



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Las Posadas.....	2
Ellen Summers.....	3
◀ Labyrinth Walk.....	3
Treasurer's Report.....	4
Community Bookstore.....	5

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2012

PARISH POST

the magazine of holy trinity episcopal church | (336) 272-6149 | www.holy-trinity.com

Experience the Holy Anticipation of Advent The Season of Waiting Has Opportunities for All Ages

December 2 is the start of a new year. The church year begins with the season of Advent, which starts the fourth Sunday before Christmas (this year December 2) and ends on Christmas Eve. The Christmas season begins Christmas Day and lasts for 12 days, though January 6.

Advent, from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning coming or arrival, is a time of waiting and preparing for the coming of Christ.

Advent is meant to be a hopeful time. But for many people, those four weeks before Christmas are stressful. Days and nights are packed with shopping, cooking, parties and activities.

Advent is our opportunity to do things differently, to make quiet time, to prepare.

“Observing Advent is as important as observing the rest of the church year,” said Ginny Herring, assistant to the rector. “We do ourselves a disservice when we celebrate Easter and Christmas and leave out the rest of the calendar. Then we have taken those observances out of context.”

At Holy Trinity, the change in season is noticeable. Hangings and vestments are changed to blue, the color symbolizing hope.

The music during services changes said organist and assistant choirmaster Ben Brafford.

“There’s a discernible shift to the more contemplative side of music expression in tone and message,” Ben said.

“We have hymns and service music we only hear during Advent. The texts reflect the waiting for Christmas, with words like come, soon, longing, wait and near. Advent music is about anticipation.”

Ginny added, “The lessons and hymns reflect a focus on two things: Old Testament scriptures containing references to the messiah, which were read by the early Christians as predictions of Jesus’ birth; and the second coming of Christ, or the end times, and the manner in which we should live to prepare for that coming. Some theologians today look at this as an emphasis on the ‘coming of Christ into our lives.’”

Observing Advent at home is a wonderful way to be mindful of the deeper meaning of Christmas and the coming of Christ.

Marjorie Donnelly, director of Christian Formation, said there are many ways families can emphasize the meaning of the season.

“Children have an innate sense of anticipation and expectation,” Marjorie said. “On a car trip, the question that parents hear repeatedly is, ‘Are we there yet?’ In Advent, there is the sense of waiting for and expecting something holy to occur. Children naturally greet this waiting time with excitement. To build on this sense of excited anticipation, families can create traditions that children can count on to be repeated each year leading up to the birth of Jesus.”

One tradition is an advent calendar. Children open a

// In Advent, there is the sense of waiting for and expecting something holy to occur. Children naturally greet this waiting time with excitement. //

– *Marjorie Donnelly*

continued on page 2

Advent *continued*

door or window on the calendar for each day as a countdown to the birth of the Savior.

Families can make an advent wreath, which includes four candles placed in a circle, often with evergreens at the base, with a fifth candle in the center. One candle is lit on the first Sunday in Advent, two on the second Sunday, three on the third, four on the fourth. The center candle is lit on Christmas Day.

Ginny said that when her children were young, they celebrated all the liturgical seasons. “We always had an Advent wreath that we lit on Sunday afternoon,” she said. Their observance included a short verse and response and sometimes a sentence of scripture.

Holy Trinity parishioners can enjoy a meal and make an advent wreath in the Haywood Duke room on November 25 at “Circles of Light—The Family Advent Wreath.” The event is for young and old, families and singles.

Families who have a nativity set can have young children gather straw (or wood shavings or similar material) for the manger. For every good deed done during the week, straw is placed in the manger. On Christmas, the Christ child is added.

A Jesse Tree is made from a bare branch or twigs or a house plant. Children can decorate it with ornaments (bought or made) that are symbols of people from the Old Testament – an apple ornament for Adam, a burning bush for Moses, a rainbow for Noah. Each day is an opportunity to read or learn and add

an ornament.

