



Crossroads

A Quarterly Journal of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

Winter 2011/2012

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The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

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Volume V, Number II

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Cover Photo: This window depicts the nativity with the crèche centered under the star with its rays of light reaching into the world beyond. These windows are the work of the Flos Studios and are executed in large chunks of faceted glass, giving an effect not possible with the traditional leaded glass.

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Dear Holy People of God:

This issue of Transfiguration's online and print journal "Crossroads," is an exciting one, indeed. In the following pages you'll find articles by several members of your parish staff as well as one about our Labyrinth written by parishioner, Nancy Jagmin. I particularly call your attention to her article. We have a marvelous tool for spiritual reflection and enrichment in our labyrinth. If you haven't walked the labyrinth or have not walked it in a while, you may well find it to be a powerful means to help you in your spiritual journey. Many, many lives have been changed both on our labyrinth and walking the scores of labyrinths around the world.

The staff articles cover a wide range of interests. There are articles on Christian Formation by members of our CF team and I've included one of my own about the traditions of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany cycle of the Church Year. Although I've written on this theme in previous issues, I also know that our parish family is expanding and evolving all the time (and that some of us have memory lapses!) and so thought it might be time to refresh all of us about this wonderful time of year we're about to enter. Finally, Ellen Dingwall has submitted an "I Am Fig!" article about how one family came to make Transfiguration their family's spiritual home.

Here are some "teasers" to whet your interest in further reading: Amy Heller, who joined our staff this past August and heads our Christian Formation Team, has written about Adult Christian Formation opportunities throughout this season. In addition to the subjects of the regular Sunday morning classes, she writes of other small group studies to be offered during the week.

Children and Family Minister, Gaye Lynn Huddleston's fascinating title "The Front Row" will help explain why Transfiguration doesn't seem to have the "back row" syndrome of any number of Episcopal churches. If you happen to be a back-row-sitter it might well encourage you to get to church earlier to claim an enviable place in one of the front rows (and aren't we lucky at The Fig to have not two but four front rows from which to choose!) Gaye Lynn writes: "The front rows are the best place for (the children) to get a view of the table being set or the choir processing. Here they can easily notice the changes in the colors of the liturgical season, the artwork on the triptych, or the smoke wafting from the thurible."

Jeb Honeyman, Director of Youth Ministry, offers an article entitled, "What Makes Kids Happy?" that parents of teenagers will find helpful. Here is one tidbit: "According to a Barna Research Group study, adults who attended church regularly as children are nearly three times as likely to be attending a church today as their peers who avoided church during childhood (61% to 22%, respectively). In other words, parents who truly want the best for their children should get their children involved at church now and regularly." (And your Rector would add, "And attend and participate with them!")

Michael Merriman's contribution "Seven Whole Days" contrasts the "Membership" model of being Christian and the "Discipleship" model. "The Membership model is pretty straight-forward. It gives us a number of things to do, good things, but clearly enables us to place being Christian into the category of being merely one of the wide variety of activities in which we take part: family life, work, entertainment, community involvement, school, sports and exercise, etc. The Discipleship model describes a way of living, 24/7 in which we do all those activities of life in the context of being a disciple of Jesus, living in the Way of Jesus."

In the "I Am Fig" article the Wendy and Oliver Cone family report that they attended another parish for a few years and had been married there. They drove 10 miles to get to the church every Sunday and decided that they needed to find a church closer to their home. Then they found Transfiguration. The final sentence sums up why they have found Transfiguration to be the place for their family: "How amazing to have found a place that focuses on what is so important to us and how we want to raise our children, and it was right under our noses around the corner all that time!"

See you in church – being Church – so that through the witness of your lives, others may be drawn to call Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior!

In the Name of the transfigured and risen Christ,



I Am Vestry

by Paula Mitchell

I came to the Episcopal Church and Transfiguration through a rather atypical route – the Episcopal schools. It was this journey that solidified my faith as an Episcopalian and my belief in the importance of a strong church and school relationship. Our family came to Transfiguration 15 years ago when we moved to Dallas and were searching for a church home.

When John and I first married, he was Catholic and I was Baptist. Initially, this was not a concern. John was in the Army, and we lived on a small post in Germany where there was only one church option for us.

Returning from Germany we settled in San Antonio and began searching for a church home. At the time, I taught at St. Mary's Hall Episcopal School in San Antonio and attended Episcopal services with my students. I grew comfortable with Episcopal traditions and found the lessons taught to be in line with my personal beliefs. I also appreciated sharing these times with my students. After a year, we moved to Lubbock where I taught for All Saints Episcopal School.

