



# Around Our Diocese

Issue #110

The Diocese of Northern Indiana

December 2009

*A Passion for the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
A Willingness to do Whatever it Takes*

*A Heart for the Lost  
A Commitment to One Another*

## A Letter from the Bishop

Dear brothers and sisters,

As an avid mystery reader - I must confess that the more gruesome the tale, the more I enjoy it - I make it a point of pride never to sneak a peek at the end. I want to wait until the very last moment before discovering "who done it." Was it the jilted fiancé? The bitter business partner? The resentful cousin? Part of the pleasure is in the waiting. While some mystery readers do their best to figure out who's guilty, I prefer the surprise. I don't want to know - until the very last page. A gasp of surprise is the sign of a *great* mystery.

That's why Advent presents something of a challenge to me. It tells the story in reverse. Advent begins at the end, on the last page, and moves to the beginning. And so, on the First Sunday of Advent, our focus is on the second coming of Jesus. "Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness . . . that in the last day, when [Jesus] shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal" (Collect for 1 Advent, BCP p. 211). On the cusp of a new church year, we gaze into the future and recognize that Jesus has history well in hand. As John puts it in his vision of the future: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:1-2). From the opening moments of the Christian year, we know how things are going to turn out!

Having opened the book and sneaked a peek at the end of the story, we move to the middle - to John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin and forerunner, who appeared on the bank of the Jordan River when Jesus was about 30 and preached about the coming Savior. The Second and Third Sundays of Advent focus on John's ministry of preparation. This year, the Gospel readings come from Luke. "[John] went into all the

region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins," we will hear on 2 Advent (Luke 3:3). And then, the next week, John will confront us with his grim yet hopeful message. "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" And yet, John adds, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:7, 16). John invites us to review our lives and prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus. His message is always fresh, always challenging, and always appropriate.

Finally we turn our attention to the beginning of the story. Each year (remember that the lectionary is on a three-year cycle), the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Advent deals with some aspect of the events leading up to Jesus' birth. This year, it's the Visitation: the pregnant Mary visits her relative Elizabeth, who herself is pregnant (carrying John the Baptist in her womb). When Mary enters Elizabeth's home, John moves (babies can be rather active in utero!), and Elizabeth sees this as a sign. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy" (Luke 1:42-44). Even before he was born, John acknowledged the supremacy of Jesus. Even before he was born, John pointed away from himself and toward the One for whom God's people had been yearning. May we too leap for joy in the presence of our Lord!

Only after we've read the story backward are we ready for Christmas. In the light of Jesus' triumph at the end of time, after we've prepared our hearts and joined John in proclaiming Jesus' Lordship, we greet the newborn King.

Yours in Christ,

**+Ed**

## Youth Winter Retreat

Students in grades 7 through 12 are welcome to attend this year's winter retreat at the Wawasee Episcopal Center from December 11<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup>. The topic is "Spirituality and Sexuality for Christian Teens". The cost is \$20.00 per participant. For more information, please contact Carol Bianchini at [cjbianchini@comcast.net](mailto:cjbianchini@comcast.net).

## ECW Memorial Fund

The Memorial Fund Book of Remembrance has added these ECW ladies that have passed away the past year: Letha Hamman, Helen Daly, Joy Davis, Susan Burkhart, Ruby Burns, Kaye Carpenter, Irene Krizman, Myra DeGroot, Mary Frances Leadbetter, Geraldine Golightly Kiefer, Sarah Rebecca Snodgrass Boyd, Wilma Clark, Laura Gray, Virginia (Ginny) Hildebrand, Gertrude (Gert) Lislle, Connie McKee, Joyce Pellett, Re'Jene Tatum, Katherine (Katie) Williams, Esther Stockwell, Norma Armstrong, Harriet Forney, Jean Samders, Amy Barnard, Mildred Hancock, and Rose Staab. Thank you to all who contributed to the Scholarship Fund.

*Dolores (De) Bada*  
*DECW Memorial Fund Chairperson*

## Ordinations

Three men from our diocese will be ordained in the month of December. The Rev. Deacon Nicholas Myers will be ordained a priest by the Rt. Rev. Shannon Johnston of the Diocese of Virginia on December 6<sup>th</sup> at St. John's in McLean, Virginia. Clark Miller of Trinity, Logansport and Greg Wilde of St. Paul's, Mishawaka (and seminarian at Sewanee) will be ordained as transitional deacons on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at the Cathedral of St. James in South Bend.

## Cathedral Events

The Cathedral welcomes the children of the diocese to attend its St. Nicholas' Day celebration on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 to 12:30 pm. It also welcomes anyone wishing to attend its deanery Epiphany Tea on Sunday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4 pm. Following tea, Evensong will be celebrated at 5 pm. Please call the office at (574) 232-4837 or email [stjames@michiana.org](mailto:stjames@michiana.org) to RVSP.

## Fort Wayne Event

Trinity Church will host the Canterbury Children's Choir for a concert on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM (EST).

## Bishop & Diocesan Calendar for December 2009

### December 2, 2009

12:05 PM (EST) Holy Eucharist at the Cathedral

### December 4-5, 2009

Colloquy Weekend for the Northern Indiana School of Theology

### December 5, 2009

Day for Deacons at the Cathedral

### December 5, 2009

10:00 AM (EST) St. Nicholas' Day Celebration at the Cathedral

### December 6, 2009

Ordination of the Rev. Deacon Nicholas Myers to the Priesthood in Alexandria, Virginia

### December 6, 2009

Visitation to St. Paul's, LaPorte

### December 6, 2009

Canterbury Christmas at Trinity, Fort Wayne

### December 11-13, 2009

Youth Winter Retreat at Wawasee Center

### December 13, 2009

Visitation to St. John of the Cross, Bristol

### December 18, 2009

12:05 PM (EST) Holy Eucharist at the Cathedral

### December 20, 2009

Visitation to St. Andrew's-by-the-Lake, Michigan City

### December 20, 2009

5:00 PM (EST) Ordination to the Diaconate of Clark Miller and Greg Wilde at the Cathedral

### December 22, 2009

12:00 PM (EST) Standing Committee

### December 24, 2009 – January 3, 2010

Diocesan Office Closed

### January 3, 2010

4:00 PM (EST) Deanery Epiphany Tea and Evensong at the Cathedral

*Around Our Diocese is published monthly. Please send stories, articles, and images by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to:*

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