



The Message

The Newsletter of

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral - Little Rock, Arkansas

A House of Prayer for All People

Advent 2024



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Looking Back, Looking Forward

by The Very Rev. Amy Dafler Meaux



Advent blessings to you! What a year it has been!

We began 2024 welcoming our new Bishop, The Right Reverend John Harmon. His consecration was a historic moment for our Diocese and the Episcopal Church. It was our great pleasure, as a Cathedral, to welcome him and install him as our Bishop. Even better was welcoming all his people: friends, family, and colleagues from all over the Episcopal church and the world. We had great fun and showed off our immense capacity for hospitality! Since then, we've had the great privilege of sharing high feast days and daily ministry with him and the Diocesan staff. He is a blessing!

Our worship this year has been profound and holy. I'm grateful to Dr. Colin MacKnight for his faithful leadership, especially as we welcomed our new Associate Director of Music, Jeremiah Mead, to our staff. Their leadership of our choir gives us the capacity to offer weekly Evensong and host musicians from across our community. Our music ministry is a leader for

the future of sacred music in the Diocese, the Episcopal Church, and across the Anglican Communion. We will experience this once again during Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. I pray these moments will draw us all close to the kingdom of God.

Most of the time, when we gather for worship it is in our regular way. This includes our daily offerings of prayer and Holy Eucharist. These are led by our members, our staff, and attended by people from all aspects of our community. As we turn our hearts and minds to a new year, I encourage you to incorporate at least one of these services into your weekly (or daily) practices. If you're looking to draw close to God in 2025, these worship services are an easy way to add prayer into your life.

We have a lot to celebrate in 2024! Our chorister program grew, including the addition of a cherub choir. 2024 also brought many people back to church: our average Sunday attendance continues to grow. This Spring we brought back our Parish Potluck (the first since 2019) and Koinonia (our child-centered Wednesday Eucharist) grew every week. A huge thank you to Emma Mitchell, Missy McCain, and Jack Dowling who attend to every detail, allowing us to open our doors to people of all ages every day. We also welcomed our curate, The Reverend Thomas Alexander! We are so proud to have him in the Cathedral community! He has brought fresh preaching and teaching to us, leading us close to God with warmth and grace. All of these people and moments bring us

The Message

A newsletter about life at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. Send correspondence & address corrections to:

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closer to God's kingdom: our members, and those who visit, find their faith enriched and renewed. God is drawing us closer, every day, to our mission: to be a house of prayer for all people. Thanks be to God!

This winter will bring more changes to our life together! We will elect a new class of Vestry members in January; there will be a new class of Wardens as well. This year will also bring a search for the next Dean and Rector of the Cathedral. I invite your prayers for the Vestry as they lead this search, including appointing a search committee. Now is the time to deepen commitment and engagement here at the Cathedral: attend Bible study, join the Book Club, volunteer for the Altar or Flower Guild, become an usher. The Cathedral continues to grow and thrive, even in transition, because our members are committed to daily ministry.

As I prepare for my own ministry transition, I give thanks for each of you. My time as Dean and Rector is a great privilege and honor! This community continues to teach me about faithfulness and community. There are few, if any, words to express how much you have taught me about God's grace and love. I give thanks for you and remember you in my prayers every day.

Peace be with you,
Dean Meaux



Koinonia with Christmas Pageant
Wednesday, December 18, 2024
5:30 p.m. Community Dinner
6 p.m. Koinonia Eucharist with Pageant

Learning to Listen: A Case for Christian Formation

by Rev. Thomas Alexander



“Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live.” - Isaiah 55:3a

Here, Scripture reminds us of something so basic to the Christian faith: God speaks. This fact is so basic for us that we often take it for granted. But linger over this fact—that God speaks—even for just a moment and you’ll soon remember how shocking a fact it truly is. The world would have us believe not only that God is silent, but that God’s silence disproves God altogether. But Christians say otherwise: God speaks! And not only does God speak, but God speaks *to us*. You’ll remember that this world was fashioned by a word spoken from the LORD God: “let it be so,” He says to us and all of creation, day after day. Ever since, God has guided and governed us in the same way: by speaking to us. And, in the fullness of time, this Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)—the miracle which gives rise to our celebrations this season. Our beginning and our ending, our creation and our redemption: all of this is made possible simply because the good LORD speaks. Shocking, indeed!