It is funny in life how you can look back on individual choices and see how they add up to define who you become. Teaching at All Saints, I met an incredible woman, Mother Jo Mann. Mother Jo was the chaplain at All Saints, and her powerful and compassionate lessons drew me even closer into the Episcopal Church. Mother Jo's husband was the rector at a very small church in Lubbock, St. Stephan's. John and I visited their church and eventually, he was received and I was confirmed.

Our next move was to Dallas. I loved teaching in Episcopal schools and knew that we wanted an Episcopal education for our daughter (and later, our son). The headmaster of All Saints, Ken Bastian, told us, "You must check out the Parish Day School." He and Gloria Snyder, the head of the Parish Day School, were friends, and he knew she was doing great things at the school down there. "And," he added, "They are part of a great church." Without PDS, we would not have known about Transfiguration.

While we did look at other churches in Dallas, it did not take us long to decide that the Fig was our home. We were welcomed into the church with open arms, and have tried to be active, participating members. As young parents, we were able to find ways to be involved. One of the best decisions we made was to join a Foyer Group where we met wonderful new friends. I met other moms through St. Monica's Guild



which led to helping with childcare, serving as a Sunday School teacher, MOM's facilitator and even co-chairing Fig Fest one year. Currently, I serve as a Lay Eucharistic Minister. John is a former vestry member, an usher and a lector.

However, the church's affiliation with the school was equally important to us. Seeing Gloria serving as lector and usher and visiting the school and seeing Father Godwin teaching the little ones in chapel was just as important as church fellowship and worship.

We wanted our children raised in an environment where Christian teachings and Episcopal values are folded into daily activities, and knowing that the values we were teaching at home were reiterated throughout their week.

Thomas and Caroline are now active members of our parish, as well. They love the youth program where Caroline serves on the Youth Council, and they are both acolytes. Additionally, we help with the Austin Street Center, currently baking cookies once a month. Community service is an important part of their lives and is reinforced at school.

My role as a Vestry member is to work with Christian Formation and ensure there are educational opportunities available to all members of our congregation, regardless of age or where kids attend school. With exceptional leaders like Gaye Lynn Huddleston, Father Merriman, Mother Amy, and Jeb Honeyman, this is one of the easier responsibilities on Vestry. There are a plethora of educational and enjoyable opportunities to choose from. Speaking from the perspective of the mother of teenagers, my kids cannot wait to attend the various events in the youth program.

But Christian Formation is not enough, in my opinion, and therefore it is also important to me to find opportunities to build on our church and school relationship for the benefit of our entire Fig family. We have a wonderful opportunity to introduce families and individuals to the Episcopal Church and Transfiguration (as it did for us), and the church provides the opportunities to strengthen this community and chances for outreach. With my remaining time on the Vestry, this is an area in which I will continue to work.

I am grateful I found the Episcopal Church and Transfiguration in particular. I look forward to working with and serving each of you during my term.

We Sometimes Forget How Special our Labyrinth Is

by Nancy Jagmin

About a year ago I received an email from a woman who attended a workshop on the Labyrinth. It was led by Rev. Lauren Artress, author of the book *Walking a Sacred Path*, which made an important contribution to reviving interest in the Labyrinth late in the 20th century. Lauren asked the participants to introduce themselves, including how each first encountered the Labyrinth. When my correspondent referred to her experience on our Labyrinth, Lauren commented on the Transfiguration Labyrinth, recognizing its significance. It was built as a permanent Labyrinth, inside a church: an infrequent event over the past 500 years!

Variations on a Labyrinth pattern are found throughout human history and across geographies and cultures. Labyrinths of endless variety are found in varying places, including wall carvings, floor mosaics, and manuscripts. Early Labyrinths in churches and cathedrals were too small to be walked, so they likely served decorative, symbolic, or contemplative purposes. In Europe during the early 1200's, Labyrinths which could be walked were laid in the floors of churches, especially cathedrals. The reason for the popularity of the Labyrinth in churches at that time is not clear. The Labyrinth pattern can be considered as a symbol or metaphor for a journey, as it portrays a path with many turns. Some speculate that walking the Labyrinth was a part of making a pilgrimage. Others have suggested that walking the Labyrinth was the last stage of Christian formation, before the Baptismal rite. Our Labyrinth is a slightly smaller copy of the Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth in France, one of the few remaining medieval church Labyrinths. The popularity of the church Labyrinth faded during the "Age of Reason", during which mystical symbols and spiritual practices came into disfavor. Interest in the Labyrinth was renewed during the latter part of the 20th century, as people experiencing the stresses of the modern technological age sought solitude, meaning, and a deeper experience of the divine.

