



## All-Ages Worship

Starting this month, we begin a new pattern of all-ages worship on the **first Sunday of each month at 10:15 a.m.** Our liturgy will be specially designed to speak to worshipers of all ages, from the very young to the young at heart. Children will be in church for the entire service; Sunday school will not be held, though nursery care will be available for babies and toddlers. Families may wish to sit in the front pews so children may see, hear, and participate more easily. Wiggles, shrieks, and pew gymnastics are welcome as our children learn and teach how to worship.

## January Soulwork

On January 12, we begin a five-week series on the Gospel of Matthew. Our lectionary focuses on Matthew this year. We'll explore Matthew's context, reflect on this gospel's major themes, and discover who Jesus is for him. This series meets January 12 through February 9 at 9:00 a.m. in the Ford Room.

## Annual Parish Meeting: January 26

St. Bede's Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 26, at 11:30 a.m. in Lehman Hall. As a community, we'll reflect on the year past, thank vestry members whose terms are ending, and look forward to our year ahead. A light lunch and childcare will be provided.

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### **Looking Ahead: Key Dates on Our January and February Calendar**

January 8: Building and Grounds Committee meeting, 12 p.m.

January 12: Arts at St. Bede's with The Albany Consort, 4 p.m.

January 14: Vestry meeting, 7 p.m.

January 15: Bede's Bedhead Book Club, 9:30 a.m.

January 20: *Martin Luther King Day – Parish Office Closed*

January 26: Annual Parish Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

February 5: Building and Grounds Committee meeting, 12 p.m.

February 11: Finance Committee meeting, 1 p.m.

February 17: *President's Day – Parish Office Closed*

February 19: Bede's Bedhead Book Club, 9:30 a.m.

For the full calendar of upcoming events, visit [www.stbedesmenlopark.org](http://www.stbedesmenlopark.org) and click the link for **News and Events**.

## The Savior We Need

*This sermon on Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 2:1-14 was preached on Christmas Eve, 2019.*

We're always looking for a savior. It seems to be a constant of human nature. We want one larger-than-life person to solve our problems—fix everything for us, end hunger, bring world peace, and give everyone a pony while they're at it. We, on the other hand, we won't have to do a thing. The savior will take care of it. They won't ask us to do more than toast their triumph. The more election cycles I live through, the more it seems that we Americans aren't looking for a president so much as we want a savior. We load all our hopes and wants onto one person who's going to have an awfully difficult time fulfilling our expectations. Presidents are only human, after all, they aren't God. We could say the same about CEOs, or principals, or even priests. We're often looking for that one magic person to fix our company or school or church. We especially want that person to do it all themselves, with no help from us.

This would seem like a modern phenomenon if it didn't crop up so often in the Bible. The prophet Isaiah is looking for a savior. He's writing more than seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus. By that time, the Israel ruled by the great king David had split in two, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Isaiah is active in the south, in Judah's capital Jerusalem. Both Israel and Judah are small, weak countries. The one thing they do have is control of the trade routes to Egypt, and that makes them both attractive targets. Early in Isaiah's time, Israel is attacked by the Assyrian empire. Assyria is bigger, wealthier, with a stronger army, so it's not much of a surprise when Israel is conquered. Judah had been kind of protected with Israel between it and Assyria. Not any more. Now Judah itself is vulnerable; they're next on Assyria's conquest list

But Isaiah, or rather Judah, knows what will fix everything: a savior, of course. A king to restore the glory of David's reign. And Judah gets one! As we hear these words, Handel's *Messiah* may start playing in our heads. That's okay, it does for me too, but we should pay attention to what Isaiah says here and what it means. The people who walked in the darkness of Assyria's shadow have seen the great light of a new king. Through him, God breaks the yoke of Judah's burden, the rod of Assyria's oppression, just as this king's ancestors did when they defeated the army of Midian. The materiel of war, the soldiers' boots and the bloodstained clothes, will be burned. This king does all this despite being only a baby—for this king has just been born for Judah. Authority already rests on his tiny shoulders.

He can't yet talk, but he is called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God—Mighty God! remember, this is a human baby we're talking about—Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He will bring endless peace, a peace of justice and righteousness.

That seems like a lot to expect of a baby. We almost feel sorry for this poor kid, not even able to sit up, and already carrying all of Judah's hopes. He alone will save his people; Judah doesn't have to do anything but rejoice. Seems pretty unrealistic. Not even the best adult king can defeat the Assyrians without an army. And it's going to take at least fifteen or sixteen years before this baby can lead anyone. It seems like everyone is being set up for failure here, the people of Judah as well as the newborn king. And in the long run, that's exactly what happens. Judah is able to hold out against the Assyrians not by military power but by becoming a vassal of the Assyrian empire. And when the Assyrian empire collapses, Judah isn't any safer. It's now threatened by the empire of Babylon, which eventually conquers Judah. Through all this, through the uncertainty and fear over many decades, despite the failure of several kings to change the situation, Judah keeps on longing for the right royal savior to make it all better.

