



St. David's Page

"We Are One in the Spirit"

421 S. Lake Powell Boulevard, P.O. Box 125, Page, AZ. 86040
office - 928 - 645- 4965 Rector: The Rev. Steve Keplinger
fax: - 928-645-9533

WEBSITE - www.stdavidspage.org

Circle of Page Social Ministry - 928-645-9533

email: stdavids@cableone.net

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There are those who contend that the downfall of the Christian church began when the Emperor Constantine converted to the faith in the fourth century. Overnight, the church went from an anti-cultural movement, struggling to survive, to the official religion of the Roman Empire. They immediately went from having nothing to having everything. How could this be a bad thing, you ask? Well, some contend that what the church did at this point was totally adapt itself to the culture, accepting the power and prestige of being in control, but in so doing losing its dissenting voice and with it, the true voice of Jesus. The contention is that instead of being the government's moral compass, the church became the government itself.

In today's world, I would suggest that the exact opposite phenomena has occurred. Christianity has played such a dominant role in American culture, that instead of religion adapting itself to society, society has adapted Christianity for its own use. Never is this more obvious than at this time of year. I guess there must have been a time when Christmas was a religious holiday. But the term has been so usurped by society, that religious folk only make believe they still have any control over it.

Christmas has, in fact, been adapted so well by the culture, that it now represents



the most important event to all retailers across the nation. A whopping 30% of the annual gross of American retail outlets comes from Christmas sales. We have all heard recent woeful reports about the drop in sales this holiday season due to the faltering economy. There are grave concerns that this will impact our gross national product even more severely.

The second obvious adaptation of Christmas to the culture is the absolute craziness that now is

imbedded into this time of year. The culture has placed so many expectations upon us during this season that we are all frantically running around trying to accomplish it all before the final gun is fired.

Of course as we all know, both of these cultural adaptations are about as far removed from the religious significance of this season as is possible. We are entering the season of Advent, a word that means "coming." The whole point of Advent is supposed to be to chill out. The season is supposed to exist as a time of contemplation and quiet, so that we may spiritually prepare ourselves for what I would argue is the most important event in our tradition.



If we can somehow dismiss the chaotic events surrounding us, the preparation time of Advent can allow us to see the full significance of the Christmas event. The realization that God is here with us in a real way can change all of us. Rather than a time of year when we are told that it is our patriotic duty to shop till we drop, Christmas actually offers the exact opposite message. God loves us so much that God became human. What else could any of us possibly need? Christmas should be the time of year that convinces us that we need not participate in the constant struggle to consume more and more so that we can make the gross national product even more gross. Incarnation should convince us that we have it all.

Perhaps I should be talking about what we must now do to take back our holiday, what we must do to wrestle Advent and Christmas back from the culture. This seems to be a popular topic these days. But I am wondering if maybe there is not some good news in all of this. Just think, we have now returned to the Christianity of the early church. Once again, we are the outcasts. Our understanding of Christmas is not the predominant one in the culture. That means we are once again in the counter-cultural position of the early church, a place where we have little power, a place where we are once again like Jesus, the one who lifted up the poor and dispossessed, though he had no power to do so. Beloved, we have them right where we want them.



A soothing Advent and
Incarnational Christmas to you all.

Steve+

We Await His Birth in Stillness and Dark

The season of Advent is upon us, and as always, St. David's will offer lots of opportunities to appreciate this season of waiting and preparing for the coming of the Christ Child. Each event will allow us to step away from the stress and bustle of the secular Christmas season to the quietness of waiting. Each event stands by itself, so come to one or come to all. You'll be glad you did.



Quiet Time in Advent

Our Taize worship on Wednesday nights offers a quiet space in the week throughout the year. The Advent season is such a busy time, between the plethora of events and competing activities of preparing for that "other" season. St. David's Taize service offers you a contemplative break from all the stress and overload. This year, we will offer meditation worship on Wednesday, December 3rd, 10th and December 17th at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. Come and spend a little time listening for that still small voice within you.



