



The New Epistle

a newsletter of

The Progressive Episcopal Church

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January 2016

January



THE EPIPHANY

January and the New Year are here, and those of us who are clergy or church musicians (or in some cases, both) are feeling a bit drained, and doing their best to relax and unwind a bit after the busiest time of the church year. Some of us are already looking at December 2016 with some dread, since Christmas Eve will fall on a Saturday, and we are wondering in advance about getting enough sleep between the end of Christmas Eve midnight Mass and Christmas Sunday morning services. For many people, double-brewed espresso might be an option on Sunday morning. But thankfully, we have some eleven months to go before we have to deal with the realities of time and schedule and wakefulness.

Twelfth Night, or Epiphany, is when the Eastern Sages, the Magi, found Jesus a few years after his birth. This feast day is also known as the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Epiphany, with a lower cases “e”, means a revelation. Webster’s dictionary defines it thus: “(1) a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something; (2) an intuitive grasp of reality through something (as an event) usually simple and striking; (3) an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure.

Epiphanies come in all shapes and sizes. It may be as simple as discovering that your local supermarket has started stocking that new flavor of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream you read about two weeks ago. Or it may be more sublime, such as sitting at the top of a rocky bluff overlooking a deeply wooded gorge and feeling the gentle breeze around you, and suddenly having the awareness that this is the very breath of God you are feeling. The breath of God that stirs the leaves of the trees, that gives birds flight, that scatters seeds to new soil; the breath of God that nurtures life itself.

Through the working of the Holy Spirit we are often provided with insight into the Divine, into the nature of God. As I sit writing this article just after midday in December 30, the headlines are full of stories about the power of nature. In western Texas have been heavy snows and blizzards, while the eastern side of the state has dealt with flooding. In the midsection of the United States there has been much violent weather, with heavy rains and flooding, as well as tornadoes causing much damage as well as loss of life. Recent headlines from England, particularly around Yorkshire, bring us more news of flooding and centuries-old buildings lost or heavily damaged by the waters.

The destruction is of course saddening, with so many lives affected by human and material loss. But in all this we are reminded that the Earth itself is a living creature. Every so often, I spend some time on YouTube and watch videos of landslides and flash floods, earthquakes where you see water coming up out of the ground (liquefaction), and other natural occurrences. While these things are destructive to human-built things, it is part of the creative process created by God. Volcanoes under the sea eventually break the surface and create new lands, where plant and animal life will soon enough take hold. We read in Genesis that God created the earth and all that is in six days. Yet that creative process continues as shifting plates create new lands and reshape others. As the earth’s climate cycles through warm and cold as it has done for millions of years, other changes will be seen. Rising seas may submerge some land, but geologic processes create new lands.

God continues to reveal his nature to us in the natural world around us. It is living, breathing, constantly creating, reforming, refining. So ought it also to be with us. We should never be afraid to try a new way of doing something, or a new way of thinking, especially when it has the ability to transform us for the better in some way. When I was a child, my mother always encouraged me to take the time to understand how other people thought and why, so that I might gain another perspective. I might not agree with the other person’s perspective, but I would have nonetheless gained in knowledge and wisdom.

Likewise is our faith. God is not limited to Creeds, doctrines or theologies. We cannot define something which by its very nature cannot be defined. God simply is. As we read on Exodus, God is the great "I AM." God exists *in* us, since we are part of his Creation. God is manifest in the trees and mountains around us. Many indigenous cultures for millennia have known this, and respected and revered it. Today there is a nice word for it: *panentheism* – God in all things and all things in God.

Back in the early 1990s as I was being prepared for Confirmation in the Episcopal Church, our priest reminded us that "God works and speaks to us through people, places, and things." How true this is! It is this voice of God that brings us those epiphanies, those revelations, about the nature of God *and* about more ways to fulfill the Great Commandment that we love one another.

May we be open and receptive to all those epiphanies God has in store for us in 2016! There are there for us, and for our very highest good.

Blessings and peace!

+Thurlow



EVOLUTIONS

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Miscellaneous TPEC news

We mourn the loss of former TPEC Bishop Ron Thompson, who passed away Christmas Eve. He served us as Diocesan of Delta diocese.



