

St Mark's Episcopal Church Big Timber

Advent & Christmas Newsletter 2021

Issue 4 / Volume 2



Caves, Caves and More Caves ...

Fr. Bryan Beveridge

In one of my recent offerings, I commented on two different caves. The first was the 'holy sepulchre' - the now venerated place of burial for Jesus' body following his crucifixion in the center of Jerusalem. I experienced it as a dark, noisy, smelly place. The second was the 'Garden Tomb'. This is a cave, a burial place, just outside the walls of the old city of Jerusalem. In contrast, it is light, bright and a place of quiet reflection.

In ancient Israel, caves – both natural and handmade were places of refuge, security, and safety. The Old Testament speaks of the caves where Obadiah hid a hundred prophets to protect them from Jezebel. It speaks of Elijah, the prophet, taking shelter in a cave on Mount Horeb after travelling for 40 days and 40 nights. Upon awakening from a sleep, God speaks to the prophet. I wish to reflect in this writing on another 'cave'.

As we journey through the Advent Season, in time and imagination, we hear the story of Mary and Joseph and their journey to Bethlehem. On arrival at their destination for the census in Bethlehem, they seek out accommodation as Mary's 'time' is fast approaching. They are singularly unsuccessful. There was as we know 'no room at the inn'. Justin Martyr, circa 155, recommended that those who doubted Jesus was really born in Bethlehem could go there and visit the cave where he was supposed to have been born. The same cave is referenced in the apocryphal Gospel of James and in the writings of Eusebius.

IN THIS ISSUE

*Caves, Caves and ~
~ More Caves*

Among The Trees

The Oldest Carol

*From The Library Steps
Gratitude*

Parish News & Events

A Christmas Gift Idea

Christmas Fare

The Editor's Encomium

St Mark's Information



Caves, Caves and More Caves ... continued

So, when we come to the Nativity Story, we are in fact looking once more at a 'cave', not likely a stable as sometimes presented. It is reasonable to assume that the cave where Jesus was born was a place of safety and security for the livestock of the local folk; a place easy to protect and defend should predators appear. Joseph, and Mary heavy with child, hunkered down in a cave. It was soon for them a place of safety, security, warmth and comfort. Oh and yes, the smells and sounds of a stable but with the warmth those critters provided as well.

One of the things I take away from the story is the ability of God's people – in this case Mary and Joseph, in earlier times Obadiah and Elijah, to use what was 'at hand' and to make their circumstances serve their journey with God. By their willingness to journey with God, Mary and Joseph were willing to journey in a 'general' direction. I suspect they believed that their God would be with them – 'above and below' – 'on the right and the left' – 'behind them and before them' – ever present as they journeyed in faith. I can only imagine the courage and faith it took for these two prospective parents to undertake this walk of faith.

As we gather together this season, in our homes, in the homes of loved ones, in places of worship, it is my prayer that we would pause and give thanks for the birth in the time of the timeless one. Reflect that we need not fear about what lies ahead. God, our creator, walks with us through the Holy Spirit and would have us know that we are his unique creation gifted to bring about more fully his Kingdom of Love.

Blessings in Jesus' name,

Bryan +

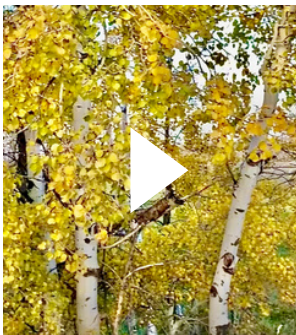
Among The Trees

Jodie Dance

Somehow this poem brings me to tears every single time I read it. The trees to me are like elders – quietly wise, full of information if you stay quiet and listen. I read this and think, how much light am I letting in? So that it can then be shared with others? Prayer and worship allow light in. Gratitude allows light in. A deep breath. Joy. Dance. It is different for each person.

