



# The New Epistle

*a newsletter of*

The Progressive Episcopal Church

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## January



## THE EPIPHANY

OUR CALLING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

January and the New Year have arrived, and Christians around the world celebrate The Epiphany on January 6, and the Old Calendarists celebrate the Nativity that day. It is a time of new beginnings, not only for people of faith, but for all of us.

The year 2016 came to a rather volatile end, with the political situation in the United States becoming quite ugly, and the vast field of political corruption being increasingly exposed, and threatening to bring into being a state of oppression for so many of God's children who are perceived as being "different" in one way or another. The fact the calendar has changed to a new year hasn't changed anything here.

It is worth noting that while most of the world is recoiling in horror at what the incoming President will bring to the national and world stage, and although we are seeing a significant rise in hate crimes done "in his name" so to speak, we are also seeing a most startling unification arising in this country of people of all races, faiths, sociopolitical ideologies, etc. to oppose the xenophobia and other hateful and divisive activity that is taking place.

We may even add to that what I shall call the "DAPL Effect." The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) has been laying bare the oppression and persecution that our Native American brethren have undergone since the first Colonists arrived in the early 1600s. It has also exposed the great harm that fossil fuel pipelines cause to our Mother Earth – that Sacred Place which God created, and placed us in to be stewards thereof. Yet we have exploited our Mother's resources for personal gain, taking more than we need.

It is a sad reality that too many of our elected officials – particularly those on the national stage – are interested only in their own power and financial gain, and are indifferent to the very real needs of the people they are supposed to represent; they all too often seem to govern as did Yahweh – the war god of the Old Testament – constantly seeking to avenge perceived wrongs or aggressions or slights. The DAPL situation and our politics and the Middle East wars that are almost entirely about oil and natural gas resources are so hopelessly intertwined.

So what are we, who call ourselves Progressive Christians, to do about all of this? It would be very accurate to say it is overwhelming, and the future of our country and the welfare of its people, and the future of the world weighs very heavily on our minds; it has been very heavy on my mind, and I confess it has gotten me rather depressed at times. But then I think about the Legend of the Starfish.

*A vacationing businessman was walking along a beach when he saw a young boy. Along the shore were many starfish that had been washed up by the tide and were sure to die before the tide returned. The boy was walked slowly along the shore and occasionally reached down and tossed a beached starfish back into the ocean.*

*The businessman, hoping to teach the boy a little lesson in common sense, walked up to the boy and said, "I have been watching what you are doing, son. You have a good heart, and I know you mean well, but do you realize how many beaches there are around here and how many starfish are dying on every beach every day. Surely such an industrious and kind hearted boy such as yourself could find something better to do with your time. Do you really think that what you are doing is going to make a difference?"*

*The boy looked up at the man, and then he looked down at a starfish by his feet. He picked up the starfish, and as he gently tossed it back into the ocean, he said, "It makes a difference to that one."*

Webster's Dictionary defines "epiphany" as "*a*) (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; *b*) : a revealing scene or moment."

Despite all the negative things we see going on in our country and around the world, there appears to be rising in the midst of it a Great Awakening of sorts. People of every race, colour, creed, religion or no religion are rising up and saying "No more!" and making their voices heard. A search online reveals many worthwhile grassroots entities where you can help make a difference regarding fossil fuel pipelines, oppression of people because of their race, religion, gender, gender identity, etc.

But Scripture also reminds us in Mark 14:7a that "the poor are always with us, and we can help them any time we want." It sometimes takes a major crisis to awaken us out of our complacency and to suddenly see the bigger picture, and then know what needs to be done. This is the very nature of an epiphany! We are experiencing just that sort of an epiphany as 2017 begins. *Knock, and the door shall be opened; seek and you shall find; ask, and it shall be given to you.* We are God's children knocking on the door of justice and equality; it is that which we seek for all people; we ask for it, and we are given the path we must follow to attain that end.

But where to begin? You can send donations to Oceti Sakowin camp, as well as a host of other places and organisations that are there to make a difference. But you can also start right at home! Is there a soup kitchen in your community where you might give of your times and talents? A food pantry? A nursing home or hospice visitation group or team? Remember the starfish: there may be hundreds in need of help, but just because you cannot get to them all doesn't mean you cannot still make a difference for the better. Whether it is a kind word to a stranger or a helpful deed, our own communities are always places where we can make a difference for the better in someone's life.

People of all races, genders, faiths, and across the political spectrum are uniting to fight against racism and xenophobia in all of its manifestations. Just yesterday (9 January) I learned of a Dairy Queen in Illinois whose owner had a history of racism. It came to a head when he called an young Black woman a n\*\*\*\*\* in front of her 3-year-old daughter. Police were called, and the DQ owner proudly defended himself by announcing to the responding officer his hatred of n\*\*\*\*\*. While the police agreed it was reprehensible behavior, it was unfortunately not illegal. So the young woman took to social media, and also contacted the corporate headquarters of DQ. Shortly thereafter, the corporate office became aware of the young woman's social media post about it, and also the police report. DQ is one of hundreds of major corporations who maintain a zero-tolerance policy regarding racism and discrimination. The company shut down the franchise, and immediately revoked the owner's license.

This is where charity begins : -- at home. People uniting locally to bring the Light of equality, the Light of the Gospel, the Universal Principle of Love and Kindness. Like the pebble that is tossed into a calm pond, the ripples of that love and kindness spread in all directions.

Thus do we come to experience our own epiphanies, our own awakenings as to what is truly important for the good and welfare of God's Creation. May we be open and receptive to all those epiphanies God has in store for us in 2017! There are there for us, and for our very highest good. Remember the starfish.

Blessings and peace!



