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Grounded in Christ *Growing Anew!*

December 23, 2024

Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe's Christmas Message

"Among the Christmas Gospels, Luke is surely the crowd pleaser. Nearly our entire visual vocabulary of Christmas—the manger, the shepherds, the angels—comes from the second chapter of Luke. Thanks to Luke, we all know the answer to the trivia question, "Who was Quirinius?"

But if you go to church on Christmas morning, or if your congregation's custom is to read a last Gospel on Christmas Eve, you will hear the beginning of the Gospel of John, which includes other words we all know: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." Christmas does not truly begin for me until I hear those words."

[Read the full message here.](#)



Photo: The Nativity of the Virgin (18 century), Russian icon | Credit:

Ivan Vdovin/Alamy



Diocesan Transitions

Newly Licensed

The Rev. Dr. Mary Jayne Ledgerwood and **The Rev. Canon Nancy Suellau** were licensed to serve in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, effective November 27.

Mary Jayne began her ministry as Trinity Cathedral's Canon of Administration on December 1. She remains canonically resident in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast.

Nancy is engaging in special projects and assignments in cooperation with the Bishop's Office. Most recently, she served as the interim transition minister



during Canon Kim Karashin's summer sabbatical. Nancy remains canonically resident in the Diocese of Florida.

Retirements

Elaine Zevkovich, our diocesan Treasurer and Director of Administration, will be retiring effective January 3, 2025. Elaine joined the diocesan staff in April 2022, rounding out a 30+-year career in finance and management. Elaine plans to remain in Pittsburgh and continue as part of the Trinity Cathedral community.

The Rev. Canon Jim Shoucair will be retiring from active ministry at the end of January 2025. Canon Jim was ordained to the priesthood in 1999 and has served as Rector of Christ Church, North Hills, since 2002. He plans to continue playing an active role in the life of the diocese. He has served as our Convention Secretary for many years and also serves as a Title IV Intake Officer.

The Rev. Robin Jarrell will be retiring from active ministry at the end of April 2025. Robin is the Priest-in-Charge of St. Brendan's, Franklin Park, where she has served since May 2022. She was ordained to the priesthood in 2003 and served parishes in the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania before coming to Pittsburgh. Robin intends to remain in the Pittsburgh area following her retirement.

Other Departures

The Rev. Torrey Johnson (ELCA) will celebrate his last Sunday at Church of the Holy Cross, Homewood, on December 29. He has served as the parish's Priest-in-Charge since December 2017. Torrey also serves as a military chaplain and is leaving Holy Cross to fulfill a new military assignment overseas.

Please keep those listed above in your prayers, as they transition to new seasons in their ministries. Please also hold in prayer the following parishes in transition:

- Nativity Church, Crafton
- St. Brendan's, Franklin Park
- Church of the Holy Cross, Homewood
- St. Mark's, Johnstown
- Christ Church, North Hills
- St. Francis in the Fields, Somerset



Ordinations to the Priesthood



God Willing and the People Consenting
The Right Reverend Ketlen A. Solak
will ordain the following to the Sacred Order of Priests
in Christ's one holy catholic and apostolic Church

Guy William Brown

Saturday, January 4, 2025, at ten o'clock in the morning
at St. Thomas Memorial Church
378 Delaware Avenue, Oakmont, Pennsylvania 15139

Deanna Jean Briody

Saturday, January 11, 2025, at ten o'clock in the morning
at Calvary Episcopal Church
315 Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15206

Theodore Arthur Somes, III

Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at seven o'clock in the evening
at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1066 Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania 15228

Jack Roso Brownfield

Saturday, February 1, 2025, at ten o'clock in the morning
at St. Michael's of the Valley Episcopal Church
2535 State Route 381, Rector, Pennsylvania 15677

Your prayers and presence are requested

Clergy: Red Stoles

Reception to follow each service



The Practice of Prayer
During the Season of Epiphany

Dear Friends,

I must confess how, during this season of Advent, I am already thinking about Epiphany. I am thinking about Epiphany because, as my heart is nudging me to go a bit deeper in prayer, it is also encouraging me to share this journey with you. To that end, I write to

invite you to join me in discovering more about the practice of prayer during the Epiphany season.

The course will begin on Sunday January 12, 2025 and it is an 8-week prayer course that will be offered online. All who want to participate will meet on Sunday afternoons at 4 p.m. for one hour to study various aspects of prayer. More information will be shared during the next few weeks. I hope that you will consider participating and that you will mark your calendars.

I look forward to embarking on this prayer discovery journey with you.

Faithfully,



Winter solstice is having a moment — in churches, too

PITTSBURGH (RNS) — The Rev. Aidan Smith is no stranger to the dark, he told the members of Trinity Cathedral gathered beneath soaring gothic archways lit by candlelight in downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Wednesday evening (Dec. 18).



