



SAINT MARY'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Newsletter

Our Mission Statement:

Saint Mary's is a Christ-centred family, caring, sharing and working together, seeking to change through growth.

December 2016 – January 2017

Dear Friends,

In his incisive essay, 'Shipping Out: On the (Nearly Lethal) Comforts of a Luxury Cruise' (*Harper's Magazine*, January 1996), the late novelist and culture critic David Foster Wallace wrote of how cruise ships are designed to 'drown out', through a tidal wave of pleasures, the reality of life, and, even more, the reality of death. He subjects to spiritual scrutiny every aspect of life aboard the cruise ship, everything from the advertisements to the evening entertainment. And he reveals that the mentality behind the cruise ship is deeply dubious: in giving people what they want all the time, you end up fostering not satisfaction but dissatisfaction, even childishness:

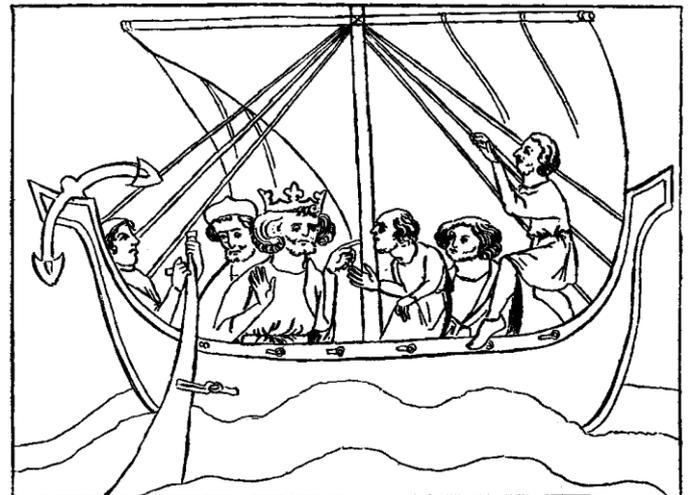
this promise to sate the part of me that always and only WANTS – is the central fantasy the brochure is selling...This is a big one, this lie. And of course I want to believe it; I want to believe that maybe this ultimate fantasy vacation will be enough pampering, that this time the luxury and pleasure will be so completely and faultlessly administered that my infantile part will be sated at last. But the infantile part of me is, by its very nature and essence, insatiable...In response to any environment of extraordinary gratification and pampering, the insatiable-infant part of me will simply adjust its desires upward until it once again

levels out at its homeostasis of terrible dissatisfaction. (pp. 51-2)

Ever the keen culture critic, for Wallace the cruise ship experience is a metaphor for contemporary life: we live a life of incredible fantasy, with iPhones and computers, and tremendous luxury – just imagine how different the grocery store was 100 years ago! Yet we are so dissatisfied, joyless, critical, stressed and cynical. Look no further than recent elections!

Wallace's observations about desire are not new. Christians from St Paul to St Augustine to C.S. Lewis have observed that human desire is deeply disordered, not a trustworthy guide to happiness at all. The classic term is concupiscence. For classical Christianity, a life of genuine blessedness is not found in satisfying every desire but in the disciplining of our desires according to the Reality of God. This is why the beatitudes are so counterintuitive.

I remembered Wallace's essay not only because of its ability to diagnose the recent elections but also because a colleague told me of a nautical analogy for the church. There are two types of church, he said: the cruise ship church and the rescue boat church.



A church modelled on a cruise ship experience simply seeks to please everyone aboard. And, in turn, everyone on board is focused on the amenities of the ship, whether they meet their expectations. They dip in and out of events or services like a cruise ship passenger dips in and out of the evening entertainments. In this way, the cruise ship church is without a captain, or, perhaps, it is captainless precisely in having

everyone as captains. The result is mutinous mayhem.

The problem with this model of the church, as seminary textbooks are fond of pointing out, is that it cannot last. For starters, the church isn't built on the premise of personal satisfaction but upon eternal salvation. Immediate gratification of desires is the surest way to miss the boat. But ultimately, this model of the church fails because it lacks love. If everyone wants to be the ship's captain, the church will be filled with infighting, complaining, suspicion, slander and rumours.