Isaiah's description of the newborn savior king has powerfully shaped our expectations of the savior born for us. We use a lot of royal language in our Christmas carols. We sing, Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn king!" "Joy to the world...he rules the world with truth and grace." "Come and behold him, born the king of angels." And I suspect that like Isaiah, we too want a savior who will fix everything for us—defeat our enemies, whoever they may be; end hunger; bring about world peace with justice and righteousness; and a pony for everyone, while we're at it. All we will have to do is sing his praises. Never mind that the savior king didn't work out so well for Judah; that's still the kind of savior we want.

Who does God send to save us? A baby. An infant who won't be leading anyone for a number of years yet. He's only sort of royal by blood; his stepfather Joseph is the one descended from King David, and Jesus isn't biologically related to him at all. He's born in humble circumstances to an unmarried teen mother. There isn't even a proper cradle for him; he sleeps in a manger with donkeys and cattle taking bites of the hay from under him. It hardly seems fitting for the savior. This is an inauspicious beginning for the person who's supposed to fix everything that's wrong in the world.

Yet in this humble birth story, God reveals not only who Jesus is, but the kind of savior he will be. This messiah is God with us, God as one of us. He is born as we are, a human baby, and also a poor person, at a time when the vast majority of people were poor. He gets hungry and cries as one of us, he learns to crawl and walk as one of us, he encounters the world with wonder as one of us. As he grows up, he will argue with his parents as one of us. He will make friends and lose them as one of us. Eventually, he will suffer and die as one of us. He doesn't hold himself apart from our experience the way a king in a luxurious palace can insulate himself from other people's everyday lives. This savior embraces life with us in all its joy, sorrow, challenge, and gift. He is Emmanuel, God with us.

And this savior does not fix things for us. He has that power, but he chooses not to exercise it. He shows us how to love God with our whole being and love our neighbors as ourselves, and he invites us to be his partner in love's redeeming work. The grownup Jesus tells a story of a man beaten by robbers and the Samaritan who stopped to care for him when others passed by. And he says, "Go and do likewise." Not "Just ask me and I'll do it for you," but teaching us how we are to live. A hungry crowd, thousands of people, comes to hear Jesus preach. The disciples ask him, "Hey, Jesus, there's a boy with five loaves of bread and two fish, but that's all the food we've got, want to help us out here?" And Jesus says, "You give them something to eat. I'm not going to do your work for you, I trust you to figure this out." Not even the savior does it all on his own. And if he did, that wouldn't be so life-giving for us, we wouldn't have the purpose and meaning and community that come from doing the redeeming work we have been given to do. The savior God sends us lets us, even needs us, to do our part to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves.

The newborn Jesus may not be the kind of savior Isaiah wanted, or we want. But he is the kind of savior God knows we need, one who is God with us, God as one of us, one who shows us how to love, then sets us free to do it. This kind of savior sets us up to thrive, to be who God has created us to be and be fulfilled in the work God has given us to do. So rejoice, dear friends, and sing with the angels. For to us, and with us, the Savior is born!

Peace, Gia+

## Join Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry in reading the Gospel of John

Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry calls upon followers of Jesus to join with him in the Good Book Club, reading the Gospel of John each day during the Epiphany season.

The Good Book offers an array of resources developed by partners from across the Episcopal Church, making it easy for people to read, learn, and wrestle with the Gospel of John, said Bishop Curry. The church-wide Bible initiative starts January 6, 2020.

“John’s Gospel is a marvelous gospel,” said Bishop Curry. In John, “we get some of the most powerful and pregnant moments of Jesus teaching about love and the Way of Love.”

Joining the Good Book Club is easy: Open your Bible and start reading! In addition, Episcopal and Anglican partners have come together and prepared resources to support the journey, including print and online Bible studies, webinars, reflections, blogs, and social media posts. New this year is a set of downloadable bulletin inserts with the daily readings and cartoons drawn by well-known artist Jay Sidebotham. ChurchNext is offering a free online live Bible study, led by scholar Vicki Garvey. Both the Episcopal Migration Ministries and the United Thank Offering have prepared excellent group studies, available for free download. And for those interested in daily reflections on the readings, check out *A Journey with John*, one of the Bible Challenge series books available from Forward Movement.

