

# Frankly Speaking

January 2007

Christmas & Epiphany, Year C

St Paul's Episcopal Church, Woodville, TX

*Break Down the Walls; Come, Know Jesus (Holy Ghost Power)*

## CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY

Christmas carols are such wonderful, happy songs! Why did we wait such an unbelievably long time to start singing them? Oh, right. Because it was Advent until Jesus was born.

But why are we still singing them for nearly 2 weeks *after* Christmas? After all, the tree has been gone for over a week, the decorations have all long since been stowed away, and here we are, still singing about Christmas!



*St Francis joins in the festive spirit of the season*

Christmas season *begins* on Christmas Eve, the first time we sing Christmas carols in church. This year, Christmas Eve was on Sunday, so in the morning we sang Advent hymns and at Christmas Eve service we sang Christmas carols.

Christmas season *ends* with Epiphany, when we celebrate the arrival of the Magi, the Wise Men, come from afar to worship the Baby who is God. No one knows exactly how long it took for the Magi to arrive, but after they had visited King

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## CHRISTMAS PHOTOS



Advent 4, morning of Sunday, December 24



Christmas Eve



Christmas Eve procession



Christmas Eve dinner

## WHAZZUP? Upcoming Events

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Jan 6: Feast of the Epiphany, 12 noon Holy Eucharist. Lunch to follow

Jan 22: Deadline for February newsletter submissions

Jan 28: Bishop High here for Visitation & Confirmation

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### Feb 1 & 2: Church office closed

Feb 1-4: Cursillo #215, The Cursillo of the Power of the Holy Ghost, Camp Allen. Lou Campbell, Rector; Fr Steve, Asst Spiritual Director

Feb 20: Shrove Tuesday with Pancake Supper

Feb 21: Ash Wednesday

Feb 22: Deadline for March newsletter submissions

Feb 24: Moon Magic, St Paul's School fundraiser, at Our Lady of the Pines Family Center

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Mar 22: Deadline for April newsletter submissions

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Apr 1: Palm Sunday

Apr 5: Maundy Thursday 6 p.m.

Apr 6: Good Friday 12 noon

Apr 7: Holy Saturday 12 noon  
Easter Vigil 6 p.m.

Apr 8: Easter Day

Apr 22: Deadline for May newsletter submission

## ASK FR. STEVE

Q: What is Confirmation?

A: With Bishop High coming January 28 for his Visitation and Confirmation, this seems to be a good time to write about the Sacrament of Confirmation.

One of the tasks reserved to Bishops is to Confirm those baptized Christians who have decided to make a profession of faith and adult affirmation of their baptismal vows. Since many of us were baptized as children, the baptismal promises were made on our behalf by godparents and parents.

When we choose to be confirmed, we repeat our baptismal vows in public and request the Bishop to lay hands on us and pray for the Holy Spirit to fill us in a new way to prepare us for ministry and service to the Lord.

There is some preparation for Confirmation, either through an Inquirers' Class or a teaching series like the Discovery DVD course that The Diocese of Texas has developed.

The parish priest determines if the person is a sincere candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation, and then the priest is responsible for providing the instruction.

In the past, Confirmation was offered to young people at age 12, as a kind of Christian equivalent to the Jewish bar or bat mitzvah. One of the problems that caused was that many young people just endured the instruction at their parents' insistence, and never really made an adult decision to follow Christ on their own. I remember hearing a story about one of my former parishes, when the wife of my predecessor "recruited" a 12 year old girl

on very short notice to be confirmed for the Bishop's visitation. There was no planning or teaching and the child was used as cannon fodder for the appearance of the parish.

Most Bishops prefer to confirm young people at age 15 or 16 who have made a serious and conscientious choice to follow Christ and had adequate preparation and teaching.