The Fig Labyrinth was made possible by a generous donation by parishioners Randy and Edna Marston, during the time when the first addition to the church was underway. Some of you remember those days in the late 90's when the

Labyrinth was planned, constructed and dedicated. Mary Ann Reed, the leader of the Labyrinth Project, conducted workshops and introductory sessions in which many parishioners participated. There were articles about our Labyrinth in newspapers, including the Dallas Morning News. Many visitors outside our parish came to experience the Labyrinth. Facilitators traveled outside the parish to lead walks on our two canvas Labyrinths. It was an exciting time.

In recent years, people across the globe have re-discovered the Labyrinth. Fr. Godwin reports that when he introduces himself, many people reply, "Oh, you're the church with the Labyrinth." It's part of our identity in the DFW area. While people outside the parish still seek out our Labyrinth, they are far fewer than we saw 10 years ago, largely because there are many more Labyrinths: in churches, retreat centers, hospitals, universities. The increasing number of Labyrinths is a testament to the power of the experience that many people find there.

So how do we acknowledge this beautiful and historic part of our parish? I would suggest that the best ways are to honor it and to use it.

How do we honor it? Before and after worship services, our labyrinth is a lovely floor on which people gather and children play. During the week, it offers an inviting gateway to people on their way to the parish offices. However, when someone comes to walk the labyrinth with a prayerful intention or a longing for the divine, it becomes for that time a sacred space. We want the space to honor the sacred and to be inviting and welcoming to walkers. In order to do that, one of the most helpful things we can do when we see someone walking the labyrinth is lower our voices. If we need to cross the space while someone is walking, we can go around the periphery of the labyrinth.

Of course, the best way to honor the gift of a labyrinth in our midst is by making use of it, as an individual or as part of a group. That topic will be explored in the second installment of this two-part article.



Lessons & Carols

Some History

The first Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas was held at King's College, Cambridge University, England, on Christmas Eve 1918. Planned by Eric Milner-White, the newly-appointed Dean of King's, it was based on an earlier order of service drawn up by E. W. Benson in 1880. Both Milner-White and Benson achieved higher status in the church (Dean of York Minster and Archbishop of Canterbury, respectively), and Milner-White continued as a liturgical pioneer throughout his life. Though one can only speculate on any liturgical connection, the format of the service – Bidding Prayer followed by lessons telling the story of the fall of humankind, then the prophecy and fulfillment of Redemption, interspersed with carols sung by choir and people – reminds one of the Liturgy of the Word in the restored Great Vigil of Easter (Exsultet followed by lessons interspersed with psalms and canticles). The service from King's has remained virtually the same since 1919, in its nine lessons (selected from 12 options) and the tradition of singing “Once in Royal David's City” at its beginning. The service takes place in the afternoon of Christmas Eve and is a non-Eucharistic liturgy serving as a prelude to later celebrations of the Holy Eucharist in one's parish or cathedral church. It has been radio broadcast annually since 1928, and its form has been replicated by literally thousands of churches and collegiate chapels of diverse denominations around the world.

Advent Lessons & Carols Sunday, December 4, 5:00 p.m.

Transfiguration has a long history of offering an Advent Lessons & Carol service or a concert of music for the Advent season on the afternoon of the first Sunday in December. The order for an Advent Lessons and Carols service was devised by the fore-mentioned Eric Milner-White of King's College, and is outlined in *The Book of Occasional Services* authorized by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. We are provided with 13 Old Testament lessons and 2 Gospel readings from which to choose, most of the former being first lessons for Sundays of Advent in the three-year lectionary cycle. Each year at Transfiguration we review these readings and most often omit those which will be read during the course of the Sunday services of Advent in the current lectionary cycle. Hymns and carols are chosen for the congregation and Transfiguration Choir which will heighten the meaning of or respond to the

lesson. This service has become one of the most popular of the Transfigured Nights events, and one which very much highlights the themes of Advent: hope, expectation, preparation, and waiting. It is also one of the most counter-cultural things we do, in that not one Christmas Carol is heard. (However, we do have great holiday treats, including traditional Christmas cookies, after the service!)

Christmas Lessons & Carols – Sunday, January 1, 10:00 a.m.

It has been our practice to use an abbreviated Lessons and Carols service for Christmas in place of the Liturgy of the Word on the Sunday following the Nativity, which this year is the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. Like King's College, we normally begin the service with a single treble soloist starting “Once in Royal David's City,” then proceed to the Bidding

at Transfiguration

by Joel Martinson



Prayer and five readings, mostly selected from the Gospels. (Here the Book of Occasional Services suggests 5 Old Testament lessons, 7 Gospels and 1 Epistle.) Carols for the congregation which have not yet been sung during the Christmas season are interspersed among the lessons. Many of these are as beloved as the more well-known carols we sing on Christmas Eve and Day, and it is always wonderful to hear the entire assembly sing in harmony – as one big choir!