The other kind of church is like a rescue boat. The success of the voyage depends not upon the comfort of those already in the boat but upon rescuing those outside. Life on the rescue boat is orientated toward work and survival, the urgency of which leaves no opportunity for pettiness. People in the rescue boat aren't worried about the amenities of the boat but about the fate of the endangered souls. They are dedicated to their mission, regardless of hardships, tempests or setbacks. They love those who need help and so they do all they can to help the ship and its captain reach as many as possible. In short, the rescue boat church is characterised by love, which is beautifully described by St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13.4-7:

Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes (NJB)

You may know that throughout history, the church has often been likened to a boat, Noah's Ark. This is why the ceilings of churches resemble the hulls of ships. Noah's Ark, of course, was a refuge; it was a lifeboat, saving people and animals who otherwise would have drowned. Throughout history Christians have been careful to understand the church not as a luxury liner but as a vessel that has a mission beyond itself and its passengers not as customers but as those who answered the call to duty. It's a good reminder to us, for the cruise ship approach to church has been a failure; the church in the west is scuttled and sinking.

Advent is upon us. It is a time for preparation, a time to reflect and reconsider our faith and the work of our church community. So it is a perfect opportunity for us to reflect on what it might mean to restore the rescue boat mentality of the church. In our prayers, let us ask for God to give us the early Christians' sense of urgency and dedication to mission. Let us pray to the Lord to return to us the joy of salvation that will keep us focused in difficult waters. Let us not mistake criticism for cleverness. Let us make sure we are on board with the Crucified One who offers not smooth sailing but another cross to take up daily on which to bear the burden of those who fail us. Jesus Christ is God's rescue mission and his Body, the Church, is the boat he sent out into the rough waters of the world – let's make sure our ship is on the right course to reach the destination of eternal life.

In Christ's peace,

James



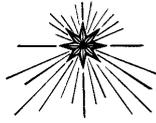
Normal weekly services:

Sunday: Holy Eucharist at 8a.m. and 10.15a.m.

Wednesday:
Holy Eucharist at 10a.m.

Thursday:
Morning Prayer at 7.45a.m.

Christmas Services at St. Mary's



Christmas Eve
6p.m. Holy Communion and an
11p.m. Vigil Eucharist

Christmas Day
10.15 Eucharist

Lunchtime Fellowship

Lunchtime Fellowship continues on the last Tuesday of the month, at 12:30pm in the Choir Vestry.

On 29th. November the theme will be Hope, Joy, Peace and Love - an Advent service (with a light shared lunch including festive treats).

Then we're taking a break for December, but we'll be back on 31st. January, the theme being Thomas Aquinas.

Mary McKinnell

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Vestry Report

The Vestry met on 26th October. It was agreed to purchase Bishop Bob Gillies a plant arrangement as a token of our gratitude for his ministry. This was presented to him on the 30th of October. The Vestry also unanimously agreed to hire Austen Barraclough as Ministry Assistant. His duties will be split between administrative tasks, keeping up on office communications, and supporting the Rector in ministry initiatives. It was emphasised that all officers remain in their roles, but that Austen will help with communications to the congregation. We welcome him and his much needed service.

Dave Dillard
Vestry Secretary

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Sunday School

Two birthdays in the Forth household in January: Camille will reach double figures on her tenth birthday on the 5th., and Talya Forth will be eight on the 29th!.

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Young Adult Group retreat



On behalf of the young adults from the three city churches who attended the Young Adults Retreat 18th-20th November in Tarside I wish to pass on our thanks for the support received from St Mary's. The theme of the retreat was 'Christlike' and one activity we completed was to write which aspects of Christ we recognise in ourselves on candles, which were then used on Sunday for the Light for Aleppo in the picture above. This retreat also allowed us to spend time together socially as a group of young adults from different churches and form bonds of friendship as fellow members in the body of Christ. We give our thanks for the thoughts and prayers you sent with us on this retreat as we sought spiritual refreshment and nourishment for the coming year.