We also often have adults much older than 16 who are confirmed. This happens when people choose to join the Episcopal Church from other denominations. If Roman Catholics or Orthodox join our church, they are received into the Episcopal Church. If Lutherans or Baptists join us, they are Confirmed. The prayers for reception and Confirmation are very similar, and the Sacrament looks the same.

Q: What actually happens at Confirmation?

A: The candidates are presented to the Bishop by the priest, and the Bishop leads the candidates in the Baptismal Covenant found in the Book of Common Prayer. Then, the Bishop lays his/her hands on the confirmand and prays for the Holy Spirit to fill the person and to empower them to fulfill their renewed commitment to the Christian life.

The outward and visible sign is the laying on of hands by the bishop and the prayer for the Holy Spirit to come. The inward and spiritual grace is the indwelling of the Spirit and the renewed spirit of the newly confirmed member.

Fr. Steve+

## FR. STEVE'S SCHEDULE

Fr Steve will be gone to Cursillo the following days:  
Thursday, Feb.. 1 through Sunday, Feb. 4

For emergencies, contact the Rev. Dorothy Gremillion at St. Luke's Episcopal, Livingston, or the Rev. Tommy Williams at Woodville United Methodist.

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## THOSE CRAZY EPISCOPALIANS!

### *Why do they do that?*

Why do the colors of the altar hanging change, and what do the colors mean?

There are six seasons in the Episcopal Church year.

- Advent
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- Lent
- Easter
- The Season After Pentecost (known as "Ordinary Time" in the Roman Catholic church)

Each season has a special color.

Advent can be blue or purple: Blue represents the Virgin Mary and purple is used in penitential seasons.

Lent is usually purple but may be bleached linen. Holy Week, which is part of Lent, uses blood red (for obvious reasons) or bleached linen, the reference of course being to the gravecloths in which Jesus was wrapped for burial.

Christmas and Easter, being "festive" seasons use either white or gold, white being the more traditional use.

Red is used for the day of Pentecost, as well as for confirmations, ordinations and the feast days of martyrs.

Green is the color of Epiphany and the long season after Pentecost. It symbolizes growth, as we would expect, since during the long seasons we learn and grow. You can see the pattern here. Two sets of

three seasons in the same order: Preparation, Celebration, Growth. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany; Lent, Easter/Pentecost, the Season After Pentecost.

The altar, lectern and pulpit hangings and the clergy vestments should be all the same color. Sometimes they may be different shades, as when someone gave a gift of one item but not the other.

White is also used for funerals. Funerals are a time to give thanks for the life of one whom we loved and to celebrate that our loved one is now in the presence of God, so we use the same color used for Jesus' birth and resurrection.

If you have an Ordo Kalendar, you will see that each day has a color designated. These will conform to the colors of the seasons plus any special days, such as saints' feast days. The colors of the hangings used will conform to these colors unless there is something special which requires a different color, such as a wedding or a funeral.

The Altar Guild is the special ministry dedicated to preparing the altar for each service and maintaining all the supplies and materials.

If you are interested in learning more about the Altar Guild or perhaps even learning how to serve in this special ministry, please contact Reggie Askins.

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## THANKS

We would like to thank everyone involved in the celebration of Fr Steve's 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Special thanks go to Beth Winberry for stepping in for Reggie Askins at the last moment!

Whether you attended or prayed from afar, we appreciate your contribution to this wonderful day of celebration. It was truly special, and we wouldn't want to be celebrating it anywhere else than with

you!

Also, thanks to all who gave to us so generously this Christmas and to all who keep us in their prayers. God's grace is so wonderful!

We love and appreciate each and every one of you!

Fr. Steve & Nancy

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## WHAZZUP? Upcoming Events 2

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### *Bishop High Visit and Confirmation*

Bishop High will make a visitation to St Paul's on January 28 for Confirmation and Reception.

If you have not been confirmed and would like to be, or if you were confirmed in the Catholic Church and wish to be received into the Episcopal Church, please contact Fr Steve.