But even more shocking is what we Christians say next: if God speaks, then we ought to listen. Now, listening is difficult work. It requires much effort and energy. And these days, listening feels like a lost art: we

rarely have the chance to practice it well, and there’s so much that seems hell-bent on making us worse at it. We need not look very far to see the damage that’s being done. But, lest we romanticize the past, I don’t think that listening has ever really come naturally to us. After all, that’s what Scripture seems to be saying: “Incline your ear, and come to me,” God commands us (Isaiah 55:3a). Scripture reminds us that listening isn’t always a given. More often than not, listening requires a decision and a determination. We must draw close and incline our ears in order that we might hear what God has to say—or, as Isaiah puts it, in order “that [we] may live” (Isaiah 55:3a). When we listen, we find life, true Life.

We Christians need to find practical ways to become better, more faithful listeners. And that, I firmly believe, is a responsibility given to the Church. At their best, our various classes here at Trinity help us to become better, more faithful listeners. Notice, then, that the goal isn’t for us to learn from our Sunday School teachers—not really, anyway. My job as a priest, for example, isn’t to be heard but to *help others hear*. Distinguishing between the two is a daily task: as John the Baptist so memorably puts it, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). But the distinction is crucial: the Church is the place where we are schooled in how to listen first not to the Church but to the God Who speaks to the Church.

At Trinity, this includes at least three weekly offerings for adults: on Sundays at 9:15 a.m., Bible Study in Keller House; on Mondays at 7:00 a.m., Bible study over at Community Bakery; and on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m., Book Club. In these spaces, we practice listening to God: in the pages of Holy Scripture, where God Himself addresses us, and in the pages of books written by other Christians, both living and dead, who show us how they have attempted to listen for God. And in these spaces, we really do learn how to be better, more faithful listeners.

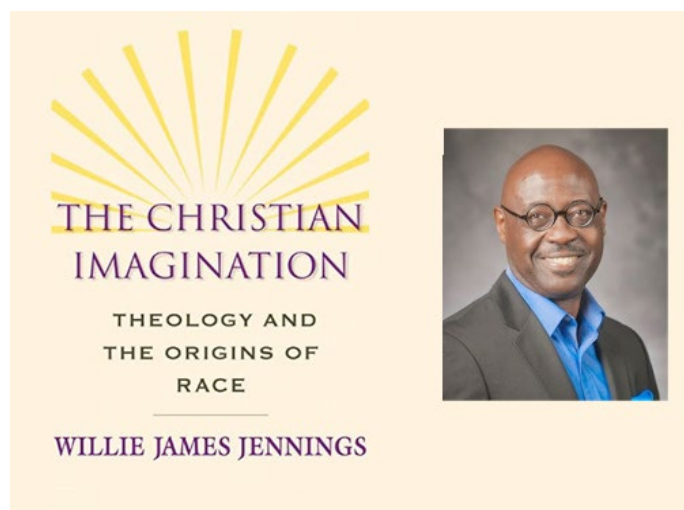
So, my dear reader, I encourage you to come join us—on Sundays, on Mondays, on Wednesdays, or some combination of the three—as we practice listening to God. I encourage you to let your fellow congregants help you practice listening to God, just as I know you will help them to become better, more faithful listeners, too. And it’s my prayer that this congregation of ours might truly be such a place where we all hear more clearly the word God has in store for us.

- The Rev. Thomas Alexander

Book Club: *The Christian Imagination* by Willie James Jennings

Wednesdays at 6:30 pm, starting January 8

Baker Parlor in Keller House



On Wednesday, January 8, the Cathedral's Book Club will start our next book, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* by Willie James Jennings. A groundbreaking account of the potential and failures of Christianity since the colonialist period, *The Christian Imagination* is now widely recognized as a theological masterpiece. This will be a chance to study Professor Jennings' work before we welcome him to the Insights Lecture Series on Friday, April 4, 2025. This book is not available for purchase locally. The book is available on Amazon and as an audiobook. For our first session on January 8, please read the "Introduction" (pages 1–14). To learn more, contact the Rev. Thomas Alexander (thomas@trinitylittlerock.org).