Carol Graham

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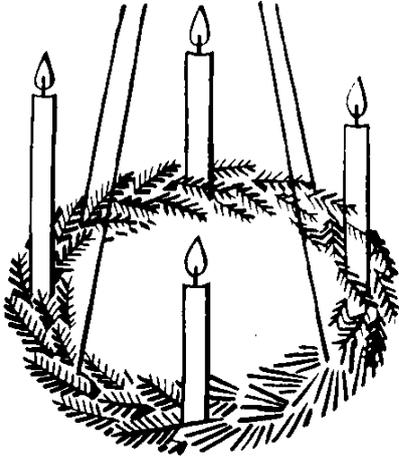
St. Mary's Christmas Raffle

Tickets are just about still available for the raffle – the draw will be at a soup lunch on 7th. December in the choir vestry. Any donations for prizes also gratefully received – speak to Mary Allardyce.

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Carols for All

Once again St. Mary's will be the venue for Carols for All at 12.45p.m. on 16th. December, with Roger Williams and Drew Tulloch. Donations (sandwiches or mincepies) to give our guests some lunch and help at the door would be very welcome – contact the church office.



Cheese & Wine / Silent Auction

This combined event on Saturday 12th November made a colossal £700! Many thanks to all involved!

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Stories to think about!

While I sat in the reception area of my doctor's surgery, a woman rolled an elderly man in a wheelchair into the room. As she went to the receptionist's desk, the man sat there, alone and silent. Just as I was thinking I should make small talk with him, a little boy slipped off his mother's lap and walked over to the wheelchair. Placing his hand on the man's, he said, "I know how you feel. My Mum makes me ride in the buggy too."

As I was nursing my baby, my cousin's six-year-old daughter, Krissy, came into the room. Never having seen anyone breast feed before, she was intrigued and full of all kinds of questions about what I was doing. After mulling over my answers, she remarked, "My mum has some of those, but I don't think she knows how to use them."

Out cycling one day with my eight-year-old granddaughter, Carolyn, I got a little wistful. "In ten years," I said, "you'll want to be with your friends and you won't go walking, biking, and

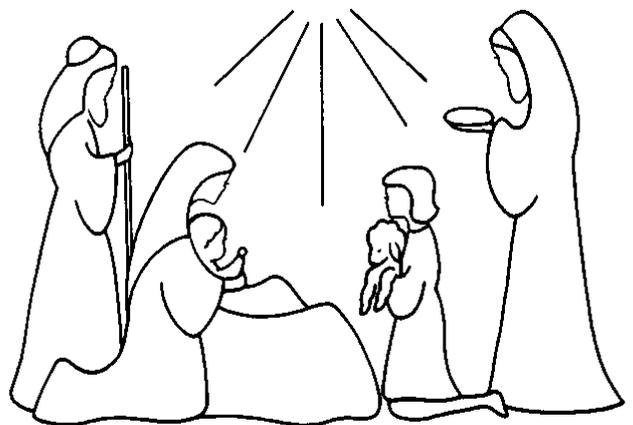
swimming with me like you do now. Carolyn shrugged. "In ten years you'll be too old to do all those things anyway."

Working as a paediatric nurse, I had the difficult assignment of giving immunization shots to children. One day, I entered the examining room to give four-year-old Lizzie her injection. "No, no, no!" she screamed. "Lizzie," scolded her mother, "that's not polite behaviour." With that, the girl yelled even more loudly, "No, thank you! No, thank you!"

On the way back from a Cub Scout meeting, my grandson innocently said to my son, "Dad, I know babies come from mummies' tummies, but how do they get there in the first place?" After my son hemmed and hawed awhile, my grandson finally spoke up in disgust, "You don't have to make up something, Dad. It's okay if you don't know the answer."

Just before I was deployed to Iraq, I sat my eight-year-old son down and broke the news to him. "I'm going to be away for a long time," I told him. "I'm going to Iraq." "Why?" he asked. "Don't you know there's a war going on over there?"

His wife's graveside service was just barely finished, when there was a massive clap of thunder, followed by a tremendous bolt of lightning, accompanied by even more thunder rumbling in the distance. The little old man looked at the pastor and calmly said, "Well, she's there."



A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!"

“Okay,” said his father. “What does the Bible mean?”

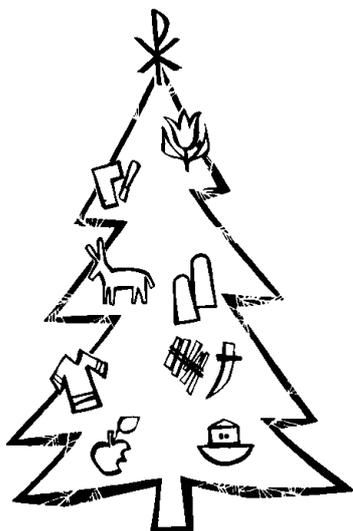
“That’s easy, Daddy,” the young boy replied excitedly. “It stands for ‘Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.’”

