



The New Epistle

a newsletter of

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December



An Advent Meditation for 2016

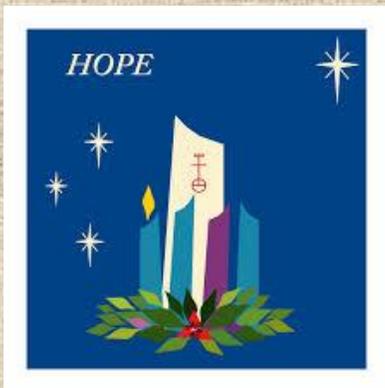
December – and the end of yet another year comes ‘round. It has been a year full of many things that weight heavily on the minds of many. In the United States it is a Presidential election years, and the concerns & fears of the world are valid regarding the results of the U.S. election. What we face politically is a disaster. The people of Europe are in a similar political chaos with Brexit. The United States and the European Union are in great political turmoil and upheaval, and life as we have come to know it is changing for everyone in these lands.

Here in the United States we are dealing with the ongoing oppression of our Indigenous People, and oppression that has been non-stop for at least 500 years. Clean water – the very essence of life itself – is threatened, not only in the United States, but throughout the world, by man’s greed and thirst for oil and gas.

In the Great Smoky Mountains, hundreds of wildfires continue to burn as November has turned into December; many homes & business have been destroyed, and people killed.

The end of November saw a category 2 hurricane ravage Central America simultaneously with a major earthquake. New Zealand endured several hundred major earthquakes following a disastrous one that shifted the entire northern end of the south island by several meters in a matter of seconds; 100-deep canyons were formed inland as the earth split in two.

The closer we get to the end of the year, the more intense everything seems to be with regard to things that adversely affect our human family.



Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek said in an interview a few months ago that a Trump Presidency would force both of the major political parties to reassess who they are, and where their corruption and dishonesty has brought them; that it will force the two parties to work together to repair a system that is badly broken.

Herein, I believe, is a great truth that transcends politics. There are many things throughout not only our government and its broken treaties with Indigenous People, but also within our communities, and indeed throughout our human family that are broken. Sometimes it takes a major catastrophe in order to unite all people of every belief or religion or political ideology to a common cause for the greater and common good.

I cannot help but wonder if the end of 2016 will be accomplishing just that. People all over the world are uniting in support of clean water and against corporate greed; people all over the world are coming together to help those devastated by the New Zealand quakes; the entire nation is coming together to bring assistance to those who have lost everything in the Tennessee wildfires. We are being forced to reassess what is truly important, and to separate the wants from the needs. We may want the latest iPhone, or the latest gadget, but do we really *need* it? In times of natural disaster, such as earthquake, fire, flood, storm we realise with a great suddenness what is truly important: food, clothing, water, and shelter; and that nothing else really matters.

It is perhaps oddly fitting that this purification by fire (an odd metaphor under the circumstances) should be happening at a season that is regarded by a multitude of religions as a time of rebirth and renewal. We are in the

darkest time of the year astronomically; soon the Winter Solstice will be upon us, and the days will slowly begin to lengthen. The god of light and life triumphs over the god of darkness and death. Christianity under Constantine adopted the pagan symbolism to apply to Christ, the Light of the World.

As the Solstice approaches, we see people of every race, every tribe, every colour, every creed, coming together around the world to unite in the common cause of protecting our Mother Earth from the poison of greed. Scripture tells us that we are to be stewards of each other and of the resources that God has given us; the Gospels are full of parables and sermons by Jesus telling us to do just this.

Christians around the world begin December with the season of Advent, a time of preparation. As we prepare for the coming Christmas, may we all take time to reflect on the simplicity not only of Jesus' birth as told by the Gospels, but on the beautiful simplicity of his message of love and universal reconciliation. May we renew our commitment to live our lives in that same simplicity to the best of our ability. May we learn from our Indigenous Brethren in Oceti Sakowin the message of peaceful prayer in times of adversity, and also be reminded by their example that God provides us with all the resources we need to care for our human family around the world and at home. We are reminded by them of what is truly important – life itself.



