

# The Stone's Throw

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## **The Rector's Focus on HOPE**

Dear Friends,

As part of my preparation for going on retreat in a few weeks, I've been thinking a lot about the presence of anxiety in our culture and in my life.

One good definition that I recently read for anxiety is "a state of uneasiness or apprehension, generally about future uncertainties". In other words, we are apprehensive about the safety and security of our future, and whether or not there will be any good in our lives.

With that definition in mind, I can say with confidence that: my, oh my, are we living in anxious times!

The anxiety present in our recent elections was the highest I've seen in a very long time. Even after the election, high anxiety lingers for many over how our new President will govern. Then of course there is the anxiety over the state of our economy, with chaos reigning on Wall Street and great uncertainty over many of our major industries and financial institutions. All of us have seen a "hit" in the value of investments intended to see us through our retirement years. Along with this general sense of apprehension, many of us have also been experiencing anxiety in our personal lives – your priest included. No one who was around me at this time last year needs to be reminded about my anxiety over Ginny's spinal fusion surgery!

How should we as Christians prepare for – and respond to – anxiety producing events. We must remember and live out the reality that Christians are people not defined by anxiety, but by hope. We must remember and live out our firm belief that, no matter what happens to us in the near term, our ultimate future is safe, secure, and good. We must remember and live out that our hope is based in Christ, in his birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection. When we lose sight that our hope is in Christ, and in Christ alone, we lose our very grounding in the promises and goodness of God.

So how do we cultivate that hope in Christ in our lives? This is the importance of the basic spiritual disciplines: daily prayer, daily engagement with Scripture, weekly worship – and ministry in the name of Christ to a hurting world. This is why I am going on retreat, to recommit myself to those spiritual disciplines, and to cultivate my own hope in Christ alone, so that I may more effectively share that hope with all of you and all to whom we minister in Christ's name.

My friends, the seasons of Advent and Christmas are a time to remind ourselves of the hope we have in Christ. This hope is not some vague feeling of happiness and sentimentality, but a living hope in Christ that is given to us, his followers.

My hope and prayer for each of you this Advent season is that each day you will experience the living hope given to each of us in Christ.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Romans 15:13).

Your brother in Christ,

David

### **Bishop's Visitation**

The Rt. Rev. Kenneth L. Price, Jr., Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Southern Ohio, will be with us on Sunday, December 7 to preach, teach and celebrate the Eucharist. We will have one service that day, starting at 10:30, with a reception for Bishop and Mrs. Price afterwards.

### **Christmas Services**

Our Christmas Eve service begins at 7:30 PM with the singing of traditional carols, followed by the Christmas Eve Mass at 8:00 PM. Our Christmas Day service (simple Rite I) will begin at 10:00 AM.

## **From the Deacon's Bench**

I was at Macy's on Veterans Day helping Leah, my daughter, to pick out a new winter coat. Leah, as a young adult, had worked at Tri-County Mall at Natural Wonders for about three years mostly during the summer and the holiday season. She would come home grumbling about how sick she was of holiday music and how she never wanted to hear another "Jingle Bell Rock" song as long as she lives. As Leah and I were picking out coats that morning the Christmas music was already blaring. I wondered if I dared to comment on the Christmas music that was being played. As I helped her try on a coat I heard her singing along with the music. Wow, miracles do happen! Yes, they do in deed and sometimes it is through the generous giving, support and hard work of the people here at St. Stephen's that we see miracles happen. As I write this article the M.H. A. is busy gathering, sorting and then repacking holiday food for our clients at the Pantry. The sign up for the Thanksgiving food was closed as of Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>. 256 families signed up for Thanksgiving. People who missed the Thanksgiving sign-up have been told about community Thanksgiving meals at other local food pantries or churches whose lists are still open. The Christmas food sign up for the clients ends the week of Thanksgiving. The M.H.A. will also be gathering Christmas presents for the children of the families signed up. The cut off age is 15 yrs. of age. If you are interested in supporting the gift project, please see or call me for more information.

Now, however, I must once again ask you to open your hearts and purses to support the Christmas food distribution coming up the week of Christmas. Please keep your eyes open for articles on the bulletin board about the Christmas food and your ears tuned to announcements in church. The Pantry's needs for the Christmas food are the same as the Thanksgiving food intake. We, the St. Stephen's staff at the Pantry, will keep you posted on the details and latest news.

Thank you to the St. Stephen's staff that has recently gotten their hands and knees dirty at the Pantry. Bebe Hales, Lois and Ralph Tuttle, Steve and Cathy Skiba, Bette Kattmann and Dick Meagher, who really got his knees, dirty the first day he volunteered and of course Father Bailey who shows up during computer emergencies when the pantry supervisor or his Deacon calls him for help.

Take a look at the Mount Healthy Alliance Newsletter posted on the bulletin board. Kathy Lorenze does an outstanding job informing all the churches in the Alliance about the number of new clients and families served each month. In October we provided 286 families with food. November will probably be as high. Thank you again for all you generosity and support.

Deacon Jean

## **Reminder -**

December 7 at 7:00PM is our monthly Taize Service. This candlelight service, with Taize music sung to piano and flute, along with Bible readings, prayer and meditative silence welcomes all. Join us and bring a friend.

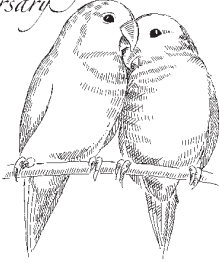
## **Ten Thousand Villages Shopping Spree Benefits IHN**

Holiday gift-giving will be easy and fun when you shop among the beautiful handicrafts from around the world at Ten Thousand Villages, Sunday, Dec. 7 any time between noon and 4 p.m. 20% of sales will go toward IHN! Located at 2011 Madison Rd. in O'Bryonville, the store is a non-profit organization that provides fair income to Third World craftspeople by selling their high-quality wares and telling their stories. Delicious drinks and snacks will be there, too, for the tasting while you shop. So, park in the ample lot across the street and prepare to spend an afternoon supporting two wonderful causes - fair market wages and IHN! Last year, we made over \$1,600 toward our mission!

## **St. Stephen's Hosts IHN on Dec 12**

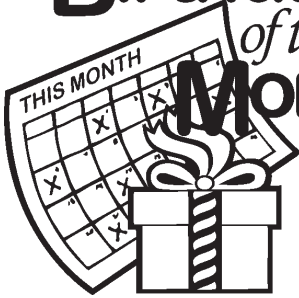
Our final hosting of the year will be on Friday, Dec 12, when St. Stephen's hosts IHN at Christ Church Glendale. As always, volunteers are needed to provide food and act as hosts. Think about this – Do you live in a warm, comfortable home and do you have enough to eat? If you can answer yes to both questions, consider a minimal investment of time this holiday season so you can help some families who don't have those benefits. The sign-up sheet is on the hallway bulletin board. Questions? Ask Lisa Elmendorf, 513-719-6469.

*Celebrating an  
Anniversary*



Lee and Sudy Irvine    December 14

## Birthdays of the Month



Tim Scholz	December 6
Lee Irvine	December 14
Laverne Wood	December 15
Eric Sittner	December 18
Irlle Hicks	December 21
Bob Cooper	December 28
Dorothy Boyd	December 31

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Address Correction Requested