We congratulate Rev. Mark Bowen and Gabriel English on their marriage in Ft Myers, Florida on December 27. Rev. Bowen serves a small but vibrant faith community in Puerto Rico.





From the Office of the General Secretary

A brief reminder that there are costs associated with the administration of The Progressive Episcopal Church. To date I have paid them all out of my own pocket, to the tune of some \$1200, which represents the period March – December 2015. My primary income is SSDI, where every penny counts, and some months I have had an overdraft due to TPEC expenses.

Please consider a contribution to TPEC to support the costs of administration. Checks may be made out to Rev. Thurlow Weed and mailed to the General Office at 1005 N. Columbus St., Lancaster OH 43130. Support can also be given via PayPal using the identifying address of tweed@greenapple.com. Whatever your means of giving, you will be provided with a receipt.

Thank you,
+Thurlow Weed
General Secretary



PHILLIP BROOKS, 1835-1893, Bishop of Massachusetts, is commemorated on January 23rd. He is perhaps best known today for his hymn, “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” He was an imposing man, standing 6’ 4”, and graduated from Harvard at the age of 20. He graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary in 1859, ordained priest in 1860, and in 1862 became rector of Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia. On April 30, 1891 he was elected sixth Bishop of Massachusetts, and on the 14 October was consecrated to that office in Trinity Church.

During the American Civil War he upheld the cause of the North and opposed slavery, and his sermon on the death of Abraham Lincoln was an eloquent expression of the character of both men. In 1869 he became rector of Trinity Church, Boston; today, his statue is located on the left exterior of the church.

Although he despaired of Anglo-Catholic ritualism, he championed many aspects of the liturgical movement including congregational singing at the liturgy. At the Eucharist, for instance, he would preach, not from the pulpit, but from the chancel steps, and although he liked to preach in a black academic gown he never failed to appear in a commodious white surplice and priest's stole when he officiated at the office or Eucharist.

In 1865, Brooks toured the Holy Land, and on Christmas Eve he reportedly went to the spot where, according to tradition, Jesus was born. The Church of the Nativity, in Manger Square, has graced the spot since 346 A.D. While there, Brooks attended a six-hour service, lasting from 10 p.m. Christmas Eve until 3 a.m.

"The music and the scenes so impressed him, that a new carol was faintly formed in his mind."

Brooks, however, did not commit it to paper until some three years later when he wrote the carol especially for the children of his Sunday School in Philadelphia. He then gave his poem to Lewis Henry Redner, Holy Trinity's organist, who had previously asked his pastor to write a text, for which he would supply the tune.

The organist went to bed on Christmas Eve 1868, awakening several hours later with the tune ("St. Louis") of the carol ringing in his ears. Redner quickly jotted it down, fleshing out the harmony when he got up in the morning. It was sung a couple of days later (Dec. 27) in the Sunday School. The carol was published in 1874. From then on it marched its way into the minds and hearts of Christians everywhere. There is a stanza not included in our hymnals and songbooks that was present in the first program.

*Where children pure and happy
Pray to the blessed Child,
Where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the mother mild;
Where Charity stands watching,
And Faith holds wide the door,
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
And Christmas comes once more.*

In the chill of winter, January 1893, what began as a cold led to the death of Phillips Brooks. On January 26, activity in the city of Boston virtually ceased as Brooks' casket was carried on the shoulders of Harvard students to Trinity Church, where thousands came to pay their respects. Following the service where the hymns Jesus, Lover of My Soul and For All the Saints were sung, another service was held outside for the crowd that filled Copley Square.

Many sermons were given to honor this man's humility and service, yet he had not been one to speak of his accomplishments, but rather one who acted upon God's Living Word. "*Some men's faith only makes itself visible, other men's lightens everything within its reach.*" Brooks would never have claimed his statement for himself, yet his whole life was dedicated to being that light.

"How good it is that the divine light shines on many mirrors and completes its revelation in no single soul!"

