

Dear members and friends of our parish family,

Merry Christmas! On this fourth day of the Christmas season I want to remind you that our celebration of The Incarnation lasts a full twelve days and that, unlike the more secular customs that have developed around the Christmas holiday, with decorations coming down and Christmas trees relegated to the compost pile, we continue our celebration of Christ being born into the world until the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6. Christmas Eve at Church of Our Father offered a glorious beginning to it all with 87 souls packing the church to offer praise and thanksgiving for the birth of the baby Jesus, ending with a lovely offering of the hymn “Silent Night” sung by candlelight.

The festivities continue this coming First Sunday after Christmas Day with our joining together with our sister parishes for the 5th Sunday Partnership Joint Worship. Holy Eucharist will be offered at St. John’s, Southwest Harbor, 10am. Our lessons for the day include the prologue from the Gospel of John (1:1-18) in which Christ is presented as having been present with the Father since the beginning of creation. This key passage from John’s Gospel is foundational to our understanding of the Trinity and points us to a deeper understanding of the significance of God with us in Christ. The first five verses of the passage focus on the relationship of the Word (Logos) to creation. The opening words—“In the beginning”—recall Genesis 1:1, as well as the tradition that Wisdom was present with God (Prov. 8:1-36; Wis. 7:21-8:1; Sir. 24:1-22) and was active in creation. Through Christ all things came into being. The Word is the source of light and life in the world. “In him was life and the life was the life of all people” (v.4). The relationship of the Word and creation not only validates the goodness of creation, but shows that creation and salvation are intimately linked. Our readings from Paul’s Letter to the Galatians (3:23-25) and the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (61:10-62:3) echo this message of the transformative power of the Incarnation. Please join us at 10am Sunday at St. John’s. Mother Kathleen will preach.

I also want to take this opportunity to offer a reminder that I will be away January 1-10 as I visit family in Ohio. In my absence please contact our wardens for matters regarding the parish; for pastoral emergencies please call Mother Kathleen (669-2029). Also, please welcome Father Chuck Bradshaw as he celebrates the Eucharist with you Sunday, January 7. Mother Kathleen and Father Tim have graciously offered to celebrate the Wednesday morning Eucharists while I am away.

I look forward to seeing you this Sunday at St. John’s in Southwest Harbor.

Faithfully,

John+