There was a very gracious lady who was posting an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country.

“Is there anything breakable in here?” asked the postal clerk.

“Only the Ten Commandments,” answered the lady.

There are only two kinds of people in the world. There are those who wake up in the morning and say, “Good morning, Lord,” and there are those who wake up in the morning and say, “Good Lord, it’s morning.”



A minister parked his car on a double yellow line in the city because he was short of time and couldn’t find a space. Then he put a note under the windscreen wiper that read: “I have circled the block 10 times. If I don’t park here, I’ll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses.”

When he returned, he found a ticket from a traffic warden along with this note: “I’ve circled this block for 10 years. If I don’t give you a ticket I’ll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation.”

A rector stood up one Sunday and announced to her congregation: “I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building project. The bad news is, it’s still out there in your pockets.”

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humour, because

attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign: “Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust.”

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with petrol just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

“Reverend,” said the young man, “I’m so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip.”

The minister chuckled, “I know what you mean. It’s the same in my business.”

People want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the centre of attention.

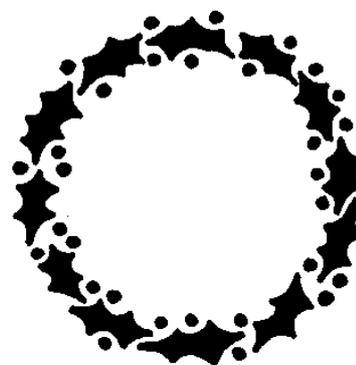
The minister was preoccupied with thoughts of how he was going to ask the congregation to come up with more money than they were expecting for repairs to the church building. Therefore, he was annoyed to find that the regular organist was sick and a substitute had been brought in at the last minute. The substitute wanted to know what to play.

“Here’s a copy of the service,” he said impatiently. “But you’ll have to think of something to play after I make the announcement about the finances.”

During the service, the minister paused and said, “Brothers and Sisters, we are in great difficulty; the roof repairs cost twice as much as we expected and we need £4,000 more. Any of you who can pledge £100 or more, please stand up.”

At that moment, the substitute organist played the National Anthem.

And that is how the substitute became the regular organist!



Saints' Days in December:

- 1st. Charles de Foucauld
- 2nd. Nicholas Ferrar
- 3rd. St. Francis Xavier
- 4th. St. Clement of Alexandria
- 6th. St. Nicholas
- 7th. St. Ambrose
- 8th. Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
St. John of the Cross
- 24th. Christmas Eve
- 25th. Christmas Day
- 26th. St. Stephen
- 27th. St. John the Apostle
- 28th. Holy Innocents
- 29th. St. Thomas of Canterbury
- 30th. Josephine Butler

Saints' Days in January:

- 1st. The Naming of Jesus
- 2nd. St. Seraphim of Sarov
- 6th. Epiphany
- 10th. Bishop William Laud
- 11th. St. David of Scotland
- 13th. St. Kentigern
- 14th. St. Hilary of Poitiers
- 17th. St. Anthony of Egypt
- 18th. The Confession of St. Peter
- 21st. St. Agnes
- 24th. St. Francis de Sales
- 25th. Conversion of St. Paul
- 26th. Ss. Timothy and Titus
- 27th. St. John Chrysostom
- 28th. St. Thomas Aquinas
- 30th. King Charles Stuart
- 31st. Bishop Charles Mackenzie

Your Magazine

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Vestry Secretary: Dave Dillard

Vestry Treasurer: Lydia Ross (864072)

Lay Representative: Nicola Mills

Sacristan: Mary Allardyce

Organist: Christopher Black

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Protection of Vulnerable Groups Co-ordinator:
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Flower Convener: Lucy Fleming

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All copy for the February magazine must be with the Editor by 23rd. January, 2017. Hard copy to Nicola Mills, or telephone 01224 488700, or e-mail to palaeography @aol.com. Thank you!

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Carden Place, is a charity (Scottish Charity No. SCO 14062).