



# THE NORTHEAST TORCH

NEWS ABOUT NERM: NORTHEAST EPISCOPAL REGIONAL MINISTRY

DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI

DECEMBER 2007

ADVENT

## Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

*Christ Church, Boonville:*

7:30 p.m. - The Rev. Bob Klein, Celebrant

*St. Mary's, Fayette:*

5:30 p.m. - The Rev. Bob Klein, Celebrant

*Christ Church, Lexington:*

10:30 p.m. - The Rev. Ed Whelan, Celebrant  
(Carol Singing - 10:00 p.m.)

*Trinity Church, Marshall:*

7:00 p.m. - The Rev. Don Wilson, Celebrant

*St. Philip's, Trenton:*

6:00 p.m. - The Rev. Canon Bill Fasel, Celebrant

### In Memorium

#### Carroll Dean Greenall

1928 - 2007

Deacon Dean Greenall, who served NERM from its inception in 1993 until he retired from ministry in 2003, has died. He was 79 years old. Dean died on December 5, 2007, at his home in Cameron, Missouri.

At the time, he was suffering from numerous physical ailments. Dean is survived by his widow, Betty, as well

as by his sister, Wanda, and mother, Roberta, both now living in Mesa, Arizona.

Dean was born in Melbourne, Missouri on April 27, 1928. He served in the US Navy during World War II. After the war, he attended business school where he met

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### From the Canon Missioner

We have three different Christmases in America. This is a source of confusion for many of us, mostly because we don't realize that there are actually three different celebrations going on at the same time. The oldest of the three celebrations is what some call "carnival" Christmas. This celebration dates to the earliest days of agricultural civilization in Europe—and in fact is much older than Christianity itself. The celebration starts in late November or early December at the end of the harvest. Before modern times, it marked a time when food and drink were in greatest supply and with little work to do. Bands of working class men, women and youth roamed the long cold winter nights singing and demanding food and drink from the upper class houses. Helped by bountiful supplies of alcohol, it was a time when the social order was greatly relaxed, if not actually inverted, and included a lowering of moral standards as well as a fair degree of rowdiness. Prior to the introduction of Christianity, the season went by different names, such as Saturnalia in the Roman Empire and Yule in northern Europe, all of which we classify today as winter solstice celebrations. We celebrate Christmas at this time, in fact, because of the Roman practice of overlaying old pagan holidays with new Christian themes. Thus they chose to celebrate the birth of Christ near the winter solstice in order to "baptize" the celebration of Saturnalia. (No one knows the actual date of Jesus' birth.)

It was the pagan origins of the European Christmas celebrations, along with its general moral laxity, that caused the Puritans to reject Christmas altogether. In Colonial America, where Puritan influence was sizeable, Christmas was largely not observed. In New England it was outright banned. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, however,

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## THE NORTHEAST TORCH

DECEMBER 2007

### **Publisher & Editor:**

The Rev. Canon William J. Fasel, D.Min.

The Northeast Torch is published periodically by the  
Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry  
(NERM)  
P. O. Box 307  
Lexington, MO 64067

### **Purpose:**

The Northeast Torch exists to serve God by providing a forum for news and opinion for the members of the Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri, and to help strengthen the bonds of faith and affection that exist among the five member congregations.

### **Submissions/Letters Policy**

The Northeast Torch welcomes submissions of news articles, photographs and letters to the editor on topics of interest to the members of NERM. Publication is dependant on space available. Submissions should include the writer's name, email address, mailing address and telephone number and are subject to editing.

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### **Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry (NERM):**

NERM is a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri, and includes the congregations of:

Christ Church, Boonville, Missouri  
St. Mary's, Fayette, Missouri  
Christ Church, Lexington, Missouri  
Trinity Church, Marshall, Missouri  
St. Philip's, Trenton, Missouri

### **Bishop of West Missouri:**

The Rt. Rev. Barry R. Howe, D.Min.

*From the Canon Missioner continued from page 1...*

Christmas had made a comeback in America, and what had been a quaint rural tradition of the working class going house to house for food and drink turned into noisy mobs of drunken youth and working class rampaging through the best neighborhoods of our cities all hours of the night. Desperate for change, upper class Americans began searching for a quieter alternative, and in the 1820's largely invented the Christmas we celebrate today. The new Christmas was family oriented and especially focused on Children. The celebration was also overtly commercial in that from the start the gifts were predominantly store-bought rather than homemade food and drink. This new approach to Christmas turned out to be a perfect fit for America's new middle class. It took off in popularity, and spread rapidly. The major catalyst was the publication of in 1826 of Clement Mark Moore's poem *A Visit From St. Nicholas* ("'Twas the night before Christmas..."). Moore, by the way, was the son of the Bishop of New York and a professor at the General Theological Seminary.

In the midst of these two very different approaches to the season is the third celebration, that being the religious one. Our religious observation of Christmas is part of a larger Incarnation Cycle that begins with the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25<sup>th</sup> and ends with the Feast of the Presentation on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The heart of the cycle is the seasons of Advent, Christmas and the beginning of Epiphany. The purpose of the Incarnation Cycle is for us to be able to reflect upon the meaning of Christ's Incarnation; how the Word of God becoming flesh in Jesus of Nazareth has changed the world and our lives. Despite the importance of such reflection, we all know that it is easy to lose sight of that purpose in the midst of the other two Christmas celebrations.

One way to avoid the problem of the old and new Christmas traditions overshadowing the religious observance would be to take the Puritan approach and ban them altogether. That, however, would not only be unnecessary but unwise. Both traditions have their own purposes even if they are not religious ones. While we are no longer a predominantly agricultural society, the winter days are still cold and short, and the winter nights are even colder and longer. A little revelry this time of year is a great way to break the tedium—within reason. As to the newer celebration, family celebrations are a great way to help build memories and maintain important relationships. Even the commercial aspect of the new Christmas has its important benefits. Many people earn their livings in the manufacture, transportation and sale of Christmas gifts, and besides, we all enjoy giving and receiving gifts—again within reason.

One way that we can help to keep all three Christmas traditions without confusing them is to remember that each has its own rhythm and climax. The old celebration finds its place in our various lighting rituals and at seasonal parties, and reaches its high point on New Year's Eve. We celebrate the new family Christmas in the decoration of our homes and in preparing special meals, with the climax coming on Christmas morning. The religious observance of Christmas is embedded in our practices of piety: prayer, study, charitable giving, and especially our

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# NEWS FROM NERM CHURCHES



Eric and Betty Owens of Christ Church, Boonville, have returned to England to attend the funeral of Betty's aunt. This is at least the 2nd time this year that they have had to return to England for the funeral of a close relative. They intend to be back in Boonville by Christmas. Please keep them in your prayers.



Handicap access to the church has been an issue at St. Mary's, Fayette, for quite some time. Up until now two portable wooden ramps constructed many years ago by a former member of the congregation were utilized as needed. What started as a project intending to replace the rusted handrails leading into the narthex became an opportunity for the congregation to commit to making its facilities more accessible to the community. Bishop's Hall is



a popular meeting place for various organizations because of its size and convenience, while providing a little added income to the church in rental fees.

A local contractor was hired to demolish the old narrow sidewalks and install ADA-specified walkways including a ramp that leads into Bishop's Hall. The fabrication shop used to make the handrails for the church is also constructing and installing the rails for the ramp. "We are very proud of our new addition" says Anne Cook, Senior Warden. "These sorts of improvements tend to breathe new life into old habits."



Members of Christ Church, Lexington, are performing a special production called *Christmas on the Border*. Written by Bruce Burstert and Christie Kennard, the show gives an historical account of Christmas in Missouri and Kansas during the frontier period in the middle of the 19th Century. The cast sings a number of period Christmas carols, some familiar and some not, and intersperses them with historical anecdotes from the Christmas experiences of pioneers, soldiers, travel-

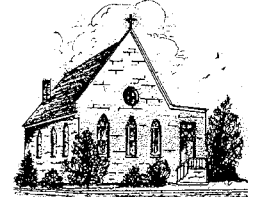
ers and more. The cast of 15 performs the show in authentic period costume. They have performed the show at the Confederate Memorial Chapel in Higgingsville, at Christ Church in Lexington, and at the Historical Roundtable meeting at Homestead Country Club in Prairie Village, Kansas. Here are scenes from the first performance:



At Trinity, Marshall, the preschool is having another banner year and full with 20 students.

Their Christmas program, originally scheduled for December 13th will now be December 20th, due to weather.

St. Philip's, Trenton, continues to work on final plans for their new addition. They hope to present something to the diocese early next year. Meanwhile, the Bethany House Church is having its annual Advent Eucharist and party on Wednesday, December 19th at the Campbell's.



## NERM Schedule January - March 2008

Date	Boonville	Fayette	Lexington	Marshall	Trenton
Jan. 6 – Epiphany	Byer	Byer	Fasel	Wilson	MP
Jan. 13 – Epiphany 1	Klein	Klein	Byer	Fasel	Breese
Jan. 20 – Epiphany 2	MP	MP	Howe/Fasel	Byer	MP
Jan. 27 – Epiphany 3	Fasel	Fasel	MP	MP	Byer
Feb. 3 – Epiphany Last	Byer	Byer	Lockhart	Wilson	Fasel
Feb. 6 – Ash Wednesday	Klein	Byer	Fasel	Wilson	Fasel
Feb. 10 – Lent 1	Klein	Klein	Byer	Fasel	Breese
Feb. 17 – Lent 2	MP	MP	Whelan	Byer	Fasel
Feb. 24 – Lent 3	Fasel	Fasel	MP	MP	Byer
Mar. 2 – Lent 4	MP	MP	Fasel	MP	MP
Mar. 9 – Lent 5	Klein	Klein	MP	Fasel	Byer
Mar. 16 – Palm Sunday	Byer	Byer	Lockhart	Wilson	Fasel
Mar. 20 – Maundy Thur.	Byer	(at Boonville)	Fasel	Fasel	Breese
Mar. 21 – Good Friday	(at Fayette)	MST*	MST*	Byer	Fasel
Mar. 23 – Easter Day	Fasel	Fasel	Whelan	Wilson	Breese
Mar. 30 – Easter 2	MP	MP	Fasel	Byer	MP

\* Ministry Support Team

**Mark your calendars: NERM Council meets Saturday, January 19th at 10:30 a.m. in Fayette.**

*From Canon Missioner...*  
 worship together. The emotional high point of our religious celebration comes on Christmas Eve, but the real climax occurs on the First Sunday after the Epiphany. It is on that occasion that we renew our baptismal vows and in doing so attempt to translate our reflection on the Incarnation into the fabric of our everyday lives.

May you all have a very merry Christmas—all three—and a happy New Year.

*Bill*

*In memoriam, from page 1...*

Betty Lou Read. They were married on May 8, 1948. Dean went into the insurance business where he worked his way up from salesman and agent to sales manager. He was stationed in Kansas City and Carthage, Missouri, and also in Michigan. In 1963, while living in Kansas City Dean was ordained deacon. He served first at St. Mary's, Kansas City, and thereafter served wherever his work took him. In the early 1990's, Dean took early retirement and he and Betty moved back to Missouri to a home at Lake Viking. Dean retired from active ministry in 2003, but continued to serve NERM periodically until his health prevented him. About the same time, he and Betty moved to Cameron. Dean was buried December 10th in Coffey, Missouri, following his funeral at Christ Church, St. Joseph. He will be greatly missed by all of us in NERM.



*Dean and Betty in July 2006.*

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