Bible Study

Sundays, 9:15 am – 10:15 am, starting January 12

Conference Room in Keller House

Join us on Sunday mornings as we read through books of Holy Scripture together, listening for what God has to say to us. In the spring, we will study the books of Luke, Psalms, Acts, and Romans. Participants are encouraged to bring a Bible with them to each session. To learn more, contact the Rev. Thomas Alexander (thomas@trinitylittlerock.org).



Breakfast and Bible Study

Every Monday, 7:00 am – 8:00 am, starting January 6

Community Bakery on Main Street

Join us at our local Community Bakery as we begin the week and the work day by sharing breakfast and discussing the Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday. There's no prior preparation involved. Our time together on Monday makes Sunday even more meaningful. To learn more, contact the Rev. Thomas Alexander (thomas@trinitylittlerock.org).





Advent at Home



Pray

A weekly prayer for lighting each Advent candle as a household.



Read

A scripture passage to read together and reflect on.



Create

A week-by-week step to build your nativity scene together through Advent.

Week 1



Light the first purple candle. We light these candles in hope and expectation as we remember that **Jesus is the Light of the World.**

What do you want to pray about today?



Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. (Matthew 24:44)
As we prepare for Jesus to come near to us at Christmas, how can we prepare ourselves? Our home? Our lives?



Choose a special place in your home for your nativity scene. Set up the scene/croche without any figurines. I wonder what part of the Nativity you like best? Why?

Week 2



Light two purple candles. We light these candles in hope and faith as we remember that **Jesus is the Light of the World.**

What do you want to pray about today?



May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)
How can we stay hopeful? What brings you hope on dark days?



Add shepherds and animals to your nativity scene. Who is coming to witness Jesus' birth? Who would you invite to a special event?

Week 3



Light three candles: two purple and one pink. We light these candles in hope, faith, and joy as we remember that **Jesus is the Light of the World.**

What do you want to pray about today?



You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. (James 5:8)
How do we practice patience? What does patience look like?



Add the holy family (Mary & Joseph) to your nativity scene. Today we especially remember Mary, Jesus' mother. How do you think Mary and Joseph felt like as they awaited Jesus' birth?

Week 4



Light all 4 candles. (If Christmas Eve, light the white Christ candle too). We light these candles in hope, faith, joy, and peace as we remember that **Jesus is the Light of the World.**

What do you want to pray about today?



Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)
How does God show us his love? What are some signs we have of God's love?



Add the infant Jesus and angel(s) to your nativity scene. Christmas is almost here! How can we share and show the good news of God's love to the world?

Phos hilaron

O gracious light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of Life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

Psalm 139:11-14

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and night wraps itself around me,"
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

Resources for Families

www.buildingfaith.org/category/advent

sanctifiedart.org/adventchristmas-resources

illustratedministry.com for Advent Materials

Advent Word
adventword.org
@adventword

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Matthew 25 Committee

by Jerry Shurgar

Introduction

Your parish committee is charged with bringing the gospel to life through works that touch those in need be it mind, body or spirit. Direct assistance is given to organizations and individuals.

Gaines House

Replaced and leveled the floor in the laundry room that was in danger of collapsing. A sofa and two chairs will soon be installed in the television room.

In November at its annual Sandra Wilson Cherry Awards Dinner the Gaines House Board presented the Appreciation Award to Matthew 25 for its service and dedication to Gaines House.

Dorcas Spa night

On this night the ladies and children of Dorcas House come to Trinity for food pampering, fun and fellowship. Three massage stations are set up in Baker parlor. For many this is a first time novel experience. Facials are set up in Mitchell House along with hair trimming. Morrison Hall is decorated and set up for hat decorations and crafting along with fellowship and food. The children are taken to Chancellors Hall for fun and games. Tours of the cathedral are available. Many of the ladies come to us hardened, apprehensive and defensive but leave touched by the love that is shared.

Phoenix House

This is a reentry program for women who have been in prison. While at Phoenix they are responsible for going to work, performing community service (volunteering at Saint Francis House), attending counseling and recovery meetings. Thirty six women live in 18 apartments. Seven replacement couches chairs and other furniture have been donated and installed.