*Twelfth Night Celebration,
Epiphany Pageant with Eucharist
Thursday, January 5, 6:00 p.m.*

Over the past seven years we have established a new tradition of combining an Epiphany Pageant for young children with a brief Lessons and Carols service followed by the celebration of Holy Communion. This year's liturgy will be on the Eve of Epiphany – Twelfth Night. This is truly a multi-generational

parish event in which the entire community comes together to tell the entire Christmas story – from Jesus' Birth through the coming of the Magi. All of our main parish choirs – Holy Family, Canticle Choristers, Youth Choir and Transfiguration Choir – sing carols from the repertoire they offered at separate services on Christmas Eve, and the congregation sings the great hymns and carols of Epiphany. Featured prominently is our Bella Musica Handbell Choir which plays arrangements of Christmas Carols as an extended prelude. Please do your best to attend this service and the dinner which follows – you are certain to enjoy it!

Advent, Christmas



Advent tells us Christ is near; Christmas tells us Christ is here; In Epiphany we trace All the glory of his grace.” so sings the 19th century children’s teaching hymn last seen by Episcopalians in “The Hymnal 1940.” We’ve written before in these pages about the traditions of the first part of the liturgical year known also as the incarnation cycle: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. Nonetheless, it bears repeating. Not only is Transfiguration growing and welcoming more and more new families and individuals every week, but also some of us don’t possess steel-trap minds and our memories of our traditions are often forgotten as “year succeeds to year.”

We’ve come, once again, to the beginning of a new liturgical year. The First Sunday of Advent sets in motion a number of changes in our worship practices. First, and perhaps most obvious, we begin a new lectionary cycle – this year, Year B for the Sunday readings and Year Two for the Daily Office readings. A word of caution: Unless you have a fairly new printing of The Book of Common Prayer you’ll probably not find the exact readings in your Prayer Book. That’s because the Revised Common Lectionary readings only became the official lectionary for The Episcopal Church last Advent I, bringing us in line with the readings used by a number of lectionary-based Christian churches. One way to be sure you’re “looking ahead” at the correct readings is to check the listing in The Notices sheet each weekend. There you’ll

find what readings will be read for the coming weekend.

Other changes you’ll notice in our Sunday worship will be different “Songs of Praise” and most of the hymns will be chosen from the Advent section of the hymnal. There will be seasonal Prayers of the People which enhance the message of the readings and sermons for each Sunday and seasonal Blessings at the conclusion of the liturgy.

In the Gathering Space you’ll see, not a Christmas tree, but a Chrismon tree – a tree with ornaments bearing Christ-monograms or signs and symbols which remind us of Jesus, for whose coming among us as a new-born child we prepare in Advent. These ornaments or Chrismons were made for us by the Dallas Needlepoint Guild as an expression of gratitude for being able to use space at the church for their regular meetings for many years. Stop

by the tree with your children to see how many of the Chrismons you can identify.



On the altar at Transfiguration, rather than seasonal flowers, we place evergreen branches reminding us of everlasting life in Christ that comes to us through our baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus. High over our heads as we worship is the great Advent Wreath with its four candles, one each lighted Sunday by Sunday to mark the passing of the four Sundays of Advent until all four burn on the last Sunday before Christmas.

& Epiphany

by Jerry D. Godwin

There are several practices regarding the colors of the advent candles: all purple, purple and one pink, all white, all red or all blue. At Transfiguration we follow the tradition of Advent blue for our vestments and Advent Candles. On Christmas, the blue candles are changed to all white.



Finally, you'll notice that the doors of the triptych are closed to reveal the figures of the archangels Michael and Gabriel and the four depictions traditionally associated with the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

No other "Christmas" decorations are placed inside our worship space during Advent because Christmas doesn't happen until, well, Christmas - December 25. Few of us with our massively over-committed life-styles today are able to observe the tradition of Europeans and in the early days of this nation, of cutting the tree with the family just a few days before Christmas and then having mom and dad decorate it late on Christmas Eve to welcome the children when they awake Christmas morning. There may be, however, ways to "work up" to Christmas and make its actual day of arrival more meaningful for everyone. Look for those possibilities in your own family life, maybe decorating a little at a time and saving the tree for late in the Advent season. As Christmas doesn't begin until December 25 (this year, also Sunday!) No matter how much you hear and see in the public and social media, the First Day of Christmas when your true love gave you a partridge in a pear tree is December 25. The twelfth day of Christmas is January 5, the day before the Feast of the Epiphany.

