of nearly all items and gave everyone a chance to try them out. As we place orders on [thistlefarms.org](http://thistlefarms.org) using the code STCROSS, we will be supporting the work of Thistle Farms. St. Cross will receive a record of all sales and a 5% rebate distributed 3 times per year. The Peace and Justice ministry will use this money to support many issues about which the congregation is concerned.

Questions? Please call Sandra Essex (310) 704-1902.

[www.thistlefarms.org](http://www.thistlefarms.org)

CODE: STCROSS on every order

# Christmas Dinner

**Sunday, Dec. 3, 6 PM**

The St. Cross Men's Fellowship Group hosts their Annual Christmas Dinner on December 3rd. Those who have attended before will be sure to tell you what a wonderful holiday feast this is! Featuring mouth-watering Prime Rib, Yorkshire Pudding, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Veggies and a delectable dessert – you won't want to miss it!



**Ah, but there's a catch!** Only eighty guests (that's 80) can be accommodated, and you must purchase your ticket(s) in advance!

Tickets are just \$15.00 and are on sale at [stcross.org/dinner](http://stcross.org/dinner).

# Clergy — Everywhere!

If you haven't noticed St. Cross has a wonderful rich choice of clergy, both staff and volunteer. It is an embarrassment of riches and one we are thankful for. We have a variety of voices in our pulpit, styles at our altar, and people to pay attention to our pastoral care needs. However, some have asked why not all clergy vest for all services. Good question. If we did, we would cut out lay people who have also been called to serve. Therefore we are rotating all clergy through all services. It also gives one of us time to talk with people in the parish hall when a service is happening (yes, we know you hang out in there). You know you are always welcome to give your thoughts and feedback on this to Rev. Rachel, in fact she really appreciates when you do give feedback. See you in church!

## Alpha and Omega



### *In Memoriam*

Muriel Plummer  
Dorothy Thomas

### *Baptized*

James Elia Weston



# Christmas Pageant: Dec. 17 at 5 PM

Preparations for the famous St. Cross Christmas pageant are under way! A big thank you to our youth directors this year, Madi Weissenberg and Rylei Borden, and to the costuming and music volunteers who are already hard at work! Costuming will take place on December 3 and 10 during Sunday School class at 9am. Rehearsal for acting parts (no chorus) will be December 16 at 9am.

On December 17, during Sunday School, the classes will be finishing their preparation for the pageant. After the services, at 11:30am, will be a rehearsal and the dress rehearsal is at 3pm. Call times for costuming will be before 3pm, and will be different for each class. Parent volunteers are needed to help in several capacities: lights, sound, set up, and helping shepherd the kids during rehearsal and costuming. Please contact Rev. Robin if you are willing to help! [rdenney@stcross.org](mailto:rdenney@stcross.org)



## The Upper Room: Dec. 3, 5-7 PM

This month the upper room (youth grades 6-12), we be gathering in Clark Hall, to make dinner and Christmas cookies together. Chef Samantha Barnes will be teaching us some recipes and techniques! We will also have a white elephant gift exchange. For those that would like to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift, worth \$5-10.

## Reflecting on Gifts: Peace and Justice

Advent, a season of waiting, expectancy, and reflection in the church, can also be a time of frantic preparation for the holiday. Sometimes choosing gifts for loved ones is an experience of great joy, but sometimes it is stressful and difficult. One way to enter into the reflection of Advent, is to meditate on the meaning of this time of waiting. What does it mean to us that Jesus came into the world? What do these relationships we hold most dear in our lives mean to us? How can we honor this meaning with our gifts?

The Global Opportunity Day, held in the parish



hall in November, and hosted by the Peace and Justice committee of St. Cross, showed us some opportunities for gift giving that improve lives. The organizations that were represented are touching and changing lives, and we learned that we can support them by purchasing gifts (whether crafts, olive oil, candles, or lotions) or by giving a financial donation to support their work in honor of a loved one. Printed materials about these organizations are still available on the counter by the guild room in the parish hall. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Rev. Robin, or any member of the Peace and Justice committee.