Saint Francis House Veterans

The veterans program sent out an appeal for pillows and break room supplies. An SUV load of pillows and coffee soon arrived at SFH to be given to our veterans.

Mothers Day Purses

This annual event makes sure that children who would not be able to provide a gift to their mother

are furnished with a decorated gift bag containing a purse filled with wonderful gifts for mom. This year parishioners provided over eighty purses that were delivered to children at organizations we support.

Reforestation Project

Trinity is transforming neighborhoods and changing lives with this project. Hundreds of large, native species trees have been planted in the yards of individuals who lost their trees during the 2023 tornado. Birds and wildlife are now returning to the area; storm water runoff is being reduced. The emotional healing has been beyond all expectations. Here are what some of the tree recipients have to say about the project.

"We have been the recipient of two pin oaks and one small magnolia. Words cannot express the transformation that has taken place in our neighborhood due to the foresight, generosity and hard work from Trinity Episcopal and Bemis Trees. After the destruction of the tornado this gives us a sense of hope and renewal. God bless all involved in this miraculous transformation."

"When the Bemis trucks pulled up to my house with two trees I was like a little girl at Christmas. My heart was filled with joy. It was two days before the anniversary of the tornado. I thank the Matthew 25 Committee and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral for this lovely gesture. God bless you all."

The project is funded by individual donations and memorials of trees, allowing it to be so successful. Twenty-three more large trees will be planted before the planting season ends until winter when it will resume. If you would like to designate a memorial tree or a simple donation just make your donation to the Trinity Reforestation Project.

Respectfully Submitted,
W.G. Shurgar

Trinity's Mission

The mission of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral is to proclaim the Word of God by sharing our gifts, ourselves, and our properties through ministry to each other, our neighbors, and our community as we serve God and represent the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas.

From the Choir Pews

by Dr. Colin MacKnight



As 2024 comes to an end, I find myself beginning to look toward the new year. One of the ways in which 2025 will be a markedly different year for me is that I will play the complete organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach, in commemoration of the 275th anniversary of his death. Bach's 18 hours of organ music are the indisputable centerpiece of the organ repertoire. Indeed, Bach not only dominates the organ repertoire, but does so to a greater degree than any composer dominates the repertoire of any instrument. (It is not a stretch to say that if one does not like Bach, one should probably not become an organist!) That being said, the difficulty and quantity of Bach's organ works make this an unusual project; in fact, I can name fewer than ten people who have played complete Bach, although I'm sure there are others of whom I'm not aware.

This project serves many purposes. First, it is an offering to the community – a form of outreach for those who love Bach, the organ, classical music, sacred music, etc. Second, it is, for me personally, a goal I have had and for which I've striven for well over a decade. Third is The Bach Challenge, a fundraiser for the choir's pilgrimage to Canterbury in summer of 2026, during which they will be the resident choir at Canterbury Cathedral for a week.

The Bach concerts will mostly comprise 30-minute lunchtime recitals on Wednesdays, beginning on January 8, 2025. These will continue through May (with a brief pause on April 16 and 23 for Holy Week and the week after Easter), pause for the summer, and resume on September 10. Outside of the weekly lunchtime recitals, there will be one additional concert: *Clavier-Übung III* on Monday, July 28, 2025, the exact 275th anniversary of Bach's death. Sometimes referred to as the German Organ Mass, *Clavier-Übung III* is Bach's

largest and most important organ work. It comprises an opening prelude, 21 chorale preludes, four duets, and a concluding fugue, totaling about 100 minutes.

I'm very excited for this project, and also quite intimidated, but I hope that many of you will become regular attendees of these performances, bring a friend, and be inspired to contribute to the Trinity Choir's pilgrimage to Canterbury.

Yours sincerely,

Colin

The Bach Challenge

As part of next year's celebration of Bach's music, we challenge you to contribute to Trinity Choir's residency at Canterbury Cathedral in summer 2026. Our fundraising goal for the 2026 Canterbury trip is \$50,000. Among other things, your gifts will support trip expenses for choral scholars who would not otherwise be able to experience singing brilliant sacred music in one of the world's great cathedrals.