*When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.
I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.
Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."
The light flows from their branches.
And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."*

MARY OLIVER



The photo was taken recently on a walk by the river. The video is a gift from the Aspens at the end of my lane, taken in the evening on my way back from a bike ride. Make sure you are somewhere quiet, turn the sound up, and enjoy!

The holidays will be here soon.
The greatest gift you can give others is to shine!

Jodie Dance

Editor's Note:

If viewing this electronically, the small image links to Jodie's video. If reading a paper copy, type this link into your browser: https://youtu.be/cq_N9IdziG4

The Oldest Christmas Carol

From An Idea By Mona Lovely

When I was searching out articles for this Newsletter, I received a note from Mona Lovely directing me to an article on the World's oldest Christmas Carol, 'The Angel's Hymn'. That article and others trace the history of this work to Bishop Telephorus, an Italian of Greek extraction who was the 8th Bishop of Rome from 126-137CE. Pope Telephorus is said to have been the first to celebrate Christmas Mass at midnight; to institute celebration of Easter on Sundays; to keep a seven-week Lent before Easter; and to begin the tradition of singing the Gloria.

It was this that became the oldest Christmas Carol when, in 129CE, he is said to have decreed that: *"In the Holy Night of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour, all shall solemnly sing the Angel's Hymn"; Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*, as recorded in Luke 2:13-14. The tune is lost and if there were further words it is not known – the oldest carol you have never heard!

In fact, the Carol is a recognized musical form dating from medieval Europe, associated with religious joy, but not specifically for Christmas, and written for choirs. As the Encyclopedia Britannica says: *'... a late medieval English song on any subject, in which uniform stanzas, or verses (V), alternate with a refrain, or burden (B), in the pattern B, V1, B, V2 . . . B.'*! In parallel, the people sang Christmas folk songs having their origins in Nativity plays by St Francis of Assisi in the 13th Century.

In the 18th Century, these two cultural lines came together, and the Christmas Carol as we know it today was born. However, the tradition of singing *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is carried on today in the refrain of 'Angels we have heard on High', No.96 in the hymnal, created in 1862 by Anglo-Irish Bishop James Chadwick by combining the Gloria with a loose English translation of an old French carol called Angels in Our Fields.

In England, a favourite musical tradition is the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols held on Christmas Eve at King's College in Cambridge. The service features nine Scripture readings telling the story of Christmas, interspersed with carols and congregational hymns. The opening carol is always "Once in Royal David's City," with the first verse sung by a single boy chorister. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was created and first performed in 1880.



From The Library Steps ...

...Wishes, Thoughts & A Good Read.

Betty Morris, a longtime member of St Mark's sends her good wishes and a suggestion for a wonderful read:

Merry Christmas (Happy Birthday to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.)

May I suggest that as you prepare for this special day you take time to read a wonderful story, if you have not already done so: *'How Far To Bethlehem'* by Norah Lofts.

This is the story of the three wise men as they traveled from Asia to Bethlehem together. It also tells of the life of Mary & Joseph. It is not a long book but a story that makes life at that time ever so realistic.

Merry Christmas with love to all!

Betty Morris



Betty's idea took root and here are some more book recommendations from St Mark's:

Daryl Todd ~ 'The Nightingale' by Kristen Hannah.

This epic panorama of World War II illuminates an intimate part of history seldom seen: the women's war. It tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France - a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women.

Joe Long ~ 'Empire of the Summer Moon' by S.C.Gwynne.

A stunningly vivid historical account of the forty-year battle between Comanche Indians and white settlers for control of the American West, centering on Quanah, the greatest Comanche chief of them all.

~ 'Blue Highways' by William Least Heat Moon.

William Least Heat Moon, pen name of William Trogon, is of English, Irish, and Osage ancestry. His first book, *Blue Highways*, chronicles a 1978 three-month, 13,000-mile journey around America on back roads, after he had lost his teaching job and separated from his first wife.

Sandi Blake ~ 'Personal Transformation', by Kiril Sokoloff.