There is an old English carol called *Jacob's Well*, which reminds us of the very essence of Jesus' teaching and example:

*1. At Jacob's well, a Stranger sought
His drooping frame to cheer;
Samaria's daughter little thought
That Jacob's God was near.*

*2. This had she known, her fainting mind
For richer draughts had sigh'd;
Nor had Messiah, ever kind,
Those richer draughts denied.*

*3. This ancient well, no glass so true,
Britannia's image shows:
Now Jesus travels Britain through,
But who the Stranger knows?*

*4. Yet Britain must the Stranger know
Or soon her loss deplore;
Behold the living waters flow!
Come drink, and thirst no more.*

Jesus travels not only Britain, but everywhere. He is the Stranger among us, unknown. But we must know that in every Stranger is the Christ-light, and in that Light is the Living Water. May we learn to behold the Living Waters all around us, that we may drink and thirst no more.



The Leadership & Clergy of
the Progressive Episcopal Church
wish everyone
a blessed Holy Season.

May we all be bearers of the Light.





From the General Secretary

You probably noticed the absence of a November newsletter. To put it very simply, I have been overwhelmed by a multitude of concerns starting the end of October.

During the last week of June I moved my aging mother from Key West, Florida to Ohio. It was an unexpected move, but her Parkinson's Disease had started to progress to a point she could no longer live on her own. The resources available here in Ohio are vastly superior to what is available in Florida; further, she would be with family, rather than living 1200 miles away. My mother's decline has been rapid, and her new primary care physician felt that home health care would be invaluable, also to assist with pressure sores that had developed on my mother's feet. Thus she was enrolled in the Palliative Care program through a local agency. For those who may not know, "palliative care" generally indicates a prognosis of two years or less of life remaining. As she further has declined into more advanced stages of Parkinson's (PD), there are issues with mobility and falls.

She was hospitalized for a week, and as I write this she is in a nursing and rehab facility while the stubborn pressure sores on her heels are being addressed. There is the great likelihood at this point that she will no longer be able to live with us, but must live out her days in a nursing facility. While she would indeed be getting the needed care that exceeds what can be provided at home, it is nonetheless a difficult threshold to cross, especially emotionally. These concerns with all their inherent uncertainties, coupled with the political chaos and the war in North Dakota have, quite frankly, left me burned out.

But now December is upon us, and the busy liturgical season is upon us. As a church organist, I have music to prepare for myself and for a church choir, and a host of other things. I'm slowly crawling out of my shell, and am thankful for recent conversations and a few of those "little things" that have popped up that are helping greatly with my getting "back into the groove." (Nevertheless, there's that part of me that I think will perpetually remain a grumpy old stoat. Perhaps it's something that comes with age, where we tend to call things as we see them; at least this is what I've been told!)

2016 has been a good year overall for TPEC; we have experienced some wonderful and meaningful growth, and have planted two new churches! Given our political climate – both current and impending – 2017 looks to come with its share of challenges. But God's grace and peace are plentiful and unending, and we know that the Creator gives us all that we need to take on the tasks presented to us. What blessed peace this is!

Blessings & Peace!

DECEMBER COMMEMORATION – *Josephine Butler (Dec. 30)*

People making a difference

Josephine Elizabeth Butler (née Grey; 13 April 1828 – 30 December 1906) was an English feminist and social reformer in the Victorian era. She campaigned for women's suffrage, the right of women to better education, the end of coverture in British law, the abolition of child prostitution, and an end to human trafficking of young women and children into European prostitution.

Josephine grew up in a well-to-do and politically connected progressive family which helped develop in her a strong social conscience and firmly held religious ideals. She married George Butler, an Anglican divine and schoolmaster, and the couple had four children, the last of whom, Eva, died falling from a bannister. The death was a turning point for Josephine, and she focused her feelings on helping others, starting with the inhabitants of a local workhouse. She began to campaign for women's rights in British law. In 1869 she became involved in the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts, legislation that attempted to control the spread of venereal diseases—particularly in the British Army and Royal Navy—through the forced medical examination of prostitutes, a process she described as surgical or steel rape. The campaign achieved its final success in 1886 with the repeal of the Acts. Josephine also formed the International Abolitionist Federation, a Europe-wide organisation to combat similar systems on the continent.

While investigating the effect of the Acts, Josephine had been appalled that some of the prostitutes were as young as 12, and that there was a slave trade of young women and children from England to the continent for the purpose of prostitution. A campaign to combat the trafficking led to the removal from office of the

head of the Belgian Police des Mœurs, and the trial and imprisonment of his deputy and 12 brothel owners, who were all involved in the trade. Josephine fought child prostitution with help from the campaigning editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, William Thomas Stead, who purchased a 13-year-old girl from her mother for £5. The subsequent outcry led to the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 which raised the age of consent from 13 to 16 years of age and brought in measures to stop children becoming prostitutes. Her final campaign was in the late-1890s, against the Contagious Diseases Acts which continued to be implemented in the British Raj.

Josephine wrote more than 90 books and pamphlets over the course of her career, most of which were in support of her campaigning, although she also produced biographies of her father, her husband and Catherine of Siena. Josephine's Christian feminism is celebrated by the Church of England with a Lesser Festival, and by representations of her in the stained glass windows of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral and St Olave's Church in the City of London. Her name appears on the Reformers Memorial in Kensal Green Cemetery, London, and Durham University named one of their colleges after her. Her campaign strategies changed the way feminist and suffragists conducted future struggles, and her work brought into the political milieu groups of people that had never been active before. After her death in 1906 the feminist intellectual Millicent Fawcett hailed her as "the most distinguished Englishwoman of the nineteenth century".

-- from Wikipedia

		<h1>December 2016</h1>						
Copr. 2015, Ashby Co., Erie, Pa.							Churchman's Ordo Edition	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
READINGS Mass — Year A Office — Year One Weekday Eucharistic Readings for use throughout the year are found in LFF, pages 498-528. See Notes on Reverse [] - In some Places	Glo.—Gloria Cr.—Creed Prf.—Proper Preface of Adv.—Advent Inc.—Incarnation Epi.—Epiphany H.Wk.—Holy Week Eas.—Easter Asc.—Ascension	Pen.—Pentecost Tri.—Trinity Sunday A.S.—All Saints St.—Saint Ap.—Apostles Ded.—Dedication Bap.—Baptism L.D.—Lord's Day	In Old English (Sarum) Use, the Advent color is dark blue. See LFF pages 20-26 for Advent and Christmas weekday lessons.	Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, 1637 <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">1</h1> Glo.Prf.St.1	Channing Moore ✕ Williams, Missionary Bishop in China and Japan, 1910 <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> Glo.Prf.Pen.	[Francis Xavier, Priest, Missionary to Japan, 1552] <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">3</h1> [Common of a Missionary I Glo.Prf.Pen.]		
The Second Sunday of Advent <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> Cr.Prf.Adv.	Clement of Alexandria, Priest, c. 210 <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> Glo.Prf.Bap.	Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342 <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">6</h1> Glo.Prf.St.1	Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397 <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">7</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.St.1	[Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary] <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">8</h1> [Propers for May 31 Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc. or BVM (TASB)]	Advent Feria ✕ <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">9</h1> Prf.Adv.	Advent Feria <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">10</h1> Prf.Adv.		
The Third Sunday of Advent <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">11</h1> Violet may be used. Cr.Prf.Adv.	[Jane Frances de Chantal, 1641] <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">12</h1> [Common of a Saint I, Glo.Prf.St.1]	[Lucy, Martyr in Sicily, 304] <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">13</h1> [Common of a Martyr I, Glo.Prf.St.3]	[John of the Cross] (Ember Day) <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">14</h1> [Common of a Theologian and Teacher I, Glo.Cr.Prf.Tri.]	Advent Feria <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">15</h1> Prf.Adv.	Advent Feria ✕ (Ember Day) [O Sapientia] <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">16</h1> Prf.Adv.	Advent Feria [Raising of Lazarus] (Ember Day) <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">17</h1> Prf.Adv.		
The Fourth Sunday of Advent <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">18</h1> Cr.Prf.Adv.	Advent Feria <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">19</h1> Prf.Adv.	Advent Feria <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">20</h1> Prf.Adv.	ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">21</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Ap.	Advent Feria <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">22</h1> Prf.Adv.	Advent Feria ✕ <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">23</h1> Prf.Adv.	Vigil of the Nativity <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">24</h1> Eve of the Nativity - W		
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: CHRISTMAS DAY <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">25</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.	SAINT STEPHEN, DEACON AND MARTYR <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">26</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.	SAINT JOHN APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">27</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.	THE HOLY INNOCENTS <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">28</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc. Violet may be used.	Of the Octave (Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury - R) <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">29</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc. Commemorate Thomas Becket	Of the Octave [Josephine Butler, 1906] Abstinence Dispensed <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">30</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc. Commemorate Josephine Butler	Of the Octave [Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, 335] <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">31</h1> Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc. Commemorate Sylvester		

