



December 2022 -
January 2023

THE BT TIMES

I SEE YOU. I AM HERE.

At the beginning of November during Diocesan Convention Bishop Eugene Sutton gave his address to the lay and clergy people gathered at Turf Valley in Ellicott City. He had returned from a pilgrimage to South Africa just a day or two before his address and a portion of his address related to this trip and his words have stuck with me these last few weeks.

He talked about the most common greeting in Zulu, one of several indigenous languages in South Africa. People often greet one another by saying “Sawubona” which translates as “I see you.” The response to this greeting is “Ngikhona” meaning “I am here.” Consider those phrases for a moment. Saying to some that you see them recognizes them as an individual person with their own light and gifts to bring to the world. Being able to say “I am here” acknowledges and embraces that light. Imagine the power of hearing “I see you” for someone who has never felt as if they are worthy of being noticed.

I’ve been thinking that this is how God always approaches us. God knows our faults and failings and is also well aware of our goodness and our grace. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that God cares for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field and points out that we are even more precious to God than these. Psalm 139 reminds us that God is everywhere and dwells with us always. When God looks at us, cares for us, loves us it is with complete knowledge of who we are, the good and the bad. What an incredible gift.

Consider how you can greet others in this world. If you say to someone “I see you” they likely won’t know how to answer since that isn’t how communication operates in our community. But how can you make someone know they are seen? After all, isn’t truly seeing someone a step on the path of being **Better Together?**

Pastor Kathleen



Notes From the Office

Darkness and Light - circa 2022

We've been together long enough to know that Advent, with its candles in the windows, wreaths on the doors, and twinkling Christmas trees lights, can be a double-edged sword. Many churches have a Blue Christmas Service, or a service of meditation and prayers, or something that acknowledges how hard this season can be. The darkness, the losses, the grief, the memories, the quiet – all serve to remind us of the brokenness of this world, of our world.

We don't have that service here, and while we've never had a public conversation about it, I believe it is because we all understand. I believe that all of us know about the hard times and the empty tables, the friends, the brothers, sisters, wives, and husbands who are not here this year, and because we are a community of faith, that knowing smile, the pat on the shoulder, the hug in the narthex, come easily.

And here's the greatest gift of all: the sorrow that should be pouring down like rain, instead becomes a flurry of gratitude and generosity. Literally a flurry. I've never seen so many Salvation Army stockings. Indeed, there were so many presents that we ran out of stockings and just had to send toys, books and games in grocery bags. The Seafarers boxes were blessed and delivered. The Ascension Homes luncheon with attending gifts is on December 11.

We don't give because we have to. We don't give because we're trying to prove we are good. We don't give to get into heaven. We give because we know how hard it can be (really, we do), and with this small gift, we can help make one person's life just a little bit better, whether it's a child, or a seafarer far from home, or someone without the resources that most of us are blessed to have.

Better Together is not just about us. We are **Better Together** when we, as a community, are there for our neighbors in need, when **Better Together** extends to the whole city, the whole county, the whole world.

And a child was born, to teach us how to love. Amen.

Carolyn Surrick



Outreach at Nativity and Holy Comforter



In the last few months we have had multiple outreach programs. What a gift to be a part of a community that cares for others in such a fantastic way.

We had a coat drive and although there is no picture, two large totes of coats were gathered. There was a gathering of bags for the Seafarers which were stored under the altar until they were blessed and taken down to the harbor for distribution on the ships. A multitude of stockings were gathered for the Salvation Army to provide gifts for children who may not otherwise receive anything for Christmas. Finally, we are again providing gifts for members of Ascension Homes through GEDCO. Tags for the residents were taken off the tree, gifts purchased and returned and they will be distributed on Sunday, December 11 at a luncheon we are hosting in Hart Hall at 1pm. So much excitement!



Our next outreach ministry is for ShareBaby. This organization seeks to address the unmet basic needs of Baltimore's most vulnerable young children through the distribution of diapers and other essential items.

To that end we will be collecting the following items at the church between now and January 1, 2023. Please contribute new items. There will be a tote in the narthex into which items may be placed. Money is also accepted; just put it in the offering plate and indicate that it is for ShareBaby.

- Adult Diapers
- Baby Diapers (all sizes)
- Pull-ups (all sizes)
- Diaper Cream
- Feminine Hygiene products
- Disposable nursing pads
- Postpartum hygiene items
- Wipes

York Road Sign – A Request for Your Creativity

We have the privilege of having a sign on York Road that allows us to advertise events and share thoughts, both funny and serious, with everyone who passes us....and there are a LOT of people who pass our sign on a daily basis. With great privilege comes great responsibility!

This means that we want to change the signs with some regularity and have them be relevant, interesting, and engaging. Pastor Kathleen is asking for your assistance with this. The space is relatively small –three lines, with each line having room for approximately 20-22 characters, including spaces and punctuation. See some of the more recent samples below and think about what you would like to see. We cannot promise we will use every possibility given to us but we would love to hear your thoughts.



Thank you for supporting our ministry financially. Giving online is easy. Simply text the amount you'd like to give to (410) 213-3900 or scan this QR code.