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### *Cursillo*

Cursillo will be held February 1-4 at Camp Allen. Lou Campbell is rector and Fr Steve is assistant spiritual director. St Paul's can send 4 candidates, and possibly more if other parishes don't fill all their slots. Contact Fr Steve or anyone who has attended Cursillo to find out more.

Other dates in 2007 are June 14-17, August 2-5 and November 1-4

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### *Shrove Tuesday*

St Paul's Men's Group will again sponsor the the Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) Pancake Supper, on Tuesday February 20. Plan to eat with us!

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### *Ash Wednesday*

Services include the imposition of ashes. Watch for more info.

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### *Holy Week*

Plan to attend the full Holy Week Schedule. Stay tuned for more info.

## LOOKING AT 2007

Sr. Warden Lou and I have had our year-end talk. Here are some thoughts from our conversation.

One of the difficult things about being a parish priest is striking a balance between being an authoritarian leader and encouraging the leadership of the laity. I think that the real strength of St. Paul's has been the lay leadership. Now that I am here full time, it is possible some of you have relaxed and thought "well, now we have a priest, so we'll let him do it." That's natural, but it is not my style to monitor every one all the time. I want people to discover their gifts and to use them for God's glory and to advance the work of the church.

I see my main tasks to be worship leader, pastoral care giver, and encourager of lay ministries. Helping cast the vision for the church is part of this. Our Spirit of Excellence committee chose the Vision Statement "Break Down The Walls, Come Know Jesus (Holy Ghost Power)" as our guiding vision. In other words, we want to knock down any barriers to others coming to know Christ and to serve him through our parish family. We want to grow numerically and we want to expand our facility as needed. It won't happen if I am a bottleneck for all things that happen in the life of the church. You all need to take ownership and responsibility for the various ministries.

There are some specific plans we want to see accomplished in 2007, or at least started:

1) First Assembly is likely to be finding their own building this year. When they move, I would like to change the service time to 10 AM to allow for Church School for kids and adults from, say, 9:15 to 9:45 every Sunday. The Diocese requires that we get our teachers to complete background checks, take the Safeguarding God's Children class and to be registered with the Diocese.

2) We need to get our church sign built in front of the church.

3) We need to have a specific plan for Evangelism for 2007. I'd like for Alpha to be part of this, but we need to have a committee do some brainstorming and planning. Members need to attend Alpha to know what it is in order to invite unchurched people to attend Alpha. The Holy Spirit will do the rest.

4) We need to do Planned Giving training through our Stewardship Committee, so that we can start an Endowment for Outreach funding.

5) We need to participate as a parish in the new Tyler County United Christian Association which will forge new bonds with the black churches in our area, and to follow up with another Revival next summer.

6) We need to look at new Outreach ministries, such as with Sinclair Children's Center.

This is only a partial list, and it needs your input and your prayers. I cannot birth ideas and implement them on my own as well as carry out my liturgical and pastoral duties.

Please thoughtfully and prayerfully consider these ideas and how you might use your gifts to help them become reality.

We can do it, together - with Holy Ghost Power.

Fr. Steve

## DIRECTORY UPDATES

### ADD

Montgomery, Ruth (Janice) 402 North Pecan St. Woodville, TX 75979 Home: 283-7732 email: <a href="mailto:Jeno2u49@yahoo.com">Jeno2u49@yahoo.com</a>	Birthday: August 20  Work: 331-9939
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### CHANGE

Askins, David Reggie	email: <a href="mailto:davidaskins@sbcglobal.net">davidaskins@sbcglobal.net</a> email: <a href="mailto:reggieaskins@sbcglobal.net">reggieaskins@sbcglobal.net</a>
Cone, Woodie & Lee 1701 Hwy 1010 Woodville, TX 75979	
Knecht, Jim & Pat	email: <a href="mailto:harmonyfarm@peoplepc.com">harmonyfarm@peoplepc.com</a>

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Herod in seeking the Baby, Herod sent out soldiers to kill all the boys under two years old. So, we can assume they didn't arrive in just 2 weeks, but in our liturgical year we have to compress time.