"There is one universal religion - the religion of Love. Love your Heavenly Father with your whole heart and soul, love every child of God as much as ever you can, and remember that the possibilities of good are greater than the possibilities of evil; and you have the key to Heaven."

January

Birthdays

Rev. Daniel Beach
Rev. Colin Keller

Anniversaries

Rev Diane Rousseau
Rev. Claudia Hall

and a belated birthday greeting to Rev Ashley Beckham (Dec 31).



January 2016



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Churchman's Ordo Edition

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>READINGS Mass — Year C Office — Year Two</p> <p>Weekday Eucharistic Readings for use throughout the year are found in LFF, pages 498-528.</p> <p>See Notes on Reverse</p> <p>[] - In some Places.</p>	<p>Glo.—Gloria Cr.—Creed Prf.—Proper Preface of Adv.—Advent Inc.—Incarnation Epi.—Epiphany H.Wk.—Holy Week Eas.—Easter Asc.—Ascension</p>	<p>Pen.—Pentecost Tri.—Trinity Sunday A.S.—All Saints St.—Saint Ap.—Apostles Ded.—Dedication Bap.—Baptism L.D.—Lord's Day</p>	<p>Days of Special Devotion are noted with ✠</p> <p>Abstinence dispensed during Christmas season.</p>	<p>✠</p>	<p>THE MOST HOLY NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST [Circumcision of Christ]</p> <p>1</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>Christmas Feria</p> <p>2</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>
<p>The Second Sunday after Christmas Day</p> <p>3</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>Christmas Feria</p> <p>4</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>Christmas Feria Vigil</p> <p>5</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>THE EPIPHANY, OR THE MANIFESTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO THE GENTILES</p> <p>6</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Of the Octave</p> <p>7</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Of the Octave</p> <p>8</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Julia Chester Emery, 1922 Of the Octave</p> <p>9</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.St.2</p>
<p>The First Sunday after the Epiphany [Holy Family]</p> <p>10</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Of the Octave</p> <p>11</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1167 Of the Octave</p> <p>12</p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.2</p>	<p>[Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, 367] [The Baptism of Our Lord] Octave Day of the Epiphany</p> <p>13</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.[Tri.].Epi.</p>	<p>[Kentigern, Bishop and Confessor, 612]</p> <p>14</p> <p>Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>[Paul of Thebes, the ✠ First Hermit, c. 345]</p> <p>(Alternate day for M.L. King, Jr. - R) [Common of a Monastic II, Glo.Prf.St.(2)]</p> <p>15</p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.(3)</p>	<p>BVM on Saturday</p> <p>16</p> <p>Propers for May 31 Glo.Prf.Inc. or BVM (TASB)</p>
<p>The Second Sunday after the Epiphany</p> <p>17</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. or L.D.</p>	<p>THE CONFESSION OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE</p> <p>18</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Ap.</p>	<p>Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1095</p> <p>19</p> <p>Prf.Bap.</p>	<p>Fabian, Bishop and Martyr at Rome, 250</p> <p>20</p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.3</p>	<p>Agnes, Martyr at Rome, 304</p> <p>21</p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.3</p>	<p>Vincent, Deacon of ✠ Saragossa, Martyr, 304</p> <p>22</p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.(3)</p>	<p>Phillips Brooks, Bishop of Massachusetts, 1893</p> <p>23</p> <p>Prf.St.1</p>
<p>The Third Sunday after the Epiphany [Septuagesima - V] Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. or L.D. [Prf.Tri. or L.D.]</p> <p>24</p> <p>The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany [Sexagesima - V] Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. or L.D. [Prf.Tri. or L.D.]</p> <p>31</p>	<p>THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE</p> <p>25</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Ap.</p>	<p>Timothy [and Titus], Companions of Saint Paul</p> <p>26</p> <p>Prf.Pen.</p>	<p>John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, 407</p> <p>27</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.St.2</p>	<p>Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Friar, 1274</p> <p>28</p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Tri.</p>	<p>Feria ✠</p> <p>29</p>	<p>[Charles Stuart, King of England and Scotland, 1649]</p> <p>30</p> <p>[Glo.Prf.Bap.]</p>