The Progressive Episcopal Church is a partner of the Charter for Compassion. The Charter for Compassion organization is the brainchild of author Karen Armstrong. Karen won the 2008 TED Prize. Her wish asked the TED organization to help her assemble the Charter for Compassion, a document around which religious leaders can work together for peace. In late fall 2008, the first draft of the document was written by the world, via a sharing website. In February 2009 the words of the world were collected and given to the Council of Conscience, a gathering of religious leaders and thinkers, who crafted the final document. The Charter was launched in November 2009. Charter for Compassion International is committed to making the world a better place. They work to establish and sustain cultures of compassion locally and globally through diverse sectors—arts, business, education, the environment, healthcare, interfaith communities, peace, restorative justice, science and research, social justice, social services, science and research and women and girls. You can learn more about the Charter [here](#).

TPEC receives regular newsletters and updates from Charter, and a recent communication shared this announcement:

### **A Great Opportunity**

We'd like to announce an extraordinary opportunity that is being given to us by the Chili's Restaurant chain. There are 1600 restaurants in the U.S. and in 33 countries of the world. From the beginning of January to March 31, 2017 Chili's will give the Charter 15% of the price of your meal. You just need to [print the coupons, available here](#) and present them when you order at Chili's. You can have only one coupon per table but you can go to Chili's as often as you can with coupon in hand. Print coupons and give to your friends. Pass them out at events.



# TPEC HAPPENINGS . . .

There are several things in the pipeline for 2017.

There are two planned ordinations that could not happen in 2016 due to scheduling and availability issues. One of these is the ordination and consecration of Canon Rick Ward-Harder as Suffragan Bishop of the Delta.

And speaking of Canon Rick, he is overseeing the creation of a new TPEC community in Arkansas. More info on that when things are a bit more congealed.

Statistics show that both our Facebook page and website have a regular stream of visitors, and more and more people are “Liking” our Facebook page. This is good to see, since it is the primary indicator of the extent of our presence “out there” and that more and more people are becoming aware of us.

## PRAYERS . . . .

We hold in prayer Rev. Daniel Beach, whose wife lost her mother in a tragic car accident just before Christmas.

We hold in prayer for Bishop Varga and the many changes in his life, but also celebrate with him his decision to return to work in Hospice.

We hold in prayer Canon Rick Ward-Harder as efforts proceed to begin another TPEC community in Arkansas.

We pray for all those who have no work, and those whose dignity is not respected.

Pray for our clergy and bishops, that we may continue in faith on that Path the Holy Spirit lays before us, bringing the Light and Love of Christ into a world so desperately in need of renewal, and that this Church may continue to be a vital part of that Journey.

*“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



# January 2017



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*Churchman's Ordo Edition*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>THE MOST HOLY NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST [Circumcision of Christ]</p> <p><b>1</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>Christmas FERIA</p> <p><b>2</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>Christmas FERIA</p> <p><b>3</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>Christmas FERIA</p> <p><b>4</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>Christmas FERIA Vigil</p> <p><b>5</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Inc.</p>	<p>THE EPIPHANY, OR THE MANIFESTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TO THE GENTILES</p> <p><b>6</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Of the Octave</p> <p><b>7</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>
<p>The First Sunday after the Epiphany [Holy Family]</p> <p><b>8</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Julia Chester Emery, 1922 Of the Octave</p> <p><b>9</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.St.2</p>	<p>William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645 Of the Octave</p> <p><b>10</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.St.2</p>	<p>Of the Octave</p> <p><b>11</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi.</p>	<p>Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1167 Of the Octave</p> <p><b>12</b></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><b>13</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.[Tri.]Epi.</p>	<p>[Kentigern, Bishop and Confessor, 612]</p> <p><b>14</b></p> <p>Prf.Epi.</p>
<p>The Second Sunday after the Epiphany</p> <p><b>15</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. or L.D.</p>	<p>Feria</p> <p><b>16</b></p>	<p>Antony, Abbot in Egypt, 356</p> <p><b>17</b></p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.2</p>	<p>THE CONFESSION OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE</p> <p><b>18</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Ap.</p>	<p>Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1095</p> <p><b>19</b></p> <p>Prf.Bap.</p>	<p>Fabian, Bishop and ✠ Martyr at Rome, 250</p> <p><b>20</b></p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.3</p>	<p>Agnes, Martyr at Rome, 304</p> <p><b>21</b></p> <p>Glo.Prf.St.3</p>
<p>The Third Sunday after the Epiphany</p> <p><b>22</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. or L.D.</p>	<p>Phillips Brooks, Bishop of Massachusetts, 1893</p> <p><b>23</b></p> <p>Prf.St.1</p>	<p>[Francis DeSales, Bishop, Confessor, Doctor, 1612]</p> <p><b>24</b></p> <p>[Common of a Theologian II, Glo.Cr.Prf.Tri.]</p>	<p>THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE</p> <p><b>25</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Ap.</p>	<p>Timothy [and Titus], Companions of Saint Paul</p> <p><b>26</b></p> <p>Prf.Pen.</p>	<p>John Chrysostom, ✠ Bishop of Constantinople, 407</p> <p><b>27</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.St.2</p>	<p>Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Friar, 1274</p> <p><b>28</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Tri.</p>
<p>The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany</p> <p><b>29</b></p> <p>Glo.Cr.Prf.Epi. or L.D.</p>	<p>[Charles Stuart, King of England and Scotland, 1649]</p> <p><b>30</b></p> <p>[Glo.Prf.Bap.]</p>	<p>Feria</p> <p><b>31</b></p>	<p>READINGS Mass — Year A Office — Year One Weekday Eucharistic Readings for use throughout the year are found in LFF, pages 498-528. <i>See Notes on Reverse</i> [ ] - 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 ✠ Abstinence dispensed during Christmas season.</p>