After the Epiphany service, we remove all the Christmas decorations from the church.

Epiphany also marks the expansion of the miracle of Jesus's birth from the "family" of the Jews to the larger world, to those of other color or heritage or tradition. We sing songs celebrating such inclusiveness.

Epiphany lasts until it's time for another penitential season – Lent.

By the way, despite what the retail world would have you think, the "12 Days of Christmas" actually begin the day after

*Christmas season begins on Christmas Eve and ends on Epiphany.*

Christmas and end on Epiphany. December 26th is the first day after Christmas, January 6th is the 12th. These are the days of celebration, the nights we should have our lights up and lit.

Christmas trees were traditionally taken down on Epiphany, and "Twelfth Night," the night of Epiphany, was the final celebration, ending the season with a bonfire made of Christmas trees.

In other traditions, the gift-giving time can be as early as St. Nicholas' Day, December 6th, or as late as Epiphany, January 6th. See the article below for more Epiphany

traditions.

The important thing to remember in all this is that, by the Grace of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus came to be one of us to save us, and the date doesn't matter. Celebrate the wondrous gift of God!

## TRADITIONS OF EPIPHANY

\*Holidays celebrating the arrival of the magi traditionally recognise a sharp distinction between the date of their arrival and the date of Jesus' birth. Matthew's introduction of the magi gives the reader no reason to believe that they were present on the night of the birth, instead stating that they arrived at some point after Jesus had been born, and the magi are described as leading Herod to assume that Jesus is up to 1 year old.

\*Christianity celebrates the Magi on the day of Epiphany, January 6, the last of the twelve days of Christmas, particularly in the Spanish-speaking parts of the world. In these Spanish-speaking areas, the three kings (Sp. "los Reyes Magos de Oriente", also "Los Tres Reyes Magos"), receive wish letters from children and magically bring them gifts on the night before Epiphany. According to the tradition, the Magi come from the Orient on their camels to visit the houses of all the children; much like the Northern European Santa Claus with his reindeer, they visit everyone in one night. In some areas, children prepare a drink for each of the Magi, it is also traditional to prepare food and drink for the camels,

because this is the only night of the year when they eat.

\*Spanish cities organize cabalgatas in the evening, in which the kings and their servants parade and throw sweets to the children (and parents) in attendance. The cavalcade of the three kings in Alcoi claims to be the oldest in the world; the participants who portray the kings and pages walk through the crowd, giving presents to the children directly.

\*In France, the holiday on January 6 is celebrated with a special tradition: within a family, a cake is baked which contains one single bean. Whoever gets the bean is "crowned" king for the remainder of the holiday.

\*This tradition also exists in Catalonia, but with one small variant; the cake, a ring-shaped pastry (The Rosc6 de Reis) is most commonly bought, not baked, and it contains a small figurine of a Magi and a dry broad bean. The one who gets the figurine is crowned, but whoever gets the bean has to pay the value of the cake to the person that originally bought it.

For more information on the Magi, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_Magi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Magi)

## FRANKLY FUNNY

(Thanks to the internet....)

For those of us who watch what we eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting medical studies.

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the Americans.

2. The Italians eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

3. The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the Americans.

4. The French drink a lot of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

5. The Germans drink lots of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats, and suffer fewer heart attacks than the Americans.

Conclusion: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

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Break Down the Walls; Come, Know Jesus (Holy Ghost Power!)

**NOTE: The Church Office will be closed on Monday, January 1.**

Quick Peek at Upcoming...

Jan 6: Epiphany Service, noon

Jan 22: Deadline for February newsletter submissions

Jan 28: Bishop High Visit

Feb 1-4: Cursillo, Camp Allen

Feb 21: Ash Wednesday

Feb 24: Moon Magic Fundraiser for school

## ADORATION OF THE MAGI



by Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi