



St. John's Scroll

December 2024 Vol. XXXVIII

Upcoming Services

Date	Liturgical Day	Time	Rite	Officiant	Sermon	Altar Guild
12/08/24	2nd Sunday of Advent	10:00 AM	Deacon's Mass Rite 2	Alan Rockwood	Alan Rockwood	Charlotte & Olga
12/15/24	3rd Sunday of Advent	10:00 AM	Morning Prayer Rite 2	Ossie Knowlton	Ossie Knowlton	Olga & Charlotte
12/22/24	4th Sunday of Advent	10:00 AM	Deacon's Mass Rite 2	Alan Rockwood	Alan Rockwood	Mandy & JoCarol
12/24/24	Christmas Eve	3:00 PM	Holy Eucharist Rite 2	Barb Massenburg	Barb Massenburg	Mandy & JoCarol
12/25/24	Christmas Day	10:00 AM	Deacon's Mass Rite 2	Alan Rockwood	Alan Rockwood	Mandy & JoCarol
12/29/24	1st Sunday After Christmas	10:00 AM	Lessons & Carols	Hunter Davis	Hunter Davis	Mandy & JoCarol

December Birthdays

Rod Landis 12/02
 Hisako Rockwood 12/06
 Jennifer Simpson-Hiatt 12/14
 Kiernan Simpson-McCord 12/22

Advent Homily from Father David Yaw

Dear People of God:

Leaders of the early Celtic Church give us the belief in times and places that are, in their words, *thin*. These times and places are where the veil between earthly and divine almost come together. We travelled in Ireland only 14 days, but this was certainly long enough to sense the mystical, to feel that there are indeed thin places.

In the Advent Season we prepare for the ultimate thin time. On Christmas Eve the veil wasn't just thin; it was wide open. Picture it: The heavens open wide and hordes of angels sing the glorious news to shepherds, who are on the lowest rung of society.

Shepherds come to witness this most incredible of gifts, the Incarnation. Sages from afar get the word and travel a great distance to witness this most wonderful event.

King Herod, powerful and murderous, has his plans thwarted. By divinely sent dreams the Holy Family is saved, and the Magi return home another way.

Advent also calls us to be aware of the times in our own lives when the veil has been thin -- when our lives have been touched by the divine. Advent calls us to listen for angelic song and to remember that we too are part of that unveiling, the Incarnation!

I invite you all during this Advent season and throughout the year to open your hearts and minds, giving thanks for our thin spaces and times.

Thanks be to God – ***Fr. Dave***

Past Visits from Saint Nicholas



A traditional highlight of the St. John's Advent Tea has always been a visit from Saint Nicholas, or "Father Christmas." For many years Father Don Bullock played the role, and in recent years others have stepped up. Clockwise from top left: Denny Vogan, Hunter Davis, and Deacon Alan Rockwood.

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR...Ellen Funk



You've been a parishioner at St. John's for around twelve years now. What was your experience with church before you began attending, and how has St. John's changed your idea of what church can be?

I've always been involved in church. I have attended Baptist, Southern Baptist, Community, and Evangelical churches. I was

baptized twice because one church didn't think the first one "took" -- so now I consider myself extra baptized!

As far as how my thinking has changed, it's more been like finding home. Rather than being preached at and hearing about fire and brimstone, I find it more a case of being taught and led. Being given the road map and letting you discover your path. The guidance provided here is amazing. I appreciate St John's view on service...The Lord's Table has become a passion of mine.

You've served on the Vestry. What advice would you give to those who haven't served this way before, and who might be curious enough to give it a shot?

We currently have just the best Vestry. I would encourage everyone to give it a shot. It's good to know the workings and decisions of the

church -- and to be involved in important decisions. Also, we can always use more talent, voices, and ideas.

If you could share a meal with a Bible character, who would it be and why?

This is a hard one. I really have two and can't decide which one over the other. Moses and Jesus both have something I strive for and find so difficult at times, the ability to deal with others and not internalize it all. There are people who are contrary, difficult, self-proclaimed atheists, and people who claim to be godly, yet time and again show you this is not the case. The hate in this world of late seems overwhelming at times, and I would love for these two to tell me how they did it, day after day, yet stayed strong in themselves and their faith.

How do you think you might share your faith with your grandchildren?