# Waiting for the Coming

THE REV. WILLIAM STANLEY

*"We live today in a seemingly instantaneous world. Modern technology has made it possible to have virtually any piece of information before us with the touch of a few buttons...This instantaneity of life has wreaked havoc in human relationships. We move into and out of each other's lives at an incredible speed. We take what we need, grab what we can, as we speed past each other. Even the covenantal relationships of life become a part of the blur and tragically lose their depth and permanence." (Waiting for the Coming: The Liturgical Meaning of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, 1)*



The title of this article is also the title of a small book on the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany by my former bishop, J. Neil Alexander. Before he was ordained a bishop to serve in the Diocese of Atlanta, he was a professor at two of our flagship Episcopal seminaries. His words are haunting in their relevance to our life in 2017. What's even more haunting is to fathom that his words were written not this year...but in 1993. We know the acceleration +Neil describes has sped up even more in the 24 years since.

"Slow Down. Quiet. It's Advent" is a phrase a former priest of mine coined, which he uses to title an Advent calendar each year. Somehow in Advent there are these perpetual invitations, if we would only be open to receiving them: slowing down and being quiet. Again at St. Cross this Advent, we will offer special opportunities to experience these gifts of the season. You could say we as the church are our most counter-cultural in Advent. Might you step out to take advantage of it?

A plethora of Advent devotional books are available in my office for you to borrow for this season. Poems, meditations, and readings offer us the chance to focus our "waiting for the coming" of Jesus in our hearts and this world. Near the end of the season--on Wednesday, December 13th at 7PM--we hold our annual "The Longest Night" service. The seasons of Advent and Christmas can be painful times for some. Our intent in this service is to offer space in which to acknowledge our sorrows and offer them to God. God cares deeply for those who mourn, for those who struggle, and for those who are alone.

So come, you who have much faith and you have little to none this season...and we'll wait for the coming together.

**Peace, Will+**

[wstanley@stcross.org](mailto:wstanley@stcross.org)

## ST. CROSS *History* From page 2

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Jennifer Brownlie Deslaurier (daughter of Caren and Mike Brownlie) was ASB President at South High School, and the Giving Tree, which started several years earlier, added the canned goods to the gifts for the children. Today the Giving Tree gives the families gift cards for food and other things along with the presents for the children.





# Thank You to Our Ushers!

Tremendous gratitude is extended to our current and former ushers and the important ministry they provide at St. Cross!

Pictured from top left: Gary Grimes, Sherry Graham, Donna Gessler, Charlie Gessler, Al Dickinson, Albert Robsahm, Jerry Saunders, Russ Lesser, Barbara Moore, Walter Young, Bill Soper, Bruce Dolph, Richard McCurdy, Terry Eddy, John Moawad, Ralph Kaye, Clark Bonner, Judy Soper, Sarah Lorenz, Chris Angelo, Mervis Reissig, Kathy Moawad, JoAnn Kaye, Marilyn Young, Lee Spivey, Charlotte Lesser and Ann Peterson.

Not pictured: Nancy Bonner, Toni Consolo, Susan Corey, Helen Dolph, Earl Feys, Alice Feys, Emma King, Pati Johnson and Pat Woolley.



## Parish Life

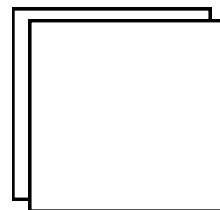
Baptism, Halloween, Baptismal Bowl, Historical Society  
Follow at [instagram.com/stcrosshermosa](https://www.instagram.com/stcrosshermosa)





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First Class Mail



## December 24 Schedule

The morning of the 24th is the  
Fourth Sunday of Advent. We will  
have **one morning service at 9 AM.**

Christmas Eve Family Service: 4 PM

Christmas Eve Carols and Festival  
Choral Eucharist: 9 PM

*Special thanks to the volunteers  
whose generous gifts of time and talent make this  
newsletter possible.*

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### CHURCH STAFF

Trudy Bush—Office Administrator  
Judi Kelly—Bookkeeper  
John Tveit—Choirmaster and Organist  
Merrill Whatley—Communications Coordinator  
David Dawson—Facilities Manager