One Advent/Christmas/Epiphany tradition that we have recommended for years is the setting of the crèche without figures sometime in the early days of Advent. The Holy Family figures (without the baby Jesus, but perhaps with donkey nearby) can be placed elsewhere in your home. The magi (or wisemen and camels) may be placed somewhere else and the sheep and shepherds in another place. Then you and your children can begin moving the figures (the magi and camels more slowly than the others) toward the crèche or manger, Mary, Joseph, sheep and shepherds arriving on December 24, the baby being placed in the crib late on Christmas Eve for everyone to welcome on Christmas morning, and the magi and camels not arriving until The Epiphany on January 6. It's a really wonderful way to make the "action" of the holy season of Christmas take on more meaning for all.

Some other ideas: If you're a singing family, you might sing one verse each day beginning on December 17, of the great and popular Advent hymn "O come, O come, Emmanuel." The hymnal notes which verse(s) for which of the dates leading up to Christmas. Make your own Advent wreath and place it on the family

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“O come, O come, Emmanuel.”

Advent, Christmas, Epiphany

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dining table, lighting one candle for each week of Advent at a family meal, say a prayer (maybe the Advent Collect for the First Sunday of Advent BCP page 211 or this one “Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of your Son, Jesus, that by his coming we may be ready to serve you and others in his Name. Amen.” And always conclude by remembering those in need and finally, with the Lord’s Prayer.) Talk a little about how you are all getting ready to welcome Jesus both newborn and Savior into your lives. Make a Jesse Tree with its symbols from Hebrew Scripture as well as Christian (information is easily found on the internet, in our bookstore or from Gaye Lynn Huddleston, our Children’s Minister.) Purchase and use an Advent calendar. Our Kay Andrews’ Bookstore has a number of different ones for sale. In your gift-buying don’t forget to include meaningful and helpful gifts for those in need through the opportunities made available at church or in other venues.

With all this careful and prayer-full preparation, you and those you love will come to the celebration of Christmas and its twelve days of feasting and festivity with great excitement and energy.

First and most important of all is to make your Communion at the Lord’s Table at one of the services in anticipation of Christmas (Christmas Eve at Transfiguration: 4:00, 6:00, 8:00 or 10:30 p.m.) or on Christmas Day at 10:00 am. Consider saving some gift-giving for the other eleven days of Christmas. Don’t forget to place the infant Jesus in your crèche and begin the magi’s trek to the manger. Sing the great Christmas carols and hymns at home as we do also at church throughout the twelve days.

The Advent and Christmas season draws to a close on the Twelfth Night Celebration (January 5.) The Feast of the Epiphany (January 6) opens the season of Epiphany. This is the time for the shepherds and sheep and donkeys and cows and angels, etc., to be removed from your creche to make way for the arrival of the magi

and their camels. Plan now for our Twelfth Night celebration, the traditional Epiphany Lessons and Carols service in which children (and adults...seriously, and adults) get to dress up as the figures of the nativity and participate in the “Epiphany Pageant.” We can’t have too many angels, sheep, shepherds or magi! The service and dinner which follows it begins at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 5...an “all-parish” event. The actual Feast of the Epiphany will be celebrated with a 7:00 p.m. Eucharist on Friday, January 6, followed by a potluck meal in the parlor for those who want to bring goodies and join in.

The whole of the incarnation cycle continues after January 6, with the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus (Saturday and Sunday, January 7 & 8) and the rest of the Sundays after Epiphany in which we hear the great stories of the bible about some of the events of Jesus’ earthly ministry. The season ends with the transfiguration event on the Last Sunday after Epiphany and leads us into the second major cycle of the Church Year, the Lent/Easter/Pentecost cycle.

What an exciting time for us all as together we liturgically and traditionally walk through the historic and annual events of this holy season, once again experience them in word, song and activities and continue to renew and grow in our faith in Jesus Christ, the One we know as Savior and Lord.



Adult Christian Formation

by Amy G. Heller

Epipany is the season of light, when we share the light of Christ to the world. Following our mission to “seek and serve Christ in all persons”, our offerings in Adult Formation are plentiful - from Sunday Morning classes to Weekday small group studies. To learn more about our opportunities, please contact Mother Amy Heller aheller@transfiguration.net