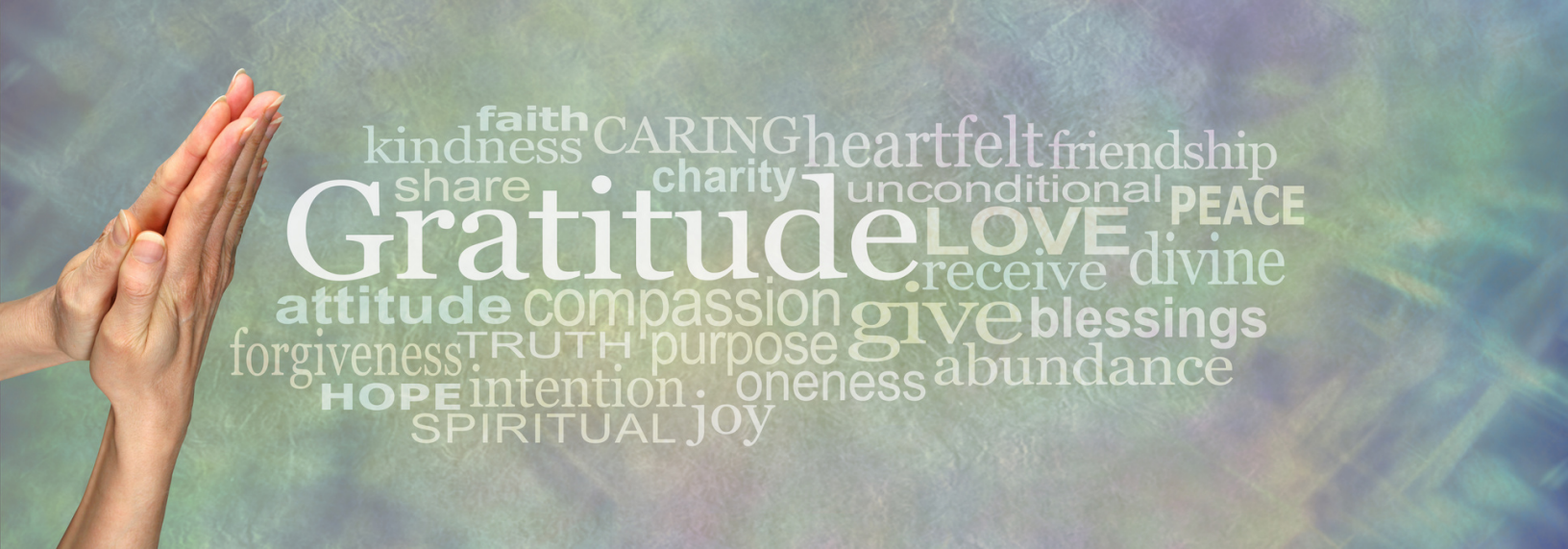
This book touches the human spirit. Its focus is on his personal trials, brought on by the devastating loss of his hearing as an adult. His loneliness and losses are profound, but instead of dwelling on self-pity, in this personal saga Sokoloff reaches out with honesty and compassion to others struggling with life-altering disabilities. What starts out as a deeply disturbing book ends with an uplifting message.

John Thornton ~ 'The Silence at the Song's End', by Nicholas Heiney.

Transcribed by his mother from diaries, crumpled sheets of paper and Post-it notes, this is a moving memoir of Nicholas Heiney who took his own life at the age of 23 in 2006. Undiscovered until after his death, these vivid writings and his poetry chronicle his adventures on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans where he found much joy.

~ 'One Wild Song', by Paul Heiney.

The father's account of a mostly solo and dangerous voyage to rediscover his dead son's voice through sailing, which Nicholas loved, and through his poem 'The Silence at the Song's End'.