**FOOD
PANTRY
SUNDAY**
On the first
Sunday of each
month, we

bring donations for the Food Bank. This month, December 7th is the day. St. Nicholas

will be visiting that day, bearing gifts. So it is appropriate for us to bring gifts of food as well. This time of year is always difficult for some - jobs are scarce and the need for all forms of assistance increases as people find their resources so limited. In this new economy, or lack thereof, the numbers are increasing, while resources diminish. We've been fortunate this holiday season with food drives throughout the community to help replenish the shelves.



Holiday type foods, such as stuffing mix, canned yams, instant potatoes and gravy would be welcome this month. Peanut butter still tops the list of food needed. It's such an easy source of protein, liked by almost everyone. Cereal is also high of the list of food needed, as well as canned vegetables and fruit, rice and beans, ramen noodles, easy to prepare meals, and soups. As we enter this season of preparing and anticipating the abundance of Christmas, remember those who face this time in darkness and despair.

The Feast of St. Nicholas

December 6th is the feast day of Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c 342. He is known as the patron saint of sailors and seafarers, and especially of children. We think of him as jolly old St Nick or Santa Claus, a variation on the Sinta Klaas brought to the US by Dutch colonists in the 1600's.



After church on December 7th, St. David's

will celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas in the Fellowship Hall with a lunch and afternoon of wrapping gifts. We'll have crafts and ornament making for ourselves and for needy families. Bring tape and scissors if you have them. It will be a day of sharing ourselves and our abundance with each other and those in need. And of course, St. Nicholas will visit, too, with special gifts for all children, young and old.



St. David's Choir

We've heard our children's voices singing sweetly at Easter season. The women of St David's found harmony in song at the 2004 Women's Retreat. And our men gamely try to provide some depth to our hymn singing each Sunday. For the past three years, Mary McDonald, our favorite choir director, has given us the most wonderful Christmas gift - a choir. Made up of men, women and children, they performed at our Christmas pageant and blessed us with the sweetest music on Christmas Eve. There's always an opening, if you are inspired to raise your voice with your fellow St. Davidites. During Advent, the choir will sing at "Lessons and Carols" in a combined choir with the Catholic Church. And of course, the big hoop de doo on Christmas Eve. Practices follow our church service on Sundays.

ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS

Seven years ago, St. David's introduced the Anglican tradition of *Lessons and Carols* to



the community of Page. *Lessons and Carols* are a service of Scripture reading and

song that tells the story of our Hebrew tradition leading up to the birth of Jesus. This year, we will once again participate in the community service of *Lessons and Carols* with our friends from Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, Page United Methodist Church, the LDS community and others.

Last year, being short one church, we combined choirs and held one service at the Catholic Church. It was the high point of the Advent season. This year, *Lessons and Carols* will take place on Tuesday evening, December 16th at St. David's. The program will begin at 7 PM. Once again, Mary McDonald will be working with Cathy Gomez, Immaculate Heart's Music Director to combine choirs and come up with a great program! If you would like to provide refreshments for the program on December 16th, we would welcome a light dessert or snack. Let Jody know if you can help. And please come - the team of McDonald and Gomez will be a wonder to behold!



Ya Ya Night
Once again, the women of St David's will gather together

on Friday, December 12th. This month we are celebrating Christmas early with a present wrapping session for our Christmas angels and the toys collected for Toys for Tots. Bernadette will choose a family from her many special needs clients out on the Rez for us. See Jean or Jody for a list of gifts for the family we've adopted.

We'll meet at Frances Cline's home, 49 Cheryl Court, at 6:00 pm, if she feels up to it,

or at Jean Keplinger's at 200 N Navajo. Bring wrapping paper, scissors and tape and your gifts, as well as your favorite Christmas memories. And of course, we'll be eating holiday foods, so bring something to share, main dish, a special cookie, bread or drink. Or the veggies you're eating in place of all those sweets.



