

For the Week of December 30 - January 5
Sunday, December 30, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we come to the close of the calendar year and prepare to greet 2019, I take the opportunity to say thank you to all who work so hard, with so much dedication, in support of the life and work of this parish. Saint Nicholas' Episcopal Church functions as a mission and ministry center because of the care and nurture it receives from you its members. I have every confidence that your commitment to Jesus and his church will continue to be manifested in the new year.

This Sunday, the Sunday after Christmas, our liturgy will be Holy Communion with Christmas Lessons and Carols. This lovely service allows us to hear the story of God's love as told in Holy Scripture, and to sing the carols and hymns of Christmas. I look forward to worshipping with you, and lifting my voice with yours in praise and thanks for the grace that God so freely gives us.

The following Sunday, the sixth of January, will be the Feast of the Epiphany. We read from Matthew's Gospel account about a refugee family seeking sanctuary from terror. Like countless others before and after them, this family will seek safety and succor in a strange land. And, they will find it.

May each of us in the new year be open to the blessings God provides, and may each of us be a blessing to others.

Faithfully,

Bill
(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of December 23 - December 29
December 23, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

I know that I am not being original when I say that “time flies.” But it sure does, and this coming Christmas’ celebration will be the fourth since I returned to Saint Nicholas’ in the fall of 2015. So, once again, I offer my prayers and best wishes to all for a blessed Christmas.

Luke’s narrative of the birth of Jesus reminds us that God often engages us in less than obvious ways. An animal shelter in a little back water village in Roman occupied Palestine, is not the place that common wisdom would direct us to find the birth of the Messiah, the anointed savior of the world. But, that is where Luke sets his narrative, little Bethlehem.

As we gather on Christmas Eve to celebrate the Incarnation, the festivities in Manger Square, outside the sixteen centuries old Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, will be coming to a close. Christian peoples of Palestine, and from a great number of the nations of the world, will be dispersing having celebrated with great joy the mystery of God’s love. In the context of that mystery, we are one with them in our awe of the glory of the Lord, the light of the world.

May the peace of the Christ Child be your peace as well.

Faithfully,

Bill
(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of December 16 - December 22
Sunday, December 16, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

I hope that you find some time for prayer and reflection during the closing days of Advent. Time to pray and reflect upon what the birth of the Messiah means to you, how it relates and engages with your life. What might God be calling you to be in the wake of that birth in the little village of Bethlehem of Judea?

It seems to me that is what Dickens' Christmas Carol is all about. Ebenezer Scrooge, albeit not necessarily willingly, finds his life interfacing with the good news of the birth of Jesus; and with that, discovers new purpose for that life and has a spiritual renewal.

My Advent prayer for all of us is that we feel the gentle touch of God and hear the still small voice of God's Spirit. The touch of love and the voice of hope enriching us with the promise of Christmas, and compelling us to be true to the image we have been created in, the Image of God.

Faithfully,

**Bill
(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)**

For the Week of September 23 - September 29
Sunday, September 23, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

Matthew 9:9-13

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a

physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

This past Friday was the day the Church sets aside to remember Saint Matthew the Apostle. I don't know about you, but Matthew's relationship with Jesus is a cause of hope for me. If Jesus engaged with Matthew, there is hope for me. After all, Matthew was as unclean as unclean can be. He worked in a system that brought him into contact with the gentile Romans. He handled the Roman coins with their inscription of the emperor. And, there was every good chance that he was either skimming or extorting. Yet, despite all of this, Jesus goes up to him and says, "Follow me."

Not only does Jesus invite Matthew to follow him, he breaks bread with him. Not only does Jesus break bread with Matthew, he, and his disciples, break bread with other tax collectors and sinners. Jesus engages in a relationship with the unclean, the impure. And when the Pharisees question this behavior, Jesus does not make excuses. Rather, he claims what he is doing as natural and merciful. It is those deemed outside the pale of faith that God in and through Jesus is inviting to come in.

So, if there's a place at the table for Matthew, there is hope that I have a place as well. Indeed, as I read and follow scripture, I am more and more assured that God really wants me at the table. In Jesus, God makes it clear that God prefers inclusion over exclusion. And, if God desires my company, then most assuredly God desires the company of all who "Stand in the need of the Lord."

Lo, Jesus saw the people of Saint Nicholas' and said, "Follow me." And they gathered with him to break bread together.