Raised in northwest Alaska, he grew up experiencing significant periods of real darkness — sometimes, he said, the light would barely crest the horizon. In that context, darkness can feel oppressive, and on the winter solstice, darkness is at its peak.

“Sometimes, our lives can feel like the longest night of the year,” said Smith. But, he reminded the congregation, “darkness doesn’t have the last word.”

Read more from [Religion News Service here](#) featuring additional interviews with Bishop Ketlen and the Rev Bonnie-Marie Yager-Wiggan.

--Photo courtesy Religion News Service/Kathryn Post



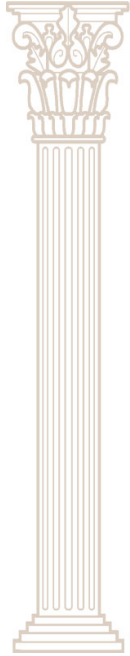
Bring the Cantate Usquam Pilgrim Singers to Sing With You on a Sunday

Cantate Usquam literally means “sing anywhere,” and we are a volunteer choir based in Pittsburgh that *charges nothing!*

The mission of the Cantate Usquam Pilgrim Singers is to bring music to churches that don't have choirs or the resources to sing at their regular services.

Cantate Usquam Pilgrim Singers

Sing Anywhere!



- The Cantate Usquam Pilgrim Singers:
- want to sing WITH you and share the joy that music brings to worship
 - are led by musicians who have experience leading congregations and choirs in singing
 - are non-denominational
 - work with you to sing hymns and music from your tradition
 - will sing choir pieces for a prelude, offertory, and/or communion
 - love to sing a capella but can also use available instruments
 - are available for dates beginning in January 2025 (except Holy Week or Easter services)
 - wear no robes and sing from within your congregation, not up front

Does your congregation have an interest in this?

Contact Michael Salmon at oriolefish@gmail.com or 904-718-7622
or Penny Anderson at penny_anderson@fastmail.fm or 412-310-9167

Supported by Lutheran Campus Ministries and Calvary Episcopal Church



Chatham Baroque & RENAISSANCE & BAROQUE

**2024/2025 Concert Series featuring performances at
Calvary in East Liberty, St. Andrew's in Highland Park,
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and more.**

[Click here](#) for the full season schedule and subscription information.

Of particular note is the world premiere of J.S. Bach's lost *Markus Passion* brought to life in a gripping theatrical format with The Sebastians, Chatham Baroque and acclaimed actor, Joseph Marcell on Friday, April 11, 2025, 7:30 p.m. at Carnegie Music Hall, Oakland. [Details here](#). Tickets would make great Christmas gifts and group sales are available.



St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mt. Lebanon

Woven Parent's Discussion Group

Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn't Have to Heal From

Jan 12, 19, 26 and Feb 2 from 5:00-6:15pm

Optional Dinner at 6:15pm

Childcare provided



Join us for this discussion of the book "Woven: Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn't Have to Heal From" at St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon. Childcare will be provided and there will be an optional dinner after. This will be a great discussion and also a time to connect with other parents in our diocese.

In this book author Meredith Miller suggests that many people approach building faith as if they are building a brick wall. The wall seems strong, but if a few bricks are removed the entire thing tumbles. Instead of this model, Miller invites us to think about how we might create a spider's web of faith. Webs are elastic, and still strong if a few strands are broken. With Woven, families can nurture the kind of faith that can flex and grow, be broken and repaired. This is the sort of faith that can stand up to the life a child will live, the doubts they will encounter, and the questions that will come up along the way.

A sign up and more info [can be found here](#). Contact the Rev. Laura Di Panfilo with questions: laura@stpaulspgh.org.



Diocesan Office Christmas Holiday Schedule



The diocesan offices will be closed from Tuesday, December 24 through Wednesday, January 1 in observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays.



Around the Diocese

Bishop Ketlen's Schedule:

December 24: Trinity Cathedral (Christmas Eve, 9:30 p.m.)

January 12: St. Stephen's, McKeesport

January 19: St. Stephen's, Wilkinsburg

January 26: St. Peter's, Brentwood



Parish leadership is reminded to complete a form, available in [PDF](#) or [Word](#), at least two weeks in advance of their visitation.

To schedule time with Bishop Ketlen, contact Andrea Rath at 412-721-0853, ext. 251, or arath@episcopalpgh.org.



Parting Shots

Bishop Ketlen Visited Atonement in Carnegie

The "saints" who are the Church of the Atonement in Carnegie enjoyed Bishop Ketlen's annual Episcopal visit on the fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22.





--Photos courtesy Heather Kistler

Bishop Ketlen Visited St. James, Penn Hills

"Joy" was the theme of the day when Bishop Ketlen visited St. James, Penn Hills, on the third Sunday of Advent, December 15.



Has your parish been featured in the news?
Please let us know via email at info@episcopalpgh.org

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