We invite you to participate in the Bach Challenge at one of the following levels:

- Chorale Prelude: up to \$49
- Chorale Partita: \$50-\$99
- Concerto: \$100-\$249
- Trio Sonata: \$250-\$499
- Prelude and Fugue: \$500-\$999
- Tocatta and Fugue: \$1000+

We also invite and encourage non-singers to attend the pilgrimage track of the Canterbury residency and experience the center of the Anglican faith. Email Colin MacKnight at colin@trinitylittlerock.org for more information.

Music Program Highlights

Feb
21
and
23



Maxine Thévenot Residency
Organ Recital at The Cathedral of
Saint Andrew
Friday, February 21, 2025 at 7 pm

Maxine Thévenot Conducts the Trinity
Choir
Sunday, February 23, 2025
10:30 am Choral Eucharist and 4 pm
Choral Evensong

Award-winning Canadian-American musician Maxine Thévenot is known for her skillful, musical organ playing, inventive concert programming, and passionate, informed conducting. She is deeply committed to her liturgical work as a cathedral musician, but also to promoting music of all genres. She

combines this commitment with concertizing, guest conducting, solo organ recitals, and collaborating with other musicians, always striving for representation and access to diverse music.

Dr. Thévenot serves as Director of Cathedral Music & Organist at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, Albuquerque. She oversees an internationally renowned choral program and is the Artistic Director of the Friends of Cathedral Music community outreach series. She is also the Founding & Artistic Director of the professional vocal ensemble Polyphony: Voices of New Mexico. She has been an adjunct music department faculty member and chapel organist at the University of New Mexico since 2006.

Please visit maxinethevenot.com for more information on Dr. Maxine Thévenot.

Mar
21

Bach Concert with Choir and Orchestra
Friday, March 21, 2025 at 7 pm

In commemoration of the 275th anniversary of the death of Johann Sebastian Bach, the Trinity Choir and members of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra will present a concert of masterworks by Bach. Two of Bach's most sublime cantatas will frame the program, which also includes a lesser known (and highly virtuosic!) instrumental sinfonia. A reception will follow.

Program

Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren, BWV 137
Sinfonia in D major, BWV 1045
Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV 21

Advent and Christmas Schedule



Advent Compline Services

Wednesday, December 11, 2024 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 18, 2024 7:30 p.m.

Koinonia with Christmas Pageant

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

5:30 p.m. Community Dinner

6 p.m. Koinonia Eucharist with Pick-up Pageant



Christmas Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 22, 2024 at 4 pm

Reception to follow

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2024

10:30 am Choral Service

4 pm Family Eucharist

11 pm Christmas: Choral Mass (prelude at 10:30pm)



Christmas Day

December 25, 2024

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Twelfth Night: Epiphany Lessons and Carols

January 5, 2025 at 4 pm

Burning of the Greens and S'mores to follow



Feast of the Epiphany

January 6, 2025 at 7 pm



GIVING AND
STEWARDSHIP

Give to the Cathedral

Now more than ever, Trinity Cathedral is a house of worship for all people. It's how we're joined together with open hearts to be good neighbors to our community, the diocese, and beyond. Now more than ever, your generosity supports the resources essential to staying connected and reimagining our life together. Now more than ever, we are grateful for your support.



Stewardship 2025

It is not too late to join or renew your commitment to Trinity's congregational life with an annual stewardship gift. trinitylittlerock.org/pledge

1884 Legacy Society

By including Trinity Cathedral in your will or estate plan, you ensure that the ministry and outreach of the cathedral will continue. Learn more: trinitylittlerock.org/legacy



Ministry Giving 2024

When you give to Trinity's mission in any amount, any day of the year, you enrich the community with spiritual support and outreach. Make an end of year gift to the annual fund: trinitylittlerock.org/give

Save the Date

Bliss

Coming May 1, 2025
Contact Jack Dowling to be on the planning team.

Advancement Director, Jack Dowling is here with assistance and answers. You will find that he loves Trinity's mission as much as you do! jack@trinitylittlerock.org – (501) 251-6667.



TRINITY

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A house of prayer for all people

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