This year, 2021, has had its ups and downs. The “normal” we have known in the past may never be the same again. COVID-19, the economy, our political divisions, global warming, racial injustice, and the unkind way we are treating others simply because we do not see eye to eye is everywhere in our communities, the news, the papers, and on social media. If you let yourself, you can become mired in it. I did last winter. Sometimes I would listen to the news on NPR and become so overwhelmed when hearing all the dire reports I felt like I could hardly breathe. After reading our local paper’s letters to the editor, I would become so angry and would want to write to refute what was stated in their letter. But the lies and the misinformation were so outrageous, that I did not know how to begin to respond and felt it would not make any impact on anyone’s thinking, anyway. I worried about my husband, children, grandson, and other family members and friends, asking God to keep them safe from this frightening and unpredictable epidemic. The world seemed to be falling apart. Then, something happened. I do not know if it was because I ended up in the hospital or God knocked me off my horse. I remembered something that I learned a long time ago, but somehow had forgotten. Gratitude!

I do not remember where, when, or how gratitude came into my thoughts or practice. Maybe it was from something I read or heard someone speak on. It helped me in the past and I found it gave a brighter perspective on the world. I am not talking about the Thanksgiving holiday, but every day. Most of the time it is the everyday little things or the loved ones in your life. These are some of the things I have found myself being grateful for: The tasty, juicy heirloom tomatoes in my garden, even when they ripened all at once I ended up with jars of homemade salsa for the winter. The way our maple tree looks so beautiful in the fall with the leaves falling red against the green grass. Our neighbors, across the alley, whom we can share our same ideas and thoughts with, laugh at the world and our kids and grandkids, share an evening fire, and know that when we have trouble, we can count on them to help us out. For my son’s tears at his wedding, showing his tender heart and how much he cares. My grandson’s laughter and how through his eyes and words he reminds again of what it is like to be a 5-year-old. The COVID-19 vaccine. These and countless more are reasons for gratitude.



As the holidays and Christmas approaches, I thank God that my family is safe and healthy. This year we can all celebrate Christmas together.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Mary Catherine Meek

Parish News & Events

Sarah Gregie

Please Join Us:

Advent Wreath and Lighting of the Advent Candles

Nov 29th, Dec 5th, 12th & 19th

Advent Teaching Tuesdays

"Practicing Patience with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength and Mind". In Dallman Hall at 5:30pm

Nov 31st, Dec 7th, 14th & 21st

Advent Worship Wednesdays

Prayer Group - In the church at 5pm

Dec 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd



Pint with the Priest

Thursdays 7pm at Tap Room

Dec 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd

Christmas Eve service at 8pm

December 7th at 3:00 to 5:00pm - Open House at the Community Food Bank

Are you interested in giving of your time, food or monetary contributions? You are welcome to stop in and see what's going on. The Community Food Bank is located at 10 Bridge Street, next to Hanser's and by Tony's Repair. All are welcome, come by and see the Food Bank at work.

Sarah's Family Christmas Gifts

The Jingle Bell program provides Christmas gifts for kids who may not otherwise have a fun filled Christmas. Since coming to Big Timber my husband and I have participated in the Jingle Bell program each year. Now that our children are older, we have made it part of their Christmas. Faline and Clayton each adopt a child's list close to their age. Then we take them shopping to pick out toys, clothes, bikes, whatever is on the list. The money used to purchase these gifts are deducted from their Christmas fund. They understand that they may not be able to get exactly what they want for Christmas, however they know it is better to help someone else have a wonderful Christmas. This has become a fun tradition for us and a wonderful way to celebrate the holiday.

Adopt a Jingle Bell Wish List Today!

Help to create a fun-filled Christmas for a child.



Wish lists can be found at
American Bank * Citizens Bank * Opportunity Bank * Sky Credit Union

Adopt a list and sign the sheet at the bank

Go shopping!

Return the unwrapped gifts, along with the wish list, to the bank where you picked up the list. Blank slips at the Bank to attach to any large items, just fill in the Child's code.

