



CATHEDRAL LIFE

Winter 2022



In days past some versions of the Book of Common Prayer listed major feast days in red print as a way to mark their importance. Therein lies the root for our phrase “red letter days”.

We have such days in our personal lives, don’t we? We mark birthdays, anniversaries, and graduations with a sense that something important happened on those occasions.

The cathedral, too, has red letter days. We soon will celebrate Christmas, New Year’s (in the church called the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus), Epiphany, and

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the Baptism of our Lord. Beyond liturgy, the vestry has been working on the budget and is preparing itself for the annual congregational meeting on Jan. 29. Throughout all these events, our excellent staff works hard to make things happen smoothly. We have many red letter days ahead of us soon.

A personal day for me and a transition day for the cathedral parish will arrive on Jan. 31. On that date my term of service ends and my time as Bishop-in-Charge ceases. As that time approaches I wish to make several comments.

First, the cathedral needs a full-time interim dean and rector. I am not able to do that for you. I am in my mid-seventies and find that I simply do not have the steam for full-time work anymore. That saddens me, but it remains as a fact of my life.

Second, in the early part of 2023 the vestry will begin its work of preparing for the search process for a new dean and rector. Indeed, it is the vestry in tandem with Bishop Taylor who will issue a call to that person. I know this is both an exciting and scary time for us, but I am certain our Risen Lord will be active in that process guiding you to the person he wants at the cathedral. In the meantime, the word is

PATIENCE. To carry out this call process properly simply takes time and has about it a hurry-up-and-wait feeling. Patience and prayer are the proper response.

Three, you are a wonderful community with many talented leaders. My sense is that the cathedral parish could well be on the edge of a new golden age.

Four, I have come to love and respect you. You have welcomed me warmly, have worked along with me eagerly, and have appreciated what I have to offer. Thank you. Know that my affection for and commitment to you will continue even when I am no longer among you. You will remain in my prayers and I will eagerly follow what happens in the next year or two.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Right Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart



The Trojan Horse of Anglican Tradition

Christopher G. Gravis, D.M.A.
Canon for Music & Cathedral Arts

As an Anglican musician, I'm afforded a wide degree of musical and liturgical latitude in many areas of our cathedral music making. That year-long grace comes with one major caveat: "Don't mess with Christmas! The music for Christmas is set in stone, as it has been since the birth of Christ; and ever shall be, world without end. Amen!"

I can't argue with that sentiment. And maybe I am an Episcopalian precisely because I hold that same desire at Christmas: a longing to tap into the collectively shared nostalgia for Christmases past, and a hope for the future. These desires are wrapped up in the scent of fresh juniper pine, billows of incense, and the strains of *O come, all ye faithful*....you know, just *exactly* as it was on that first Christmas in Bethlehem. What would Christmas be, after all, without the musical touchstones that bedrock our liturgical faith? I'm thinking of *Hark! The herald Angels sing*, *Of the Father's heart begotten*, and *Silent night*.

The Very Reverend Canon Daniel Ade once told me a funny story about a musician



in a parish where he worked; who, after a long career in music ministry, decided he'd switch things up for one Christmas Eve and forgo the singing of *Silent night*. In Fr. Dan's dramatic retelling, the people nearly rose up and publicly stoned the poor misguided fellow after the midnight mass!

We all know there are friends in our midst who only darken the door of a church but once or twice a year, and what is truly more special than an entire church on their knees singing *Silent Night* together by candleglow at 12.00am on a cold night? Isn't it (in part) exactly that experience they come for once or twice a year?

A cynical outlook might suggest that human beings only want to be comforted by the things they already know and love, and that the Church is but a crutch propping up this kind of misguided cultural nostalgia. But lately I've come to see things a bit differently: that the rich Anglican tradition we offer is a kind of benevolent decoy. With carefully placed intention, the real meaning of Christmas may dwell within, lying in wait to enter our hearts at the right moment. The traditions we know and love might actually be a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine (the deeper and more challenging meaning of Christmas) to go down.

For in all of the pomp and majesty of Christmas at the cathedral, the noble processions, the gorgeous greens and blooms, the candles, the profoundly beautiful music, and the Christ child in the crèche, there is a moment where people open themselves in kindness to eternal truths they would not otherwise be willing to hear the other 364 days of the year. It is precisely the seemingly warm comfort of tradition that primes our hearts, to make room for grace and truth to enter in.

There are few Christmas traditions more set-in-stone than the annual Carol Service from King's College Chapel, Cambridge, broadcast live around the world on BBC

radio to over a billion people every Christmas Eve. The service always begins with a chorister singing the first verse of *Once in Royal David's City*, and always concludes with a double-whammy of *O come, all ye faithful* and *Hark! The herald angels sing*.



Watching the carefully crafted service, the slow dignity of the choristers filing into their stalls, the perfectly elocuted lessons read with impressive emotional reserve, all within the hallowed stone vaulting and stained glass of Henry VI's fifteenth-century chapel, one might be lulled into the misunderstanding that all of this is merely the trappings of empire – a show that, while aesthetically satisfying, and unapologetically British, misses the true meaning of Christ's Incarnation. And yet, printed alone on the 3rd page of the leaflet for this year's service is the following sonnet entitled *Refugee*, by Malcom Guite:

*We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,
Or cosy in a crib beside the font,
But he is with a million displaced people
On the long road of weariness and want.
For even as we sing our final carol
His family is up and on that road,
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of
power,
And death squads spread their curse across
the world.
But every Herod dies, and comes alone
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.*

For some, Christmas may appear to be overly-commercialized opportunism, or sentimentalized tripe. If we do not open our hearts, as I and maybe you too struggle to do each year (and the days that succeed December 25), it may just be that. I haven't always been successful



each year, to be honest. But somewhere struggle to do each year (and the days that succeed December 25), it may just be that. I haven't always been successful each year, to be honest. But somewhere arresting half-diminished 7th chord on "Word of the Father..." in the last verse of *O come, all ye faithful*, and looking in the candlelit faces of choristers singing "sleep in the heavenly peace," we have the opportunity to make room in our hearts for those whom Christ came to save: the captive, the un-loved, the refugee, and those who mourn. As barren and cold a stable as that heart may feel, it is still a worthy place...if only we make room.

This year the Choir of St. John's Cathedral will premiere *Tollite Portas*, a new piece written just for us by composer (and countertenor in the choir) Vasken Ohanian, who has set Latin words from Psalm 24: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in." It is a brilliant piece, and deeply moving.

So this Christmastide, sing with joy and great gladness. Raise your voice with angels and archangels above (and those around us in our midst, particularly those in great need), and let the King of glory in.

Merry Christmas!



The Choral Academy at Christmas

Mr. Stephen Salts, *Director of the Cathedral Choral Academy*

The beautiful season of Advent has been particularly rewarding at St. John's this year, and the Cathedral Choral Academy choristers have been honored to participate in our services. The candlelit Procession of Lessons and Carols was a delight for us all and propelled the children into excitement for Christmas Eve. Families with children are warmly invited to our 5:00pm Christmas Eve family carol service, where the Choral Academy choristers will lead many beloved Christmas tunes.

It has been such a joy teaching our young choristers every Thursday evening for our weekly Choral Academy lessons and rehearsals. I am so impressed with their talent and commitment; congratulations Annika, Elliot, Irene, Noor, and Ryan on a fantastic first half of the choral season! And much gratitude to Ada Galindo for her weekly help with the choristers – we are very grateful!

From the Cathedral Choral Academy, we wish you all a joyful and most blessed Christmas ahead.

A Message from the Wardens

As I write to you we are in the season of Advent looking forward to the coming of our Lord in the midst of the shortest days of the year. When you read this, we will be approaching Lent, another period of reflection and anticipation. Meanwhile, as a parish we are in a period of discernment as we begin the process of selecting a new dean and as we take the first steps towards developing our land for a higher purpose.

NEWS AND UPDATES

On February 5th 2023 we'll welcome back our deans, Father Mark and Father Dan for their last Sunday with us. They'll celebrate a mass and after the service we'll honor them for their many years of service to St. John's.

In November 2022, Michael Tracy, our junior warden and Nancy Koehring, our treasurer and I met with our developers to discuss the process of securing permits for our new building development which will break ground in a few years. We'll continue to keep you informed as we work through the beginnings of this exciting project which will not only help secure the future of the Cathedral and also be a benefit to the community.

In December 2022, Michael Tracy and I met with Bishop Taylor and canon to the ordinary Melissa McCarthy to begin the process of finding an interim priest to oversee St. John's during our search for a new dean. To lay out this process for you, let me explain first that Bishop Frank has served us as a volunteer, for which we are endlessly grateful. His term with us will end in February. He will be replaced with an interim priest who will be with us one or two years, while we search for a new, permanent dean.

In December Hamilton Yang and I met with our A/V contractor to troubleshoot some of the problems we've been having both with the livestream and with the amplification system in the cathedral.

Hamilton found a software problem that caused sound to drop out and those of you who watch the livestream should have noticed a significant improvement starting with the 4th Sunday of Advent.

Unfortunately, we also found some issues with our wireless mics, our amplifier and speakers. While we work on these problems we found a temporary fix and have patched in a portable speaker in the back of the church that has improved our in-house sound. Thank you for your patience as we deal with both a new system and while consider upgrading some of our older equipment.

I want to thank and recognize Hamilton for the many, many hours he has given to solving this problem.

Ways you can help

These are exciting and challenging times for St. John's. We are changing, and while change can be unsettling, it also opens up many new opportunities and possibilities. If you're thinking of deepening your faith now is the time to commit more to your parish. There will be many opportunities to pitch in, to volunteer and, if you can, to give of your abundance to St. John's. This is not a time to be a "armchair parishioner" – there's so much work to do!

First, we are forming committees to oversee some of these challenges and opportunities. Right now we are putting together a committee to develop a parish profile—to help define and describe our community to potential priests. And we are also putting together a search committee to conduct the search for a new dean. If your interests or gifts incline you towards these committees, please let me know.

We also face an acolyte shortage. Serving at the Lord's altar in this lay position is a great way to deepen your faith journey. We're a relaxed crew and your participation helps us maintain St. John's renowned liturgy. Please talk to me, or my wife, Kelly Coyne, if you have any questions about serving as an acolyte.

Our food pantry continues to serve more and more people in our difficult economic times. We appreciate all those who give to and volunteer to the pantry now, and I'd encourage you to give and volunteer if you haven't. I'm hoping, as senior warden, to find some additional funding so we can expand our outreach and fulfill Christ's call to serve our neighbors.

As always, we need money. While we have good news on the forward progress of the development, we face financial challenges in 2023. We have lost over \$100,000 in annual rental income, and will need to make that up in other ways. So I encourage those of you who don't pledge to consider filling out a pledge card. Any commitment, even a small one, is greatly appreciated. To those of you who do pledge, I thank you and ask you to consider giving a little more this year. One advantage of being a pledging member is that you will be qualified to serve on the Vestry, which is another great way to help St. John's.

If you'd like to fill out a pledge card online, you can do so here: <https://forms.gle/26A6ueHTc1HCfyRt9>

Another way to help is to simply show up to Sunday services, to Compline, and to our education hour. Many of us have spent a lot of time isolated in the past three years. But the truth is, you can't do Christianity alone. Part of the way we experience Christ's grace is in the body of Christ, through face to face encounters.

While quiet time in personal prayer is part of our practice, the other part is group worship and fellowship. St. John's is committed to keeping people safe, from helping people get vaccinated to masking when appropriate. I believe that we are reaching a period in the pandemic where the risk of loneliness and isolation is greater than the risk of the disease. We look forward to seeing you in person in this blessed year of our Lord 2023. Thank you

In closing I'd like to offer abundant thanks: thanks to all of you who I see on Sunday, and who form this community. I want to offer special thanks to Bishop Frank for the many hours he has volunteered to St. John's, celebrating mass, preaching, teaching classes and supervising staff. Many thanks also go to our choir master Dr. Christopher Gravis, our organist Zack Neufeld, and our amazing choir which makes our liturgy shine. I want to thank our administrator Kyle Black, our sexton Ada Galindo and Kelsey Delgado who runs our livestream and social media. Without these three, St. John's simply would not function. Thanks again to Hamilton Yang for his work on the sound system.

Thank you to our acolytes, ushers, lectors, altar guild, and the flower guild for the vital work they all do every Sunday. Thank you too, to our rosary group for all their prayers, and the Daughters of the King for forming the backbone of this community.

Thank you all, again. We are very blessed.