Faithfully,

Bill

(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of September 16 - September 22
Sunday, September 16, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

January 20, 2019 seems a long way off; after all, summer is not officially over. However, I am calling your attention to a very important event that will be held on that Sunday at 2:00 p.m. in the Baby Grand in Wilmington. That event is the final of the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. communications contest, MLK VOICE 4 YOUTH.

High School students from throughout the state of Delaware are invited to participate in this contest are responding to the question: *Guided by Dr. King's work in the 1960's for nonviolent social change, what do you propose to improve your future and our communities?* The response to this question may be communicated by poetry, rap, or speech. Three of the students who reach the finals on January 20 will receive a monetary prize: First place, \$2000.00; second place, \$1000.00; third place, \$500.00.

Information about this contest is posted on the bulletin board. Registration closes on the 20th of December. For more information, contact Jane Rubini at jrubini@christchurchde.org or 302-655-3379.

Faithfully,

Bill

(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of June 24 - June 30
Sunday, June 24, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

Below you will find an invitation from Bishop Brown and the Reverend James Bimbi to join them next June on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. What a wonderful opportunity to experience the land of Jesus with our Bishop and Father Bimbi. That this pilgrimage will be undertaken with the spiritual and intellectual guidance of Saint George's College Jerusalem only adds to its attractiveness.

As most of you know, I can and do give personal witness to the faith stirring experience that is when one walks the hills of the Galilee, wades in the sea of Tiberius, meditates in the Judean Wilderness at sunset, and contemplates the mystery of the empty tomb in the Church of the Resurrection. So I urge you to consider joining with our Bishop, Father Bimbi and fellow members of the Episcopal Church in Delaware and walk the story of our Faith in the land where it all began. It is not too early to plan and save for what may be a once in a lifetime opportunity. For more information, phone Fr. Bimbi's office 302-994-1584.

Faithfully,

Bill

(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

The Rt. Rev. Kevin S. Brown, *Bishop of Delaware*, and the Rev. James M. Bimbi, *President of the North American Committee for St. George's College Jerusalem*, invite you to join them on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, June 13 - 22, 2019.

Registration with a down payment is needed ASAP to hold your space. Contact Jim today for more information and to begin your registration process. 302.994.1584

For the Week of June 17 - June 23
Sunday, June 17, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Yard sale, held this past Saturday, raised about \$1,200.00 for our Outreach Ministries. Because of this, people in need and or distress will have their lives blessed and hopes raised. I know that raising these funds did not come about without a lot of hard and time consuming work. My thanks to Sue DeGraff and those who put in hours preparing for the Sale, staffing the merchandise tables, the food and bake good venues, and clearing and cleaning at the close of the day. Bless you, every one of you.

Faithfully,

Bill

(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of June 10 - June 16
Sunday, June 10, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

This past Saturday, the 2nd of June, our Vacation Bible School team spent the morning planning for the July 9-13 event. It was a very productive meeting, and my thanks to Barbara Scira for leading us through an examination of the curriculum. Also, my thanks to the team members for stepping forth to take on the leadership roles necessary for a successful Vacation Bible School (VBS).

This year's VBS theme is *BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS*. The curriculum is Bible based and is developed around Matthew 5:9: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. The goal is that the children will understand that:

- Peacemakers find good ways to solve problems.
- Peacemakers help other people.
- Peacemakers speak up for what is right.
- Peacemakers ask for help to resolve conflicts.

The VBS is open to children entering kindergarten through children entering the fifth grade. Since we are getting back into VBS after several years off, we are limiting the enrollment number to about 20. There will be information and registration forms available at the Yard sale this Saturday the 9th of June.

Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.

Faithfully,

Bill

(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of June 3 - June 9
Sunday, June 3, 2018
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

From the Pastor's Pen:

Dear Friends in Christ,

This week a word of congratulations to all in the Saint Nicholas' orbit who are graduating from high school or college. What a wonderful and exciting time it is to be engaged in the transition that graduation marks. New adventures are ahead, decisions are to be made and goals to be set.

Some of you will be going to work, some into the military, and some will be continuing your formal education. Whatever choice is made, may it be one that gives fulfillment and provides opportunity for using and developing the gifts and skills that are yours.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may the Lord make his face shine upon you and give you peace, this day and all the days of your life.

Faithfully,

Bill

(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)