SUNDAY MORNING CLASSES – 10:15 TO 11:00 A.M.		
SCRIPTURE, TRADITION & REASON Roper Hall	Jan. 8 – Mar. 25, 2011 Scripture: A study of the Parables of Jesus <i>Richard Harmon and Roy Heller</i>	Join Richard and Roy as they explore Jesus’ most commonly known and misunderstood parables from the New Testament. This 12 week series will challenge you to know more deeply what parables are and how Jesus used them in his ministry.
THE BIGGER PICTURE CLASS Staff Meeting Room	Jan. 8 – Feb. 12, 2011 Sacred Music: Bach and the Lutheran Legacy <i>Mat Thekkil</i>	The Sacred Music series concludes with a study of the life and music of Johann Sebastian Bach. In this part, we will study the art, architecture, culture, and philosophies of Baroque Germany. There will be a particular focus on the influence of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. We will follow the presentation of topics found in the BBC series: Sacred Music. The course will consist of video presentation along with lecture and discussion.
SPIRITUALITY Parlor	Jan. 8 – Feb. 12, 2011 Benedictine Spirituality Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: by Joan Chittister, OSB – <i>Amy Heller</i>	Join Amy Heller in a discussion of Joan Chittister, OSB’s book “Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedicts Today”. Published in 1990, this book has been both an invitation and a companion to many seeking to deepen in their walk with Christ. Books can be purchased at the Bookstore but no need to have one for the class.
G.P.S. Vestry Room	Giving Parents Support For parents with tween's and teen's	Navigate with fellow parents in the uncharted and often confusing time through the teen and tween years. Sunday mornings alternate between topics about the spiritual, emotional, physical and spiritual developmental changes of youth. Special guest speakers include the clergy and professionals with an expertise in young people. We take time each month to get to know each other better and enhance our own spiritual growth.
iPARENT Room S204	Worship, learn, share and grow with other parents raising young kids	Connect with a community of traditional and non-traditional parents in the midst of raising young kids in today’s information age. Worship, learn, share and grow together as we navigate and understand our roles as parents. Weekly Sunday morning format includes a rotation of iPARENT and clergy-led topics, breakfasts, open chat time and special guest speakers. In addition, several parent-centered social gatherings will be planned throughout the year.

— Weekday Small Group Studies —

Advent Book Study – *Facilitated by Joy Daley*
 Tuesdays, November 22 – December 20, 2011
 7:00 – 8:30 p.m., Room 204 (iParent room)

Women’s Brown Bag Bible Study: Paul’s Letter to the Philippians – *Facilitated by Amy Heller*
 Wednesdays, January 11th – February 15th, 2012
 11:45 – 12:45, Vestry Room

Bring your Bible and your lunch and let’s study Paul’s letter to the churches in Philippi. Full of some of the most beautiful passages in the New Testament, this letter addresses the challenges of unity, joy and humility. Childcare provided. For more information or to enroll call Amy Heller 972-233-1898 ext. 288 or email aheller@transfiguration.net

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Seven Whole

After the resurrection, Matthew tells us, Jesus met the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” But for well over a thousand year Christians have acted and thought as though he said, “Go and make Church members of all nations...” I like the breezy, colloquial paraphrase of those words found in *The Message*:

Jesus said, "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the

threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."

Disciples, that is what Jesus wanted, followers of him living his way, practicing all that he has commanded. To do that we have to approach being Christian in a way different from mere Church membership.

Below is a helpful chart contrasting the “Membership” model of being Christian and the “Discipleship” model.

MEMBERSHIP MODEL	DISCIPLESHIP MODEL
New member classes	Catechumenal process
New people conform to the way we do things	New people transform congregation and even challenge how we do things
We give you the answers	You raise the questions
Voting member only needs to commune once and make a contribution of record each year	Discipleship is a way of life
Church provides you with all you need to be Christian (in an hour a week!)	Living as a Christian is a 24/7 proposition, that mostly happens away from church
Get it done!	Live it out!
Focus on destination: becoming a member	Focus on the journey: walking as a disciple
Disseminating information	Building relationships with God, Self, and others
Assenting to doctrine	Practicing faith through prayer, Bible reading, worship, and ministry in daily life
Limited time span	As long as it takes
For new members only	For the whole congregation through serving as faith partners and blessings in worship
Pastor-driven	Lay-driven
New member orientation	Faith formation

Days

by Michael Merriman

The Membership model is pretty straight-forward. It gives us a number of things to do, good things, but clearly enables us to place being Christian into the category of being merely one of the wide variety of activities in which we take part: family life, work, entertainment, community involvement, school, sports and exercise, etc. The Discipleship model describes a way of living, 24/7 in which we do all those activities of life in the context of being a disciple of Jesus, living in the Way of Jesus.

To live in that Way requires more than merely learning some facts about Jesus and the Church. It requires “formation” in a new way of living. That is the goal of our Christian Formation programs here at Transfiguration. It is also the goal of our worship, our ministry and mission activities, and our parish social groups. Formation is more than education. It helps us develop the commitment and skills needed living in the Way.

Back in the Third Century a bishop named Tertullian said, “Christians are made, not born. If we were born Christian we would not need formation, but if we are made into Christians by God acting through the life of the Christian community, then we need continual formation.