This year, Holy Trinity will start the tradition of Las Posadas, where a doll-sized holy family travels from parish family to parish family (see accompanying story).

A family Advent tradition is a good way to slow down in order not to miss the essence of Christmas: how the Christ child was born.

“Advent provides us with a context



Eli and Sam Inman tell about the nativity journey using the Las Posadas figures while their friend Amelia Owens listens.

not only for Christmas, but for the rest of the story” Ginny said. “And, not incidentally, it offers an alternative to the insane rush of the Christmas season.”

—Harriette Knox

Sources: “To Dance with God,” Gertrud Mueller Nelson; “Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas,” multiple authors.

The Night of Las Posadas

Mary and Joseph and their donkey are on the move, headed to Bethlehem, but they need shelter every night. Are you willing to make room for them?

Las Posadas (*posadas* is Spanish for lodging or accommodation), is a Mexican tradition which recreates Mary and Joseph’s search for a place to stay. Figurines of Mary, Joseph and the donkey travel from home to home in a community or parish.

“I think this is a tradition that will help families bring some ‘holy’ into the holidays,” said Ginny Inman, assistant to the rector.

Holy Trinity families will be able to sign up during November to take in the holy family. The requirements are simple: be willing to open your home to the holy family, care for them for 24 hours, and deliver them with care to the next household.

Mary, Joseph and the donkey travel in a basket with the book *The Night of Las Posadas*, a CD of Christmas music, and a journal to record the holy family’s activities.

In the journal, families can include photographs, drawings and memories of their experience with the holy family. Parents

and children can plan and prepare where they will house the holy family, talk about what they might need, and reflect on the meaning of the season of Advent.

The Inman family will be the first host at the start of Advent, December 2.

Las Posadas is an opportunity to create a new Advent tradition, meet new families, practice hospitality and honor the true meaning of Advent, anticipating the birth of Christ.

Ellen Summers Shares Her Gift of Writing Scholar, Poet and Novelist Teaches in Servant Leadership

Ruth Anderson: You are a Shakespearean scholar, a poet and now a novelist. Wow. Where did you get started on your journey?

Ellen Summers: Right up the road at Chapel Hill with a Ph.D in English in 1988. Just before graduation, I had the good fortune to get a job offer at Hiram College in Ohio and taught Shakespeare there in the English Department for 17 years.

RDA: With tenure at Hiram College and as a full professor, how did you ever decide to leave?

ES: Actually two things were happening at once: my mother was in her last illness and I was growing more and more restless at Hiram. I came to Greensboro to be with my mother and to support my sister who lived here and was a caregiver for Mother. Even though I was secure at Hiram College, I knew that part of my life was coming to a close. I moved in with my sister after my mother died, and we’ve happily shared a house since then.

RDA: When did you first come to Holy Trinity?

ES: (Laughs) On Holy Trinity Sunday in 2009 and Bishop Curry was the preacher. I sensed immediately that this was a remarkable community. I joined the choir, took classes at The Servant Leadership School of Greensboro and knew this was the kind of faith community that would help me with this next stage of life.

RDA: What happened next in your professional search?

ES: People do not hire middle-aged Shakespearean professors (unless they are widely published) and I was not interested in going back to college teaching anyway. Then my cousin, and mentor, Pat Schneider, suggested that I offer writing workshops in the method taught by Amherst Writers and Artists. I became certified in this method and now I use it here in Greensboro.

RDA: What is the Amherst Writers and Artists method?

ES: This is a method designed to protect new writing. In a safe environment, everyone is encouraged to support the writing of other members of the group—rather than criticize it. The reason for this is that new writing, first draft writing, is damaged by critique. On the other hand, writers have an unreliable sense of what works well in their own new writing, and it’s enormously helpful for others to point it out. We teach from what is strong in a piece of writing, not what is weak or in error. After people relax, they are truly flabbergasted at what writing comes out of them.

