

Liturgical Celebrations

December and January at All Souls are full of wonderful celebrations. If you've worshiped in liturgical churches, the dates may be familiar and we'd love to tell you about how All Souls celebrates. If you haven't worshiped in liturgical churches, this all may be new to you, in which case, we'd love to introduce you to our cycle of seasons.

The Church Year begins each calendar year on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas. In 2011, this is November 27. The four Sundays preceding Christmas are the Sundays of Advent. This season's color is often purple, the color of preparation. Advent is a season of waiting and preparing for celebrating the mystery of the Incarnation at Christmas. Adults and children will both enjoy looking for the liturgy of the Advent candles that is added at the end of each Sunday's service during Advent. ☼

Feast of St Nicholas

Throughout the year, Anglicans often remember the lives of saints on certain days. They may be the birthdays of these saints, the date of their death, or perhaps some other memorable part of their life. December 6 each year is the Feast of St Nicholas, a commemoration of the death of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, in AD 343. On the Wednesday closest to this date every year, All Souls celebrates the Feast of St Nicholas. This year, we celebrated on Wednesday, December 7. Our celebration replaces our normal Wednesday Night programming and is a wonderful event for all ages. We present a short drama about the life of St Nicholas followed by activities, refreshments, and a cookie exchange downstairs. We also have a *St Nicholas Shoppe* where children and adults can shop for small items to give as gifts to their friends and family. All proceeds go to Outreach Community Center in Carol Stream. ☼

Renewing the POWER to *Love*

Surely, Martin, you are simply trying to make a Classical Anglican church."

So remarked Dr J I Packer, when, on the occasion of one of his visits, I confessed that I was not at all sure what it was we were trying to do, at All Souls; and as the years go on, I see, more and more, that Dr Packer is correct.

If "classical" is the one attribute that essentially distinguishes All Souls, within the Anglican firmament, then what is "classical"?

The OED helps, as always: that which is "classical" is that which is "regarded as representing an exemplary standard; traditional and long-established in form or style: a classical ballet." If one dares to take up the challenge, then what about All Souls is "exemplary," marked, not just by faithfulness to a tradition, but to a tradition worthy of faith: of trust: of adherence; especially in face of the clamoring, consumer-oriented chaos which defines the Church in our time and place? In which relevance to how you, as an individual, feel about yourself, is the Gold Standard of everything.

At such a time and in such a place as this, the standard we seek is not at first to be found, where we might expect: in doctrinal definitions—the 39 Articles, for example—which, although definitive, were normative in name only; but in the nearly five centuries of Common Prayer; especially as embodied in the Book of Common Prayer (1662), and its derivatives.

As one who was brought to faith through just such a 'derivative', it is a source of chagrin that circumstances have denied us at All Souls a Prayer Book that is shared with the community of Anglicans to whom we belong. The Common Worship of the Church of England has, for the 7 years of our existence, provided us with our liturgical texts: but these are continuously being created to complement—not to supplant—the continued use by the C of E of the Book of Common Prayer (1662); and we must do the same. We must bring that Book, and the values it expresses, more explicitly into the life we share.

Why? Are we now running a museum?

No.

But we are acknowledging that this Book, the Book of Common Prayer (1662), constitutes "the first significant period of an area of study" (OED). It is our "classic."

Of course, the Book of 1662 is, itself, simply a faithful expression of that which came to be 100 years earlier, in the work of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?

—Romans 5:10 ESV

Christmas Eve & Day

At All Souls, our Christmas Eve service is full of candlelight and carols. This family-friendly service begins at 7:00 pm. There is Nursery care available for ages 0-3, though we encourage families to include children in this service.

Christmas Morning is a Sunday this year. It will be a quiet celebration of the arrival of the Newborn King. To encourage families to worship together, we will not have Children's Worship that morning. There will be Nursery care for ages 0-3.

At All Souls, we celebrate the Nativity with the arrival of the Magi, at Epiphany. Be sure to look for details about our Epiphany celebration in January's **Around All Souls**. ❁

LOVE *continued* ◀

Ashley Null has persuasively proposed (Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power to Love, OUP: 2000), that the essence of the Anglican understanding of the Work of Salvation wrought by God in Christ, of how it is that sinsick and self-centered humanity is made right with a God, gracious and loving, whose own Gold Standard for common life cannot be compromised, is embodied in the Book of Common Prayer that Cranmer developed. And that understanding is best expressed in Scripture:

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
(Romans 5:10 ESV)

God did not wait for us to make ourselves worthy, or even for Himself to make us worthy, and—only then—love us. It was while we were still unworthy, still His enemies, that He showed us His love on the Cross. The love of God for a fallen humanity is the love of a God Who loves His enemies, and if it is anything less, it is nothing. And we are lost.

I hope to be able to discover, again and again, as we go forward, the value of this insight; and of that in our Anglican Way which is inspired by this insight.

If All Souls can keep this in heart and mind, and be faithful to this inheritance, as we seek to shape a community of action and contemplation, we will be well on the way to whatever God has in His heart and His mind for our future.

—Martin ❁

The Jesse Tree

Are you familiar with the Jesse Tree? Perhaps your family creates one at home during the Advent season. We have one at All Souls and we'd love to introduce you to it. It lived for a time in our Narthex, but this Advent season, it has moved down into the Undercroft so that the children can decorate it each Sunday and work with the ornaments. Each day during December through Christmas Day, an ornament is added to the Jesse Tree that sits on the top shelf in front of the windows. We have chosen to use bare branches for our Jesse Tree because it highlights this quiet season of waiting and allows us to see the ornaments more clearly around the tree.

The ornaments of the Jesse Tree tell the story of Jesus' genealogy and bring to light for us the whole of redemptive history. You and your children may enjoy watching as our ornaments are placed on the tree.

We have several books in our library that explain the Jesse Tree and are a guide for families who want to do a Jesse Tree at home. Ornaments can be ornate and elaborate, or even simple paper ornaments, hanging from a paperclip. Each ornament has a passage of Scripture to go with it. You might want to add this tradition to your family's Advent celebrations. We have extra copies of one Jesse Tree book. Please feel free to take one to use with your family. ❁

For unto you
is born this
day in the
city of David
a **Savior**,
who is
Christ
the Lord

—Luke 2:11 (ESV)

See if you can figure out how each ornament relates to the Story:

Dec. 1: a globe

Dec. 2: an apple with a snake wrapped around it

Dec. 3: an ark and a rainbow

Dec. 4: a camel and a tent

Dec. 5: a lamb

Dec. 6: a ladder

Dec. 7: a colorful coat

Dec. 8: a tablet with 10 numbers

Dec. 9: a cluster of grapes

Dec. 10: a sheaf of wheat

Dec. 11: a slingshot

Dec. 12: a scroll

Dec. 13: a tree stump with a fresh shoot

Dec. 14: a lion and a lamb

Dec. 15: a dove and a crown

Dec. 16: a shepherd's staff

Dec. 17: a cross

Dec. 18: a heart with writing on it

Dec. 19: Bethlehem

Dec. 20: a fiery furnace

Dec. 21: a brick wall

Dec. 22: a star

Dec. 23: a candle

Dec. 24: an angel

Dec. 25: a baby in a manger