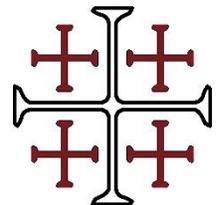
Christmas is coming!!

There will be two Christmas services this year. Both will be livestreamed as well as in person.

- Christmas Eve: 5pm: The Handbells will play! The Choir will sing! Pastor Don will provide a Children's Message and Pastor Kathleen will preach! Any children present will be invited forward to the communion rail in order to be a little more up close and personal to the altar so that they can see what is happening during the Eucharistic prayers. So often they cannot really see what is going on because they are just too small. This means that they will also be the first to receive communion on that day.
- Christmas Day: 10:30am: There will be music, a celebration of Holy Eucharist and Pastor Kathleen will preach. Take a short break between opening presents and eating a Christmas lunch or dinner to remember the reason we celebrate.

Jerusalem Bound

Pastor Kathleen has been given an opportunity to travel on pilgrimage with alumni and current students from Virginia Theological Seminary to Israel in January 2023. She will be leaving on January 7 and returns late on January 22 with a return to the office on January 24. Her home base will be St. George's College in Jerusalem with trips all over the region. At some point after her return there will be an adult forum where she will talk about her experiences and share photos and stories from the trip. This promises to be an incredible and soul-filling trip. Please hold her and those traveling with her in your prayers during this time.



Pastor Kathleen is incredibly grateful to the staff and council for their willingness to provide coverage while she is absent for three Sundays. Pastor Don will be celebrating all three of the Sundays and preaching one of them. The Rev. Laura Sinche the Lutheran pastor who provides Campus Ministry for Towson University and UMBC will preach another Sunday and Ryan Missel (your summer seminarian) will return to preach the final Sunday - and will, at that point, be The Rev. Ryan Missel following his ordination as a deacon on 12/17.

Pastoral Emergencies during this time will be covered jointly by Pastor Don and Lauren Welch, an Episcopal Deacon who has visited our community before.

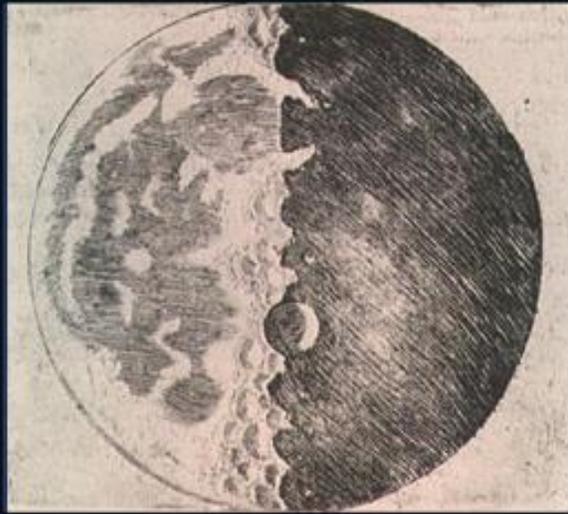
Important Dates – Mark Your Calendar!

- December 11, 1pm: Ascension Homes Luncheon
- December 16 and 17: Cedarcroft Center Holiday Bazaar (see flyer for more details)
- December 17: The Ordination of Ryan Missel to the Sacred Order of Deacons in the Episcopal Church. Livestream information forthcoming.
- December 18: Visit by Bishop Eugene Sutton, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
- December 20, 7pm: Ensemble Galilei Winter Solstice and Christmas Concert
- December 24, 5pm: Christmas Eve Service
- December 25, 10:30am: Christmas Day Service
- December 26: Parish Office closed
- December 30: Parish Office closed
- January 1: Eucharist Services 8am and 10:30am
- January 7 - January 24: Pastor Kathleen out of country
- January 16: Parish Office closed in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day



Come and enjoy beautiful music!
Tickets available at the door.

Ensemble Galilei Is Coming!



The 2022
Winter Solstice &
Christmas Concert

Tuesday, December 20th

at 7:00 p.m.

The Big Band is Back!

Ginger Hildebrand
Kathryn Montoya
Jackie Moran & James Oxley
Sue Richards & Carolyn Surrick
with lutenist, Ronn McFarlane
making music together

at

The Church of the Nativity
& Holy Comforter.

Tickets: \$25 General Admission
\$20 Students & Seniors



For more information go to www.EGmusic.com or call 410.433.4811

Weekly Community Gatherings

See the weekly email or website for Zoom links.
www.nativitycomforter.org

Sunday Mornings

Holy Communion in person at 8:00 and 10:30 am. Find the livestream on Facebook.

Monday Chair Yoga & Mindfulness Meditation

This 10:00 am class is led by Linda McGill.

Wednesday Healing Prayers

We gather on Zoom at 10:30 am.

Wednesday Night Live

Prayer and reflection at 7:30 pm on Zoom.

Our conversations will inform and reinforce our faith and spirituality, while promoting an appreciation for God's creation in its widest diversity.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

meets on Zoom with Pastor Don at 11:00 am

Thursday Evening Meditation Class

with Linda McGill on Zoom from 7:30 - 8:15 pm



The Church of the Nativity
& Holy Comforter
419 Cedarcroft Rd.
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