

For the Week of March 24 - March 30  
Sunday, March 24, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

Dear Friends in Christ,

People of faith around the world are in solidarity with the Muslim community of Christ Church, New Zealand in this time of horror and grief brought about by the terror attack on their mosques. At least fifty people were murdered as they gathered in prayer and worship. The white supremacist who took their lives targeted them because they were Muslim immigrants.

We have once again experienced the slaughter of men, women and children congregating in places of worship. A church in Charleston, South Carolina, a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and now mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand are no longer places of sanctuary, rather targets for hate. The people who left their homes in Christchurch, never to return, set out to do what so many of us do on Fridays through Sundays, they set out to be in fellowship with others as they worshipped the Lord their God.

Our prayers are indeed offered for those murdered in Christchurch as well as their families and community. We grieve for them, and we grieve that once again hate and bigotry have been served by an awful act of terror. We are mindful of the words of the poet: "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." It tolls for this denial of our common humanity.

Faithfully,  
Bill  
(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of March 10 - March 16  
Sunday, March 10, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

Dear Friends in Christ,

**The Gospel reading for this Sunday, the First Sunday in Lent, is Luke's account of the temptation of Jesus: After his baptism, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. We reflected on Jesus' Baptism on the First Sunday after the Epiphany. Now, on the First Sunday in Lent, we will reflect on his struggle to grasp the meaning of this anointing.**

**The rest of Luke's Gospel is the narrative of Jesus incarnating his understanding that God's anointing meant that he was to announce and give witness to the kingdom of God. In this Lenten season, we will follow that narrative to the Cross, and beyond, to the empty tomb. We will discover the cost to Jesus of being the anointed one, and the promise for us because he is.**

**Prayers for a holy Lent for each of us.**

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

For the Week of March 3 - March 9  
Sunday, March 3, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## ***From the Pastor's Pen:***

**Dear Friends in Christ,**

**As we are approaching the forty day season of Lent, it is not inappropriate that we take a deep spiritual breath before stepping off on the journey through that season to the Cross and beyond. Taking a deep breath is a way of collecting oneself before engaging in an undertaking or task. Taking a deep spiritual breath is a way of clearing ones heart and mind in order to better experience the "still small voice" of God's admonition to listen to his son.**

**We will read the transfiguration story in this Sunday's Gospel account from Luke. At the conclusion of this reading, the heavenly words directed to us at Jesus' baptism will be repeated: Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him. We are informed as we enter Lent that we will be in for a time of listening. A reminder, listening is not a casual act, it is intentional and can be challenging. It might even be life changing. While the voice of God may come as a breeze, its effect can be as the winds of a storm.**

**So, find time to be quiet and listen, if only for a few moments. At the least, it might prove restful, but, at the most it might open you to a vision of God, and to God's vision for you.**

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

For the Week of February 24 - March 2  
Sunday, February 24, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## ***From the Pastor's Pen:***

**Dear Friends in Christ,**

**What a joy this past Sunday to have seven pre-teen children with us. And, what a pleasure it is that they felt at home and enjoyed their Saint Nicholas' experience.**

**I have been blessed during the many days of my life to meet and share good news with children in all sorts of situations. Often these have been children who, for all intents and purposes, live under stressful and oppressive conditions. From Port-au-Prince in Haiti to Pretoria in South Africa, from East Wilmington, Delaware to occupied Palestine, children, who are often living on the edge of disaster, reveal an inner reservoir of hope and trust. When I listen to the better angels of my nature, I know that I am meant to be an assurance that their trust and hope is not in vain. I am meant to be their voice and presence, interfacing with the powers and principalities that mock their dignity and deny their worth.**

**During the upcoming season of Lent, I encourage you to join me in praying and advocating for the children of the world. Especially, during this holy season, for the children of the Holy Land who live under the daily stress and humiliation of military occupation. Pray for the children of Hebron in occupied Palestine who daily pull on their back packs and walk the gauntlet of the check point police on their way to and from school. Pray and advocate for the twelve year old boy who is awakened in the middle of the night by the military police who have entered his bedroom to take him from his parents because he has been accused of throwing stones. And, as you pray, may you know the peace of the Lord down in your heart.**

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

For the Week of February 17 - February 23  
Sunday, February 17, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

Dear Friends in Christ,

Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

Deuteronomy

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans

We read from both Deuteronomy and Romans this past Sunday, the 10th of February. I have quoted from the closing lines of the appointed readings because I find them to be compelling. In spite of so much in humankind's religious story that proves divisive, so much that seems to promote exclusion rather than inclusion, these lines speak to a different possibility, the possibility that God's love reaches beyond race and creed, beyond ethnic and national identification.

The Deuteronomist instructs the Hebrews about their obligation once they enter the Promised Land. They shall return to God a thank offering and then they shall celebrate. And, that celebration is to be inclusive, all are to be invited, including the people who already inhabited the land.

Paul in his letter to the Romans proposes that God calls, invites, all to know life through his reconciling love made known in Jesus. There is no distinction he says between Jew and Greek (non-Jew). The Lord is ready and desirous to hear all who reach out in faith to be blessed by the saving love of God; a love incarnated in Jesus.

Sisters and brothers, this is good news. It resonates with that verse from John 3:16, so often promoted on bumper stickers: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Faithfully,

Bill

(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of February 10 - February 16  
Sunday, February 10, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

Dear Friends in Christ,

In my past message, I wrote about the use of money, of financial resources, and how Jesus and Holy Scripture pay a great deal of attention to this use. Now, a few thoughts about the connection between our financial resources and the Church.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament, there are countless admonitions to present the obligatory tithe to the religious authorities. One might make offerings as well, but the tithe was mandatory. Jesus will call for offering from abundance, for being just and fair with one's financial resources. We might remember the widow's offering:

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." Mark 12

As was said last week, there are many demands upon us as we consider the use of our resources. Some are mandatory, such as local, state and federal taxes. In the case of our tax dollars, a portion goes to agencies and activities that care for the needs and wellbeing of those in need. Other uses are voluntary, charity offerings. These support causes and programs at the local, national, and international levels; causes and programs that assist others in times of natural disasters, or help underwrite medical research in the quest to overcome the many diseases that threaten human life.

And there is the Church and its relationship to our financial resources. We commit financially to the life and work of the Church because we believe that its witness to the Kingdom of God calls for our participation. We do this, not because we are buying God off, but because it is what we do as people who have acknowledged Jesus as the Lord of our lives. We do this because we believe that the Gospel is of great value, too valuable for us not to walk its talk. We do this because our resources, joined with those of others, enables ministries of health care, education, and peace of justice, at home and around the world.

I encourage you to consider the use of your resources after your death. For sure, with whatever these resources are, care for those you love. But, also give prayer and thought to

**the ongoing mission and ministry of the Church. The Book of Common Prayer contains this admonition:**

**The Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for the well-being of their families, and of all persons to make wills, while they are in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting, if they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses.**

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

For the Week of February 3 - February 9  
Sunday, February 3, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

Dear Friends in Christ,

**Have you ever stopped to think what Jesus' most talked about topic was according to the Biblical narrative? Well, it was about money, wealth and possessions. I have seen one statistic reporting that about 15% of his preaching and teaching was about this topic. Indeed, in the Bible there are over 2300 verses dealing with money, wealth and possessions. Jesus could be direct about accumulating and using wealth, too direct for many of his listeners and often for us.**

**A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.'" He replied, "I have kept all these since my youth." When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich.**

**And in case one gets too big headed about her or his generosity, Luke tells us that Jesus, pushy as ever: Looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.**

**As individuals and as families, we daily make decisions about how we use the financial resources available to us. This is so no matter how great or how small these resources are. For some of us, there may be times when these decisions are excruciating: food or the rent/mortgage; medicine or the power company; maintenance on the car or the needs of a child or parent. For others, there is a far more leeway in deciding how our resources are distributed.**

**Even compulsory expenditures allow us to contribute to the common good. We pay our taxes and part of each dollar paid is used in the nurture and care of those in need, at home and abroad. And, we may benefit from this. For instance, if a member of your family has been served by Medicaid, your tax dollars were at work. Or, when the police break up a narcotics ring, your tax dollars are at work.**

**We also choose how to distribute our resources. The United Way, our favorite school or college, the arts, social service agencies, these and more are destinations for our giving.**

**What about the Church? What is the connection between our faith, hope and love in Jesus and our financial resources? Tune in Next Week!**

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

For the Week of January 27 - February 2  
Sunday, January 27, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## ***From the Pastor's Pen:***

**Dear Friends in Christ,**

**I was delighted by the energy that developed at our Annual Meeting this past Sunday. It confirmed that the life and work of Saint Nicholas' Episcopal Church continues to be important, meaningful and worthwhile for you. This parish is a good place to call ones' spiritual home, and a good place in which to become disciples and apostles of the one whose birth we so recently celebrated. In other words, it is a good place in which to put the walk to the talk of our baptisms, as we were reminded when we celebrated the Baptism of Jesus.**

**By honoring our baptisms, we of Saint Nicholas' identify ourselves as steadfast members of the Jesus Movement. The life and work of Jesus of Nazareth is our life and work, and the evidence of our faithfulness is revealed by the quality of our commitment to the great commandment: You shall love the Lord our God with all your heart, and with all your**

soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10). And, of course, we know who our neighbor is, even the one for whom our default position is rejection (visit Luke 10:25-37).

Having said yes to God through our baptisms, we are incorporated into the Jesus Movement. So then, we are in the line of the prophets who spoke the word of the Lord, and of the apostles who served the Living Word of the Lord incarnated in Jesus. Let's not allow the energy of this past Sunday dissipate. Let's realize it in our worship, our service, our evangelism and our fellowship.

Faithfully,  
Bill  
(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of January 20 - January 26  
Sunday, January 20, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last Saturday I attended the ordination and consecration of Charles Lane Cowen as a priest in the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. The service, which took place at Trinity Church in Wilmington, was a lovely one. As fitting for Trinity Parish, it was conducted in both English and Spanish.

I am always interested in how the preacher at an ordination develops her/his sermon. In this case, the preacher constructed her sermon around the theme of Joy. She contended that joy is center in the life of a person/institution living a life in Christ, and that Charles is one whose life is so lived.

The next morning I was with you during our Sunday gathering for worship and fellowship. The service was held in the context of the celebration of the Baptism of Jesus. And in this context, we celebrated our own baptisms, especially the baptisms of the children and young people in the Life in Christ program.

The snowy messy weather did not put a damper on the joyfulness of the occasion. Being in relationship with Jesus and with one another is indeed a cause for joy. And, baptism establishes us in such relationships. The community of Jesus is a community of joy, and the reality of this joy is expressed through love. Jesus puts it this way in John's Gospel Account:

**As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15)**

**To put this another way, how about the lyrics of a song most of us have sung at some time in our lives:**

I have the joy, joy, joy,  
Down in my heart, (where?)  
Down in my heart, (where?)  
Down in my heart,  
I have the joy, joy, joy, joy,  
Down in my heart, (where?)  
Down in my heart to stay.

And I'm so happy, so very happy  
I have the love of Jesus in my heart.  
(Down in my heart)  
And I'm so happy, so very happy  
I have the love of Jesus in my heart. (George William Cooke)

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

For the Week of January 13 - January 19  
Sunday, January 13, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

**Dear Friends in Christ,**

**This Sunday, the 1st Sunday after the Epiphany, is the occasion for celebrating the Baptism of Jesus. We will read from Luke's Gospel account that Jesus was baptized during the period when John was baptizing in the Jordan River. This Sunday is commonly known as the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus, and is one of the normative occasions for baptisms.**

**While we do not have candidates for Baptism at this time, we will focus on it on Sunday. In the course of holding up Baptism, we will give special attention to the children who have**

been baptized here at Saint Nicholas'. These children are members of our Life in Christ Ministry, a ministry unique to our parish.

The Life in Christ Ministry provides ongoing support for the children and their parents, enabling the children to live into the vows and promises made for them when they were baptized. Each child has an adult member of the parish who has accepted the calling to be the child's guide as he or she takes on the discipleship that is theirs in Christ.

For all of us who have been baptized, this Sunday provides a reminder for us as well that we have the same discipleship as the children. I remind us of what the Catechism says about this:

The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

I look forward to being with you on Sunday

Faithfully,  
Bill  
(The Very Reverend William B. Lane)

For the Week of January 6 - January 12  
Sunday, January 6, 2019  
Service begins at 10:00 a.m.

## *From the Pastor's Pen:*

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am writing this on New Year's Eve and there are less than seven hours left in 2018. So, by the time you read this, we will be in the new year with the days of 2019 stretching before us. Of course, the beginning of this new year will be informed by the events of the old. The so called slate is not wiped clean at 12 AM on December 31.

However, the story of the old year, while informing, need not dictate that of the new. To that end, I share the closing verse of the Christian martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer's New Year's 1945 Poem:

**While all the powers of Good aid and attend us,  
Boldly we'll face the future, be it what may.  
At even, and at morn, God will befriend us,  
And oh, most surely on each new year's day.**

**Bonhoeffer wrote this while in prison, just a few months before his execution by the Nazis. As the old year passed away, with all its tragedies and horrors, he was confident that the promise of God was the true reality for creation, not the seductiveness of evil.**

**So, into 2019 we go, taking with us the things from 2018 that still need doing, and those that need undoing. We go with the assurance that God does not withdraw God's promise, that God will indeed befriend us. We go holding dear that promise of God spoken by John, the promise that darkness cannot overcome:**

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.**

**Faithfully,**

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