Please return gifts to the banks by December 11th

If you prefer to make a tax-deductible contribution please mail a check to:
Big Timber Women's Club-Jingle Bell Program
PO Box 23
Big Timber, MT 59011



... And A Little More News ..

A Message From The Rev. Deacon Roxy Klingensmith

In this season of Advent, the beginning of a new church year, I am so very blessed to announce that I will join the staff at St. Mark's as the Deacon beginning January 1. I am grateful to Fr. Bryan and the Vestry for giving me the opportunity to serve this loving congregation and the community of Big Timber in Jesus' Name in the coming year.



I am aware that St. Mark's has had a history of deacons serving here; I am honored to join those that have done so in the past. I also know that there is often confusion around just what the diaconate is and how it serves, in partnership, with the priesthood. The diaconate is an equal order with the priesthood in the Episcopal Church. Both are ordained orders, the difference between the two lies in the call ... mine, as the deacon, lies in the words of the Examination at the time of a deacon's ordination (BCP, p. 543): "My brother/sister, every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God, the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your Bishop. In the Name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely". Essentially, the Deacon is the bridge between the greater community and the church, bringing the hopes, needs and concerns of the wider world to the church to be addressed.

I also serve within a worship service proclaiming the Gospel (The Good News!), sometimes leading the prayers of the people, setting/serving at the communion table, administering the chalice and doing the dismissal, that is "Go in Peace to love and serve the LORD - thanks be to God!"

I look forward to serving with Fr. Bryan as a partner, working together to build up the Kingdom of God within St. Mark's and the wider community of Big Timber, Montana. Watch what I do, how I serve in the months to come ... my hope is that you will truly come to know/understand the role of the deacon in serving those in need in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Blessings and peace,

Deacon Roxy



Christmas Fare ...



Todd Family 1888 Kentucky Sourdough Pancakes.

As used by Sonny Todd for the St. Mark's Pancake Supper

Keep starter in refrigerator in clean container which gives room to expand as yeast works. (Cover should be loose in glass container.) Keeps for weeks, but try to use at least once a week.

Night before put starter into a bowl and add 2 cups warmed milk, 2 cups flower & mix thoroughly, cover with plate or lid.

Next morning put about a cup of starter back into clean jar and put back into refrigerator. To the rest of the starter, add:

2 eggs
2 Tbls. Oil
1 Tsp. Baking Soda
1 Tbls. Sugar
1 Tsp. Salt

For extra thick add 1 Tsp. Baking powder. Mix batter well and cook pancakes as usual. (Note: leftover batter does not keep but leftover pancakes can be wrapped in plastic wrap and reheated.) May also use for waffles, leftover waffles may be frozen and reheated in toaster.

Todd Family Christmas Roca

2 cups butter
2 cups sugar
2 T corn syrup
6 T water
1 cup almonds, chopped
Hershey bars and crushed almonds for the top.

Use a large heavy pan and a wooden spoon. Melt butter, add sugar corn syrup and water. Cook to a hard crack on the candy thermometer, stirring constantly. Add the nuts and spread in a cookie sheet that has sides. Melt Hershey bars (about 9) on the hot candy and spread evenly. Sprinkle the crushed almonds on top. Cool, crack into pieces and enjoy.

Raspberry Delight ~ from Mona Lovely

A Mary Jo Engle Recipe

Combine:

2 cups crushed pretzels
2 T sugar
½ cup chopped pecans (I use 1 cup)
¾ cup margarine - softened
Pat into bottom of 9x13 pan
Bake at 350 for 10-15 minutes

Filling cream:

8oz pkg cream cheese
¾ cup sugar - try powdered sugar
Fold in 1 thawed 8oz carton whipped topping

Topping:

6oz pkg raspberry jello (I use an extra 3oz pkg)
2 cups boiling water
2 x 10oz pkg frozen raspberries (I use Costco frozen mixed berries)

Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Editor's Note:

My apologies to those whose submitted recipes were not included here, the page was beginning to groan under the weight of calories.

The Editor's Encomium ...

"It's all storytelling, you know. That's what journalism is all about."

Tom Brokaw.

OK, perhaps I overestimate my position in journalistic circles, but I bet Tom didn't have any difficulty finding copy to "Stop the Presses".



Here in the St Mark's Newsletter newsroom over the past year, it has been a lonely search for enough to "Start the Presses" ~ until this edition! Clearly my last attempt to shame you all hit a raw nerve - if only I knew what it was I said that sparked the deluge. It has been a delight to compile this recipe, book review, history and reminiscence packed cornucopia that is the Advent and Christmas issue. I hope you have enjoyed it.

So, from the Editor a heartfelt "Thank You" to all who contributed, and a plea that you keep up the good work - or make someone else an offer that they cannot refuse!

My apologies to all those who submitted recipes, suggestions for articles, family quotations etc, that were not included in this issue; I am afraid that we ran out of space.



Two additional "Thank Yous": one to Father Bryan for his help removing the five stained glass windows, and an especially big one to Katie Sisum of Glassisum Designs of Livingston for her outstanding work on rebuilding them. The upper portion of the first window is completed and on display in the church. Please go and take a look, the transformation is stunning.

It is hoped that it and the lower half will be replaced in a refurbished frame by Christmas

Gratitude

On the subject of thanks, you will have seen the inspiring article by Mary Catherine Meek, which made me look differently at the present focus on all that is wrong. Dwelling on the selective misery peddled by the media is no way to live one's life, there is much to be thankful for, not least the Christmas Message of Faith, Hope and Love.

Good Wishes to all for Christmas and for a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

A Final thought from Tom Brokaw:

"If fishing is a religion, fly fishing is high church."

ST MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BIG TIMBER

PO Box 626, 207 W. 4th Avenue,
Big Timber, MT 59011.

officeofstmarks@gmail.com



~~~~~

We, the family of St Mark's, are a diverse group of Christians seeking a deeper, loving relationship with God and each other through prayer, worship, study, fellowship and ministry to our community.

~~~~~

Services

We gather in St Mark's Church for worship each Sunday at 10:30am, with fellowship and coffee thereafter in Dallman Hall. At present, only the Host is being offered at Holy Communion.

~~~~~

| * Ser. | Position                                     | Name                           | Address                    | e-mail                    | Phone/Cell   | Notes               |
|--------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 1.     | Rector                                       | Bryan Beveridge                | PO Box 478                 | bryanbeveridge1@gmail.com | 406-931-0349 | Cell                |
| 2.     | Senior Warden                                | Daryl Todd                     | PO Box 1657                | daryltodd1940@gmail.com   | 406-579-7618 | Cell                |
| 3.     | Junior Warden                                | Vacant                         |                            |                           |              |                     |
| 4.     | Treasurer<br>(ex officio)<br>Asst. Treasurer | Mary E. Cremer<br>Sarah Gregie | 189 Boulder Rd<br>As Ser.9 | mcremer@itstriangle.com   | 406-932-4392 | Home                |
|        | Clerk                                        | Vacant                         |                            |                           |              |                     |
| 5.     | Member                                       | John Thornton                  | PO Box 1150                | jt@ejt1.co.uk             | 406-930-0165 | Cell                |
| 6.     | Member                                       | Sandi Blake                    | 316 Otter Creek Rd         | sandidblake@gmail.com     | 406-932-4180 | Home                |
| 7.     | Member                                       | Suzanne Wilson                 | 562 Otter Creek Rd         | suzannewilson50@gmail.com | 406-932-4185 | Home                |
| 8.     | Member                                       | Vacant                         |                            |                           |              |                     |
| 9.     | Administrator                                | Sarah Gregie                   | PO Box 626                 | officeofstmarks@gmail.com | 406-932-5712 | 8 – 11am<br>M, W, F |

Please consider joining us, we would love to see you.