Bring them to church! I heard a sermon once where it was said over and over of little ones: bring them to church. If they need to color, bring them to church; if they need snacks, bring them to church. Get them involved. Answer all the questions. Read them Bible stories. Even if they are in the pew coloring, you'd be surprised what they pick up and ask about.

Devotional by Rod Landis

“For by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever all those who are being made holy.”

– Hebrews 10:14

Who knew Habbakuk could be so interesting? This three-chapter Old Testament book of prophecy throbs with the tension between how humans perceive things and how things actually are. The passage of time, for instance. Habbakuk is structured as a series of prayers offered by the prophet, followed by a waiting period, and then God’s response concerning events to come. Chapter two is notable in that Habakkuk begins by affirming that, like a lookout in a watchtower, “I will watch to see what He will say to me (v. 1). When the Lord does answer, it is to tell Habakkuk what is written down will not happen right away -- so not only is the delivery of the prophecy a waiting game, but also the prophecy’s fulfillment.

God prefaces the oracle regarding the Babylonian invasion of Judah by telling Habakkuk, “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it testifies about the end and will not lie. Though it delays, wait for it, since it will certainly come and not be late” (v.3). How can a thing both “delay” and also “not be late”? By recognizing that our ways of thinking are not God’s. He knows we’ll assume the thing foreseen is going to take awhile, yet objectively – that is, if we could see things from a divine perspective – it will occur at just the right time. We think in terms of “should be,” as in “That letter should have arrived by now; I mailed it last week!” Yet only God knows ultimately the right time for anything because He is the first cause of everything that transpires.

Sometimes within a single verse of Scripture truth is crystallized through grammatical form – in the case of Hebrews 10:14, through verb tense. Or perhaps verb tension. Look at the verse on the previous page (you expected I'd get around to it eventually, right? Even if I have to ride Habakkuk to reach Hebrews!). The verb phrases are “has made” and “are being made.” The first is a completed action at a specific time, the Greek aorist tense. Christ died on a particular day at a particular time, and through the sacrifice that is the book of Hebrews' theme, he “has made” perfect His elect, those who are objectively His and have always been. But then the writer uses a different verb tense to describe “those who are being made holy.” Wait a minute! This sounds like it hasn't happened yet, or at least isn't finished yet – and yes, paradoxically, this is also true. The present tense verb in this phrase means “now,” yet results from an action in the past that is already over.

Our painful process of becoming saints -- becoming holy -- was guaranteed *in time* because the shepherd offered Himself sacrificially at a distant point in human history, but He also knew who He was dying for. The sheep past, present, & future perceive progress toward holiness as occurring over days, weeks, years (and never quickly enough), yet in God's exalted and objective reality it is as good as done. It's guaranteed, just like Habakkuk's oracle. We move by predestined days, weeks, and years toward what was decreed before worlds began. This is why the aorist and present tenses can reside together in the same statement – not comfortably, but in tension.

What a merciful thing it is, though, to know the end of everything is determined by His sovereign and perfect design, and that nothing ultimately comes “early” or “late” except through our flawed perception.

Coming in 2025!

A new Scroll Feature, “Where are they now?”, which will profile previous St. John’s parishioners who have moved away and found a new church home. We’ll ask our “friends in the field” to send photos of themselves, their churches, and parish life...then we’ll share them with you.



Established in 1843, Emmanuel Episcopal in Athens, Georgia, is a thriving parish church staffed by three clergy, an organist/choir director, and half a dozen administrators. Taylor and I were married here thirty summers ago, in 1994. Reverend Katie Bradshaw is the

rector, and The Very Reverend Clayton Herrington is the associate rector. Three services are held every Sunday, including one in Spanish led by the Reverend Fabio Sotelo.





At the Florence Turek Memorial Garden, MJ Turek snapped this photo of a curious plant in cruciform shape.



Clergy: Mtr. Barb Massenburg, retired; Deacon Alan Rockwood

Clerk: Ossie Knowlton

Sexton: Ellen Funk

Organist: Samantha Funk

Altar Guild Chair: Ellen Funk

Members of the Vestry: Lynn Clay, Senior Warden; Hunter Davis, Junior
Warden; Stephen Bradford, Ellen Funk, Peggy Pennington

Scroll editor: Rod Landis

St. John's Episcopal Church
503 Mission Street, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

