



Discerning Hearts

Newsletter of The Episcopal Community

"We are marked as Christ's own for ever."

Volume: 2023 Issue 12



Advent Greetings

*The Rt. Rev. Phyllis A. Spiegel,
XII Bishop of the Diocese of
Utah*

Advent is a season of preparation. The practice of preparation is something that women often have much life experience in. We

know this in our home life, our careers, and in our roles at church. For centuries in the church, many of the preparation tasks have been predominantly tended to by women. In the churches I serve, this remains the case.

Women take lead roles in preparing the altar, the flowers, the receptions, the children's pageants...

One might say, women have a lot of experience as people of preparation. So how are we at participating in the Season of Preparation? How are we at preparing space and time within all of the other preparations we have to check off our lists?

I once asked this of an amazing Altar Guild chair. As Ann's priest, I needed the incredible work she was doing, which involved countless hours at the church and running errands to get needed supplies for our services – my creative ideas often led to more work for her. I worried about her while I also treasured her gifts which she so freely gave. When I asked Ann if the work was interfering with her spiritual preparation, she gave me sage advice. She explained that she prayed into her work, that it was an expression of her tending to God's people. Her work was very intentionally both prayer and action. I was focused on the outward expression of Ann's work; she opened my understanding to her inner work.

"Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." James 2:18

The season of Advent is one of the most challenging times of the church year for those of us in charge of many preparations. How do we give space to our souls to prepare for the balance of prayer and action?

One way I do this is by "cheating" the season of Advent. While the stores begin playing Christmas music on November 1st, I begin playing Advent music a month ahead of the season (which feels like a radical rushing of the season to my Episcopal soul!) To further my seasonal heresy, I also bring out past Advent devotional studies and use those throughout November. I do all of this to begin preparing my brain and spirit for the work ahead. The words and images fill my senses, calm my anxieties about the work ahead of balancing home and church life. Advent words fill my being: Light, Hope, Joy, Promise, Wonder, Expectation, Preparation.

The season of Advent is a treasure. We are gifted with the invitation to make space, to slow down, to be intentional about the state of our souls. Like all other invitations, in order to accept the invitation of Advent, we need to prepare. Prepare to make space.

Prepare to give careful attention to our spiritual and physical wellbeing. Prepare to dedicate the work before us as living offerings of love to God.

Welcome to the Season of Advent, the season of preparation. With great hope for what these four weeks can bring to you, I offer only this: Give careful thought to the preparation your Advent experience requires. Perhaps make a lovely warm beverage, maybe even put on some beautiful Advent music, and ask God to begin working in you space for all that is to come.

In the blessedness of hope,

+Bp. Phyllis Spiegel
XII Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Utah



Compline Schedule

03 Dec – Becky Taylor
10 Dec – Chris Butterworth
17 Dec – PattiJoy
No compline Dec 24 or Dec 31

The community offers compline over Zoom each Sunday Evening at 5PM CST. Please join us! If you would like to lead compline, please contact Please contact Becky Taylor at bekatay@me.com



December Birthdays

Julia Madden Gayle Ahrens
Barbara Harris Betty Wyman



Event Calendar

2023

Meetings are on Zoom unless otherwise noted.

- **Book Study – Sundays, 5:00 PM CST**
- **Sunday evening Compline**, weekly at 6:00 PM Central
- **Friday Morning Prayer**, weekly at 9:00 AM Central
- **07 December – COL Meeting 4:00 PM** Central on Zoom

• **2024**

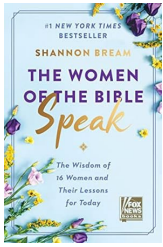
June 23-28, 2024 - GC81 Louisville, KY



Time to start making those plans to attend General Convention next year! The Episcopal Community will again be hosting the prayer chapel as well as manning a display booth. All members are welcome to come and

help spread the word about TEC. We hope you will join us. Make your reservations now. More information is available at: [Attendee Resources GC81 – The General Convention of The Episcopal Church](#)

Around the Community: Holy Spirit Circle Book Study



Women of the Bible Speak by Shannon Bream is the current book study of the Holy Spirit Circle in Pahrump, Nevada. The book opens up the lives of sixteen Biblical women, arranging them into pairs and contrasting their journeys. By pairing their stories, Shannon helps us reflect not only on the meaning of each individual's life, but on how they relate to each other and to us.

The Chosen Cynthia Sand

This Christian historical drama series has brought a whole new dimension to my understanding of the humanity of Jesus and his followers. One of the striking elements of the presentation that hit me immediately, is that these men and women were young, not grey-headed seniors. Jesus was only in his thirties during his three years of ministry. As a seventy year old woman, that was very thought provoking. And it is this age identification that has appealed to so many young people. They can relate. We see Jesus through those encountering him and in turn can relate to those who are so much like our very modern selves. The perspective of the writing is fresh. The cinematography and production very beautiful. The acting is insightful and poignant. But it is the in-depth look at the characters that captures and holds my attention.

Going into the 4th Season, there are so many platforms from which to view this series. You can download thechosen.tv app and watch for free. You can watch it on Netflix, Prime Video and YouTube. Interestingly, funds for this project have been raised by crowdfunding and paying it forward. Over 40 million had been raised as of the end of 2021. Those who donate make it possible for this to be watched for free by anyone. Dallas Jenkins, the creator, producer, and writer, partnered with Angel Studios. It has been a resounding success and is slated for 7 seasons. I applaud the funding process and the opportunity it gives viewers to literally share in the work of spreading a message of hope. It has been translated into dozens of languages and seen by millions around the world.

Many people have gathered in groups to watch the episodes together and then discuss. If there would be interest in doing so, please contact me and we could form a virtual group. Or local Circles could gather and watch together. In addition to the series, a Christmas special will be offered in selected theaters December 12-17. It is a combination of two shows previously offered: The Shepherds and The Message. I'm sure it will be offered via streaming after its theater debut.

A final word: this series is just a wonderful choice for viewing, a huge shift from the common options that contain so much darkness. The theme which ties it all together from the creator to the content and through the actors is one of Surrender. Once we do, Jesus can enter for his glory.



Recipe of the Month

Cranberry Pecan Goat Cheese Truffles



Yield: 18 truffles
These festive mini cheese balls only take 15 minutes and are loaded with creamy goat cheese, cranberries, and crunchy pecans!

Ingredients
10 oz goat cheese

6 oz cream cheese
2 teaspoons cinnamon
3 tablespoons honey, plus extra for garnish
1 1/2 cups pecan chips, divided
1 cup diced dried cranberries
1/2 cup minced fresh parsley

Instructions

In a large bowl, beat goat cheese, cream cheese, cinnamon, and honey until light and fluffy. Add 1/2 cup pecan chips, folding to combine. Set aside.

Line countertop with parchment paper. Toss together remaining pecan chips, dried cranberries, and parsley in the center of the parchment paper.

Using a large cookie scoop, scoop out one round of cheese filling and toss it into pecan mixture. Roll to coat. Continue until all truffles have been rolled in coating.

Refrigerate cheeseballs until ready to serve. You can make these up to three days before, just make sure and store them in an airtight container.

To Serve: Drizzle with honey, if desired. Serve with crackers, warm crostini or as is with a toothpick!



Circle of Leadership Elections

The Nominations/Elections Committee:

Nancy Young

Rebecca Taylor

Barbara Harris

The Episcopal Community

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