RDA: If I came to your writing class who and what would I find there?

ES: We laugh a lot! All kinds of people come—from professional writers to those who have not written at all. Some want to write a memoir and others just want to find their voice. If they are in that circle of writers, I know that they have been called by God to write. This is a very exciting process to watch in the participants. I observe as they become more and more confident as they find their voice in their writing and this directly relates to a new confidence they are finding in their lives.

RDA: Tell me about your poetry.

ES: I have been writing poetry since I was a child. One time, I literally woke up and wrote down the poem from my dream. When I moved here I got serious about my poetry and joined a poetry critique group in the Writers’ Group of the Triad. This group has been very stimulating and supportive of my work. In the first part of my career, I studied other people’s poetry, but now I am a poet myself.

RDA: I understand that you have several of your poems published and that you have had some awards. Please tell us about these.



Photograph by VanderVeen Photographers

ES: *Fire and Chocolate*, the Writers’ Guild of the Triad poetry anthology, four poems in the January 2012 issue.

Dead Mule, four poems in the April 2012 issue.

Bay Leaves 2012, “Water the Lover.” NC Poetry Council, honorable mention in the Shull category (formal verse).

Pinesong 2012: “A Sonnet’s Call to Form” (3rd place in Scott category—formal verse) and “Everything is Round at the Circus” (1st place in Nixon category, children’s poetry). NC Poetry Society.

RDA: And now I understand you are working on a novel?

ES: I took some classes in the Enneagram through the Servant Leadership School and from Russ Hudson and this helped me discover a great deal about who I am. I can actually forgive myself for not being someone else. What a precious gift! I also realized that the Enneagram is a godsend for the development of fictional characters, and I got the idea to write a series of novels with each protagonist as a different Enneagram type. I am finishing a novel whose central character is Type One. The working title is *The Road to the Center*.

continued on page 6

Memorial Labyrinth Walk Walk to Remember Lost Loved Ones



After the Memorial Service on Sunday, December 9, the Labyrinth Keepers offer the opportunity for a quiet, meditative walk on the labyrinth in Broome Hall. There will be candlelight, prayer shawls and music for walkers to enhance the experience.

So – what is the labyrinth all about? Where did it come from? How do I walk it?

St. Augustine wrote “*Solvitur ambulando*,” which means “It is solved by walking” and many of us have found this to be true as we go about our daily tasks.

Although the word “labyrinth” is frequently used incorrectly as a synonym for “maze”, it is not designed to trick the walker, but to lead safely to the center. There are no wrong turns, just one path that loops around. The same path is used to return to the starting point and leave the labyrinth. Walking requires a minimal level of concentration to stay on the path and allows the mind to be open to focus internally.

The labyrinth we have at Holy Trinity is modeled after the one set into the stone floor of Chartres Cathedral in France in 1201 AD. Notre Dame de Chartres was designated as a pilgrimage cathedral during the middle ages, and it is believed that the devout who could not travel to Jerusalem would come to Chartres and walk the labyrinth as the final stage of their pilgrimage.

In modern times, it has been rediscovered as a meditation tool and thousands of labyrinths have been constructed in public and private spaces across the globe.

There is only one rule for walking the labyrinth and that is “there is no wrong way to walk”.

Some walk with “release” on the way in, getting rid of the anxieties and problems of everyday life, with “receive” as they pause in the center, and with “return” as they bring what they received back into their life.

Some enter with a difficult choice or concern, hoping to find clarity as they walk. Some walkers wrap themselves in prayer shawls which can symbolize God’s love and the love we remember from those we see no longer. Often, we walk holding those we know who are ill or in distress in our hearts.

What can we receive from walking the labyrinth? Its messages are as unique for each individual. It can be a metaphor for our journey through life, with its twists and unexpected turns. It can be a way to sort out the cares and concerns that plague us.

Prayer shawls lovingly made by Holy Trinity members will be available to aid in walking the path after the Memorial Service. This can be a quiet and deeply resonant way to remember loved ones. We invite you to share this experience with us on December 9.