Our formation programs here have four primary goals to help all of us become mature Christians, and a mature Christian is:

- Able to interpret scripture in the context of his/her life and having a solid knowledge of the content, history, and theological perspectives of the Bible.
- Able to participate fully and regularly in Christian worship, and able to interpret it and welcome newcomers into it.
- Able to take responsibility for his/her life of prayer and spiritual development, and willing to keep learning and growing in prayer.
- Active in addressing the structural causes of suffering in the world and helping those who are suffering.

The programs here – Sunday morning formation for all ages, weekday and night programs for adult and teens, mission trips and pilgrimages, retreats, Vision Forum events – these are obvious means of formation. But at the very center of the formation of Christians is what we do at the Altar week after week. Occasional visits to God on convenient Sundays, or sporadic attendance at Christian Formation programs (if at all) don’t build us into the people God wants us to be.

**“ It takes seven whole days a week.
That is the ultimate stewardship program. ”**

It takes seven whole days a week. That is the ultimate stewardship program. It’s not that we put aside all our other responsibilities and spend all our time at the Church. It’s in those few hours every week that we spend with our fellow Christians at Church or Church activities that we are shaped and formed into people who can live all the aspects of our life – family, friends, work, school, recreation, entertainment, service – as disciples, consciously Christian.

Yes, it does mean spending some time at Church every week. But more important, it means that we spend all our time where ever we are being disciples, following the Way of Christ. Come on! Come to Church, but then get out and be fully formed disciples of Jesus, seven whole days every week.

The Front Row

by Gaye Lynn Huddleston



I am often asked for ways to help children engage in the worship life of our parish. Some days it might seem more like a struggle than it is worth to keep your kids with you during the service. An hour-long liturgy with young children under feet could feel like a long, dry summer, without the relief of Children's Chapel. However, an important part of a child's Christian formation takes place at a parents' side, in the Nave.

My husband, an Episcopal priest, likes to say that being an Episcopalian is a process akin to marinating, not quick frying. The liturgy seeps into our souls and worship becomes a part of our sustenance through repetition and engagement. Yes, children in worship may be distracting; they have a tendency to move around and make noise. No matter, they are soaking up the language, rhythm and feel of God incarnate. This is hard to replicate anywhere else.

Our service is action oriented. We sit, stand, and kneel. The Book of Common Prayer and two hymnals are available for our use. We read out loud, sing, and actively listen. Encourage your children to participate. Teach them to make the sign of the cross at appropriate times. Hand them a BCP and help them track the progress of the service. Have them stand for the Gospel. This is their time for formation and your best opportunity for inclusion.

Some parents have found it helpful to move closer to the action in order to keep their kids engaged in the liturgy. Our priests love to look out and see the faces of the youngest parishioners and, I guarantee, the children feel the connection. The front rows are the best place for them to get a view of the table being set or the choir processing. Here they can easily notice the changes in the colors of the liturgical season, the artwork on the triptych, or the smoke wafting from the thurible. The children who have attended First Informed Communion are challenged to listen for the sound of the breaking of the bread. Only the front rows have a chance to hear this during the Eucharist.

You are doing good work; showing up is half the challenge. It would definitely be easier to sleep in and have a lazy breakfast together. But worshiping only on high holy days would be much like the quick frying method, not enough time to soak up all the beauty and richness of our faith. During this period in your life, you are called to raise faithful children, with a community of fellow Christians lending their support. It can be frustrating; there may be moments when you are embarrassed. But the continual good work that you are doing by helping form your children during worship is tantamount to their life in Christ.

What Makes Kids Happy

By Jeb Honeyman

According to a recent study done by CBS News, US companies are spending nearly \$17 Billion annually marketing to kids. This is almost double the amount spent in 1992. A big part of this is because US teenagers spend \$30 billion of their own money and influence upwards of \$150 billion of their parents' money each year. This is alarming in and of itself, but what really should concern us is WHY parents are being influenced to spend so much money on their kids. By in large, this money is being spent in an effort to 'connect' our kids. As parents, we feel pressure to buy things for kids because we are convinced that if our kids have enough stuff, they will be accepted by their peers within their social circles. And we believe this will ultimately make them happy. As a youth minister, I see this all the time. Incredible amounts of time and money are spent on kids to keep them happy. Advertisers have picked up on our desperation, and have provided us with endless products and services aimed at helping us keep kids happy. Unfortunately, as we all know, money and things rarely make anyone happy in the long term. This is as true for kids as it is for adults.

So, what really makes kids happy? What if I told you there was something you could do that would almost guarantee (73%) that your kid is 'very happy?'¹ What if I told you there was something you could do that would increase your student's enjoyment of life, increase their belief that their life was useful, increase their hopefulness about their futures, and increase their general satisfaction with their lives by over 30%?² What if there was something you could do each week to significantly increase their chances for academic success,

and limit self-destructive behaviors?³ How much would you pay for something like this? To what lengths would you go to make sure you had this?

