

ATONEMENT

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH ON TOBACCO ROAD

an amount on the UTO Offering by next week.

ATONEMENT NEWS BRIEFS

Christmas Gift Giving at Atonement

Through the hard work of many parishioners gifts were donated to children of the families that come to our Food Pantry. Over 100 children were provided gifts for Christmas. On Saturday, December 14th the wrapping of gifts took place and then the gifts were distributed on December 21st.

The 12 Days of Christmas Pageant

The children of the church presented the 12 days of Christmas at the 6 PM service on Christmas Eve. Jeremy and Susan Wall organized and directed the efforts of the children in this year's pageant. Father Miller explained the meaning of the 12 days after the pageant. See the article later in the Newsletter, which explains the 12 days.

THE MISSION VESTRY MINUTES- November 2002

Father Miller opened with a prayer.

Minutes of the October meeting were read. Kathy made a motion to accept the minutes. Sara seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Pam reported that pledges are down as some members of the congregation think that because we paid off the Church mortgage we do not have a payment on the Parish House. Father Miller will write a letter and explain to the congregation about the mortgage on the Parish House. We had \$42.00 donated for CPC. Pam will have

John made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Suzanne seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business:

We are still looking to put a ceiling fan in the kitchen. Mike has taken care of some of the electrical problems. Father Miller will get someone to look at the main breaker.

New Business:

It was decided to send the money from the Advent Folders to the Church in Jerusalem.

The Korean church will be leaving as soon as they get their building finished. The speakers belong to the Korean Church. We need to replace the speakers. Father Miller will get some prices. We will need the nursery open for Stewardship Sunday, the Annual Meeting, and the extra Christmas service.

Jr. Warden's Report:

John reported the frames around the doors at the church are rotting, and need to be replaced.

The lights on the front porch of the Parish House are not burning. We need to get them looked at.

Sr. Warden Report:

John read a letter from the Bishop about Clarkson Point. He would like the Augusta Convocation to build a house at Clarkson Point for a "caretaker" so the property would have someone to look after it. Kathy made a motion to donate \$120.00 for Clarkson Point. Nanette seconded. Motion passed. Suzanne reported she would not know how much the van rental for the Acolyte Festival would be until tomorrow.

Vicar's Report:

Father Miller read a letter from The Rev. Sr. Rosina A. Ampah asking for donations to a

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mission in Ghana. Nadine made a motion to send \$100.00 from the Mission/Vestry Discretionary Fund to the Ghana mission. Suzanne seconded. Motion passed.

Father Miller reported the Diocesan Asking for 2003 will be \$10,745.00.

The January 18th meeting for small congregations will be held in Cochran. Father Miller would like to have as many people as possible from Atonement to go. John made a motion to adjourn. Suzanne seconded. Motion passed. Father Miller closed with prayer.

THE VICAR'S COLUMN

Our Annual Meeting saw three Council Members elected. We welcome Gloria Blackwell. Robert Cortes, and Jeremy Wall newly elected to full three- year terms. We also elected John Smith as Senior Warden and Shelley Hounsell as Junior Warden.

We almost have a balanced budget 2003. There a few people to be contacted that normally pledge that have not done so yet. This is my annual reminder for everyone to be thinking of applying for parish status. According to the letter from the Bishop [dated 1999] we have to be able to support a full-time priest within the next three years by 2004. That means at the Diocesan minimum salary scale [to include housing, utilities, pension, medical and social security differential] and is willing to contribute to the Diocesan Program budget, which we already do. After two years of that accomplishment we could apply for Parish status. Sixty days prior to the annual Diocesan convention the Wardens and Mission Council could petition the Bishop and Standing Committee to be admitted as a Parish. It would go before the convention for the first vote and again the following year. If the petition passed the second year then Church of the Atonement would be a Parish, in the Diocese of Georgia. The soonest we could apply would be the Convention of 2005, if we were paying a full salary in 2004. But we must begin now to think and believe "Parish."

To become a Parish we will need to increase our membership and that means all of have to do our

part in bringing people who are unchurched to Christ. If those people have been members of a church at some time in their life and are now not attending a church, then invite them here.

The Bishop' s Visitation will come on Wednesday April 23rd 2003.

At Sunday's service [January 5th] we will install our new vestry and the officers of the E.C.W. During 2003 we will be starting some new ministries here at Atonement and begin organizing ourselves for growth in membership. We will be taking a dedicated position toward establishing goals for growth.

Please remember in your prayers the following: Lee Patton and her sisters Lillian and Geraldine; Melba Jones; Melinda Etterlee; Farris Etterlee; Bong Hai Kim [Man Sun's niece], Henry Nieves, Rick McKinstry, the Edens family, Leslie Joseph, Father Billy Alford, Joe Murdoch. Also remember Beth Britnell in Arizona and Joanne Beard in Korea and our fellow Christians around the world who are being persecuted for their faith.