– Libby Haile

Money Matters Our Treasurer’s Report

With the annual meeting and vestry election behind us, we are in the midst of our Every Member Canvas and beginning our planning for the 2013 budget. Please prayerfully consider your pledge and if you are able, consider an increase. It does not have to be large; an increase of \$10 per month from every pledging unit could mean enough funding for an additional clergy member.

I seem to remember an old cliché that says you won’t get into too much trouble if you do the things you are supposed to. As we enter the advent season, I am struck by my knowledge of all the good things that we, as a parish, do. There is our commitment to Christian Social Ministries, our ministry with refugees, the Servant Leadership School, Glory Ridge, helping to make Muriel’s Servant Garden work, the Sacred Garden Bookstore – I could go on for a long time.

So if you are giving to Holy Trinity and Holy Trinity is passing on some of what you give to the less fortunate, then I suppose we are doing the things we are supposed to do, and we should not only not get into trouble, but we should know that we are blessed by our actions as we bless others.

Finally, as I have said before, if you have questions about our church finances, please call or e-mail me jcompton1@triad.rr.com. As your Treasurer and a parishioner, I believe that the fiscal strength of our parish is important, and I am committed to making the finances of Holy Trinity transparent to all parishioners.

Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the remainder is needed by others.
– St. Augustine

John Compton is a parishioner and serves as Holy Trinity’s treasurer. He can be reached via e-mail at jcompton1@triad.rr.com.

The Sacred Garden Bookstore Is More Than a Bookstore Fulfilling Its Mission by Building Community

You’ve heard the phrase, “You can’t tell a book by its cover”. Nor can you tell the Sacred Garden Bookstore by its building. From the outside, you see rocking chairs on the front porch inviting you to sit with a good book and a cup of fresh-brewed coffee.

Your first impression when you walk in the bookstore may be fairly typical of any other independent niche bookstore – shelves full of interesting books, soothing music playing in the background, comfy chairs just waiting for you to sit and read. But that’s just the beginning.

As volunteer Celia Snaveley says, “The bookstore is a profoundly sacred space. For me, no matter what frame of mind I come in with, this space has a healing character. And when I leave, I’m somehow healed, renewed, refreshed. I don’t think that I’m alone in that respect. The simplicity of the space appeals to the senses. The opportunity to come and sit in this space offers a special kind of hospitality that says all are welcome. It’s hospitality in a very natural way. It feels like home. The people who come in the bookstore are like family . . . a community.”

Community is exactly what makes the bookstore more than what you see from the outside.

Sacred Garden Bookstore’s mission is to be a sacred space for individuals and groups in the Triad community and beyond seeking a deeper understanding of their faith journey. The bookstore carries out its mission in many ways – and not all within the confines of the converted house at 215 West Fisher Avenue.

The bookstore is the resource for all the churches in the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina in filling special orders for prayer books, hymnals, calendars and church supplies.

The bookstore goes on the road several times a year to attend the annual conventions for three Episcopal dioceses (the Diocese of North Carolina, the Diocese of East Carolina, and the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia) selling books and church supplies at a discount. Clergy conferences and Episcopal Churchwomen (ECW) annual meetings are other opportunities for the bookstore to go on the road building relationships and building community along the way.

Back at the bookstore, Greensboro area non-profits such as Faith Action International House, Peacehaven Community Farm, Sanctuary House and other groups like the Cone Congregational Nurses and Chaplains hold regular meetings. Some of Greensboro’s non-profits have honor cards in the bookstore during the Christmas season. In 2011, close to 900 honor cards for nine non-profits were sold raising \$4,445 for the organizations.

At Christmas, the bookstore provides books at cost to the children of Partnership Village – a transitional housing community for formerly homeless individuals and families. Each December, the bookstore holds its annual Alternative

Christmas Sale selling not only non-profits’ honor cards but also fair trade items and crafts by local artisans with a portion of the proceeds going to Holy Trinity’s Global Mission outreach.

This year, the bookstore will have honor cards for ten non-profits – Backpack Beginnings, Barnabas Network, Faith Action International House, Greensboro Urban Ministry, Habitat for Humanity, Holy Trinity Youth, Mary’s House, Peacehaven Community Farm, The Servant Center, and, new this year, The Strength and Honor honor card dedicated to the support and education of area firefighters in memory of LCPL Andrew D. Russoli.

Also, the bookstore will have jewelry and craft items from the Amani Children’s Foundation which serves children orphaned by poverty and AIDS in Africa. The Alternative Christmas Sale starts Sunday, November 25, and runs through the month of December.

The bookstore offers other opportunities for building community. During Cynthia Bourgeault’s workshop held in the fall of 2011, last Spring’s Co-Creation event, and last month’s Welcoming Prayer workshop, the bookstore was well stocked with books related to the events.

Recent book signings, poetry readings, artist receptions and concerts have been held on weekends bringing creative energy to the bookstore. A new offering, Servant Leaders Circle, on the second Saturday of each month has been started so Servant Leadership School students can continue the dialogue from classes.

So stop by the Sacred Garden Bookstore. We’re open seven days a week. Come in and enjoy the conversation. All are welcome as we grow in community.

– Jane Cooke



Bookstore manager Shelley Miller and volunteer Celia Snaveley stand next to one of the unique handmade items in the store—Ellen’s Angels.

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
607 North Greene Street
Greensboro, NC 27401
(336) 272-6149
www.holy-trinity.com

Non-profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 122
Greensboro, NC

The Rev. Timothy J. Patterson
Rector

Return service requested

The Rev. Virginia N. Herring
The Rev. Ginny Bain Inman
Assistants

Ellen Summers *continued*

RDA: I can't wait to read it.

ES: I would have appreciated knowing about my "true self" a bit earlier in my life. I am hoping through this writing, that perhaps someone will see and forgive him or herself for not being someone else.

RDA: Your life has changed a lot in these past three years since coming to Greensboro.

Ellen: (Laughs) Yes! And when I visit relatives these days, they tell me that I have really changed—that I am more relaxed—that I have changed for the better. And I think that is true. But I had to let go, as we learn in servant leadership, in order to have this new life emerge.

Writing as Co-Creating

Thursdays from 2-4 p.m. beginning in January 2013 for 8 weeks

In this eight-week class, we will more deeply explore our capacity for vivid writing. A powerful means of spiritual development, writing offers ways to explore oneself as one creates gifts for the world. Nobel Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison put it this way: "Struggling through the work is extremely important, more important to me than publishing it. If I didn't do this, then I would be a part of the chaos."

Open to all writers, beginning and experienced, in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

Class is limited to 12 students.

Location: Café Space, 211 W. Fisher Avenue

Led by: Ellen Summers, PhD

Holy Trinity on the Cloud

Move over Herald Angels, Holy Trinity has moved to the "Cloud". A few weeks ago, Holy Trinity completed a transition to recordkeeping for the church being maintained on a new on-demand site accessible through the internet.

When faced with the need for a newer, larger computer to handle the church's records, we decided to investigate alternatives. Our software, from ACS Technologies, Inc., is generally considered the standard for larger churches and provides an excellent base for recording and reporting the myriad of activities that happen in and around the church.

"Cloud" computing is a concept that has developed over the past few years and offers many benefits that can be delivered from a central location. It provides staff with the ability to work outside the office, increases data security with automatic backups, and reduces information technology maintenance with seamless upgrades and updates.

There are numerous time and expense savings that will result from the change: no longer will there be a need for backing up data files and storing the back-up at a remote location and we will be safer from losing our data as a result of a break-in or lightning strike.

This is just one way in which the church is using technology to our advantage and saving the parish money in the process.

– John Compton