“On the Way to Bethlehem”

Just in case you haven't got enough to do during Advent, Mary McDonald is directing “On the Way to Bethlehem” on Sunday, December 14th. This is her third year of directing and after two “Messiah's,” Mary has opted to let Handel rest for a while. Instead, she's offering a concert of traditional and contemporary carols and orchestral music, including “Messiah.” The performance will be at Kanab High School, at 7 pm. We all know what a professional Mary is, so this should turn out to be a great show. If you want to carpool up to Kanab, let Jody or Steve+ know. As Mary has said before, she can Handel it.

Bell Ringers and Angel Trees

Meanwhile, we will continue our tradition of giving our best to help the neediest. The Salvation Army is looking for bell ringers to raise money in December. It's a great volunteer project and all money raised stays in the Page community. It might be cold out there, but



the glow from inside your heart will keep you warm. And the shifts are only for two hours. If you would like to help by being a bell ringer any time between November 23 and December 24, please call DeAndra Begishie at (928) 225-2446.

Once again, the Circle of Page is coordinating the Angel Tree program. Last year, the Circle of Page provided gifts for over 3000 kids in the greater Page community. If you can help, please let Jean know. This year is looking just as tough for many people.



Mitten Trees, etc. The Page Soup Kitchen will be setting up hat, mitten and sock trees to collect for

Christmas distribution and throughout the winter months. You know how quickly it gets cold here. Watch for a tree set up in the back of the church. All items should be easily washable. They are also collecting sample size toiletries and small (Beanie Baby size) stuffed animals to give out as gifts at their Christmas dinner.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS
If you would like to purchase a poinsettia for our Christmas altar in

honor or in memory of someone, or to give thanks, there will be a sign-up sheet in the church, or you can e-mail or snail mail your request. The cost is 12.00 per plant. Be sure to include how you would like your dedication listed in the bulletin.

2009 Historic Church Engagement Calendar

Our Engagement Calendars are in and St. David's is there along with some very amazing other churches. If you'd like a little bit of history to be with you throughout the year, or someone else's year, let Jody know. Calendars are \$12 each, and we have a limited supply! Three guesses which day St. David's is on.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

ADVENT Four-December 21st -

The fourth Sunday of Advent is our traditional time to green the church and feast on a potluck lunch. It's our first Advent and Christmas in our new Sanctuary - how do we green the church? Being who we are, we'll find new and creative ways to decorate. Think about our beloved pyramid - what could we do with that? And of course, we'll have a potluck lunch to keep everyone fed and happy while we transform the church.



EVE OF THE NATIVITY - DECEMBER 24 Caroling and Candlelight Service - 7:00 PM This is our big Christmas service, Midnight Mass for those who don't want to stay up until midnight. It's one of the most moving services we have. Think about the sanctuary in candlelight. If you have friends who want to have a "Christmas experience," bring them to this service.



CHRISTMAS DAY - This year,

Christmas Day falls on Thursday. The Vestry agreed that we ought to provide a morning service for those who may not be able to come to our Christmas Eve service. Attending the Christmas Eve service will not disqualify you for a morning service too, if you wish. Otherwise spend Christmas morning with families and friends, as we begin the Christmas season. Remember, for us Christmas continues for 12 days. So keep celebrating.

Epiphany Sunday

Wait a minute! What happened to the Christmas pageant??? How did we miss that? Actually, this year, we are being biblically correct and waiting until the three kings really do show up to have our pageant. Something about enough to do just before Christmas. Or was that needing more time to practice? Anyway, our wonderful Pageant will be presented on Epiphany Sunday. Roles will be handed out soon, and don't be shy about taking one. St. David's is the best audience to let your inner actor come out. Whether you're in the play or not, plan to come on Sunday, January 4th to wonder at the story of the Nativity.

Looking Ahead

It's not too early to be thinking about Annual Meeting at the end of January. We will be electing two new members to our Vestry as well as delegates and alternates to Diocesan Convention to be held in Salt Lake City next November. If you are interested in serving as a member of the Vestry or as a convention delegate, please speak to a Vestry member soon.