We have a Prayer Team here at Atonement. If you have someone you want the team to pray for please contact either Nadine Grayson or Suzanne Harrow who will notify the Prayer Team. Become a Lighthouse in your neighborhood and keep any others you may know in your prayers. --KDM+

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

The 12 Days of Christmas was written in England more that 400 yrs ago by Catholics who were told by the Church of England they couldn't express their religious beliefs [1558-1829]. Fearful that the children might forget the important symbols...an allegory was written. Here is what the 12 Days of Christmas means.

1. A partridge in a pear tree signifies the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A mother partridge will feign injury to decoy predators away from her nest. The children hearing this song would know that, and understand the parallel between the acts of a mother bird and the sacrifice of Christ.

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2. Two turtle doves represent the Old and New Testaments.
3. Three French hens represent the things that will last - faith, hope and charity (love).
4. Four gospels sing the song of salvation, referenced by the calling birds.
5. Five golden rings are the first five books of the Bible given to Moses, which tell of man's fall from grace.
6. Six geese a-laying symbolize the six days of creation.
7. Seven swans stand for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. [Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Prophecy, & Discernment]
8. Eight maids a-milking are actually the eight beatitudes from the Bible. Matt 5:3-10

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

9. Nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit (from Galatians chapter 5: verse 22) are the nine dancing ladies. [But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.]
10. Ten lords a-leaping are the Ten Commandments
11. Eleven Pipers Piping represent Jesus' faithful disciples.
12. Finally, 12 drummers drumming are actually the twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

BREAKFAST AT MCDONALD'S...

I am a mother of three (ages 14, 12, 3) and have recently completed my college degree. The last class I had to take was Sociology. The teacher was absolutely inspiring with the qualities that I wish every human being had been graced with. Her last project of the term was called "Smile."

The class was asked to go out and smile at three people and document their reactions. I am a very friendly person and always smile at everyone and say hello anyway, so, I thought this would be a piece of cake, literally.

Soon after we were assigned the project, my husband, youngest son, and I went out to McDonald's one crisp March morning. It was just our way of sharing special play time with our son. We were standing in line, waiting to be served, when all of a sudden everyone around us began to back away, and then even my husband did.

I did not move an inch an overwhelming feeling of panic welled up inside of me as I turned to see why they had moved. As I turned around I smelled a horrible "dirty body" smell, and there standing behind me were two poor homeless men.

As I looked down at the short gentleman, close to me, he was "smiling". His beautiful sky blue eyes were full of God's Light as he searched for acceptance. He said, "Good day" as he counted the few coins he had been clutching.

The second man fumbled with his hands as he stood behind his friend. I realized the second man was mentally challenged and the blue eyed gentleman was his salvation. I held my tears as I stood there with them. The young lady at the counter asked him what they wanted.

He said, "Coffee is all Miss" because that was all they could afford. (If they wanted to sit in the restaurant and warm up, they had to buy something. He just wanted to be warm).

Then I really felt it - the compulsion was so great I almost reached out and embraced the little man

with the blue eyes. That is when I noticed all eyes in the restaurant were set on me, judging my every action. I smiled and asked the young lady behind the counter to give me two more breakfast meals on a separate tray. I then walked around the corner to the table that the men had chosen as a resting spot. I put the tray on the table and laid my hand on the blue eyed gentleman's cold hand. He looked up at me, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Thank you.."

I leaned over, began to pat his hand and said, "I did not do this for you. God is here working through me to give you hope." I started to cry as I walked away to join my husband and son. When I sat down my husband smiled at me and said, "That is why God gave you to me, Honey. To give me hope." We held hands for a moment and at that time we knew that only because of the Grace that we had been given were we able to give. That day showed me the pure Light of God's sweet love.

I returned to college, on the last evening of class, with this story in hand. I turned in "my project" and the instructor read it. Then she looked up at me and said, "Can I share this?" I slowly nodded as she got the attention of the class. She began to read and that is when I knew that we as human beings and being part of God, share this need to heal people and to be healed. In my own way I had touched the people at McDonald's, my husband, son, instructor, and every soul that shared the classroom on the last night I spent as a college student. I graduated with one of the biggest lessons I would ever learn: UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE.

Much love and compassion is sent to each and every person who may read this and learn how to LOVE PEOPLE AND USE THINGS - NOT LOVE THINGS AND USE PEOPLE.

On the Horizon

Jan.1st: Feast of the Holy Name: 10 AM

Jan. 5th: E.C.W. meeting – After Church

Jan. 5th Youth Confirmation Class- 4:30 PM

Jan. 11th Workday 8AM-12Noon

Jan. 12th: Mission Vestry Meeting-After Church

Jan. 12th Healing Service – 5 PM

Jan. 12th E.Y.C. Meeting – 6 PM

Jan. 18th Small Congregation Mtg- Cochran, GA

Jan. 19th Youth Confirmation Class- 4:30 PM

Jan. 26th Youth Confirmation Class- 4:30 PM

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