These statistics all describe students who actively participate in the life and ministry of their church on a weekly basis. No sports team, drama club, video game system, consumer product, or summer camp has this type of impact on students' long-term wellbeing. If you are interested in these benefits for your student, we have no shortage of opportunities in the Transfiguration Youth Ministry. We have weekly programs on Sunday morning and Wednesday night, as well as service opportunities, fellowship, worship opportunities, studies, and much more throughout the year. The only catch is this — you can't wait. According to a Barna Research Group study, adults who attended church regularly as children are nearly three times as likely to be attending a church today as their peers who avoided church during childhood (61% to 22%, respectively). In other words, parents who truly want the best for their children should get their children involved at church now and regularly.

Please contact me at any time if I can help you get your student involved in the Youth Ministry at Transfiguration. I know you'll be happy you did!

¹Barna Research Study Group—www.barna.org

²<http://ia.thebostonchannel.com/sh/family/stories/family-181936420021204-111245.html>

³<http://religion.ssrc.org/reforum/Sherkat.pdf>

Adult Christian Formation – Weekday Small Group Studies *Continued from page 11*

Living the Questions

Facilitated by Fr. Michael Merriman & Amy Heller

Wednesdays, January 11th – February 15th, 2012

6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Vestry Room

This exploration of contemporary progressive Christian thought was very popular last year as a Sunday Morning series. Many who attended that series said they would like to do it again in more depth. The series has a DVD exposition of the theme featuring such notables in Judea/Christian thought as Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossen, Annette Flunders, John Cobb, and Amy-Jill Levine, as well as a number of younger, less well known teachers. Participants will bring their own food and we will have time for significant discussions in small groups as well as the group as a whole. For more information or to enroll call Michael Merriman 972-233-1898 ext. 237 or email mmerriman@transfiguration.net

MOMS (Mothers Offering Mothers Support)

Facilitated by Gaye Lynn Huddleston & Amy Heller

Wednesdays, February 29th – April 25th

7:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m., Hospitality Room

Join this 8 week course being offered to mothers, if you would like to bring the companionship of other women into your busy life. Enjoy this opportunity to boost your self-esteem, enhance your relationship skills, and get to know other mothers in our parish. Take a few hours each week to develop a greater awareness of your own spirituality and to appreciate the ministry of your motherhood! Childcare provided. For more information or to enroll call Gaye Lynn Huddleston 972-233-1898 ext. 241 or email ghuddleston@transfiguration.net

Why Transfiguration?

By Ellen Dingwall

For this edition of Crossroads we meet the Cone family. They represent so many of our young families who have chosen Transfiguration as the church home in which they feel comfortable raising their children. They have gotten involved in many of our ministries and organizations and are a treasured part of this community of faith. Look for Wendy, Oliver, Sophie and Libby at the 9 o'clock service or at iParent Class on Sunday mornings.

After attending St. Michael and All Angels (where we got married) for a few years, and missing far too many Sundays because of the 10 mile drive, we were looking for a church closer to home. Wendy was pregnant with our first daughter when we visited on a Sunday morning, and we were immediately struck by how welcoming everyone was, the large number of children there were, and the perfect tone of the sermon and service. By the time we finished the tour of the church, we had made up our minds to join so we too could become part of the community. Soon after, Wendy attended her first Wednesday Morning Mom's Group, and four and a half years later, she has only missed a handful of meetings since and has developed some of our most precious friendships.

We now truly feel a part of the Fig family and it has become an even more important part of our lives than we ever imagined. Our daughters have loved the church from their very earliest days, starting with their love for Doris, who makes any guilt about leaving your baby in childcare disappear. She and everyone else involved with childcare, children's chapel and Godly Play have been wonderful to both our girls and do so much to make the Fig a great place for families. We feel so fortunate to have found a church our daughters can grow with and look forward to the day they and their friends get to experience the youth group. And our lives have been enriched by the circle of friends and education we have gained from iParent.

The most wonderful thing about the Fig, and the reason we are so committed to supporting its work and so proud to be members, is that it not only talks the talk of Christianity, but also walks the walk. To us, the Fig, its clergy, staff and members embody what we believe are the fundamental tenets of the Christian life – compassion, inclusiveness, support and



Wendy, Oliver, Sophie and Libby Cone

selflessness. We feel it every time we visit the Fig and in every sermon and conversation that takes place there. How amazing to have found a place that focuses on what is so important to us and how we want to raise our children, and it was right under our noses around the corner all that time!

Oliver Cone