“I look forward to reading John’s Gospel with you,” said Bishop Curry. “May this coming year, this Epiphany—as we celebrate the coming of the wise men—be the coming of new wisdom, new life, and new love as we read John’s Gospel together.”

The Good Book Club website, [www.goodbookclub.org](http://www.goodbookclub.org), lists the daily readings and partners as well as a variety of resources and formation tools. Spanish resources and information are available at [www.goodbookclub.org/espanol](http://www.goodbookclub.org/espanol). You can also sign up at [www.goodbookclub.org/get-involved](http://www.goodbookclub.org/get-involved) for a weekly email that previews the coming readings and highlights participants and partners.

## ***The Arts at St. Bede's on January 12, at 4pm*** **Viva Venezia!**

Venice in the 1640s – without a doubt the time to be alive. Why? With luck and a bit of wealth, you might have been able to hear Monteverdi's late masterpieces as they were launched. As a close second, you can hear these pieces very soon, performed by the vocal soloists of St Bede's, Menlo Park, with the instrumentalists of The Albany Consort and The Whole Noyse. Four major works by Monteverdi flank the program – two from *Selva Morale e spirituale*, two from Madrigals of War and Love. Between the vocal works, the musicians present sonorous 4 part and 8 part sonatas and canzonas by Monteverdi's contemporaries Frescobaldi, Gabrieli and Rossi. All told, a fabulous view into a four-century-old soundscape that is as vibrant now as it was in the day.



*The Albany Consort*

### **About The Albany Consort**

In 45 years, the Albany Consort has given more than 500 concerts, on its own and in collaboration with other organizations, in productions ranging from two to 70 musicians, spanning the widest repertoire of any early music group. Some 500 musicians have engaged in the journey, some briefly, others over the long haul. Founder Jonathan Salzedo delights in finding others who are excited by interesting musical projects and in putting young musicians in the front line. He is part of a musical family that includes his wife Marion Rubinstein and daughter Laura Rubinstein-Salzedo, who are both integral to the group's decision making. Recording is not a priority, so they only have a single shrink-wrapped CD - *Jewish Art Music from Rossi to Lidarti* - resulting from a fortuitous accident. Wonderful if slightly blemished live performances can be heard and seen at [www.albcons.live](http://www.albcons.live).

### **About The Whole Noyse**

The Whole Noyse has been one of the country's leading early brass ensembles for over 30 years. Specializing in music of the Renaissance and early Baroque, The Whole Noyse focuses on the combination of cornetts, sackbuts and curtal, instruments that made up the primary professional wind group of the 16th and 17th centuries. In keeping with the versatility expected of wind players of the period, the ensemble also doubles on recorders and flutes and often mixes in the sounds of shawm, slide trumpet, gittern, violin, and viola. The group has collaborated with North America's most respected early music ensembles, and in 2010, the 400th anniversary of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610, participated in more than 15 performances of that monumental work in the US and Canada. Its solo recording, *Lo splendore d'Italia*, is available on the Helicon label.

### **About the St. Bede's soloists**

Under the leadership of Katherine McKee, the St. Bede's choir leads the congregation and sings anthems at services. Their wide repertoire ranges from medieval plain chant to Renaissance motets to works by the great Baroque, Classical, Romantic and 20th Century masters to music newly commissioned for the choir. The vocalists who are the St. Bede's section leaders are also oratorio soloists, recitalists, principal singers with local opera companies, and San Francisco Opera choristers.

### **Personnel**

Jonathan Salzedo *harpsichord*  
Marion Rubinstein *organ/recorder*  
Katina Mitchell *soprano*  
Naomi Braun *mezzo-soprano*  
Katherine McKee *alto*  
Dan Stanley, Colby Roberts *tenors*  
Chris Filipowicz *bass*  
Laura Rubinstein-Salzedo, Rachel Hurwitz *violins*  
Roy Whelden *viola da gamba*  
Stephen Escher *cornetto*  
Richard van Hessel, Michael Cushing *sackbuts*  
Herb Myers *dulcian/viola*

*Kathy McKee*

## Family Sharing

Thanks to all of you who participated in this Holiday season's Family Sharing Program, which was a huge success once again this year! We dropped off 23 Christmas stockings to the Ecumenical Hunger Program, all geared towards teenagers. In addition, we brought 12 wrapped gifts of clothing (all from one parishioner). Lisa, at EPH, was so endearing, by thanking us for last year's stockings and shared the volunteers' happiness in having something so wonderful to hand out to the teens. She explained to me that while many of these teens' parents are working, these young kids are left to clean, cook, and watch over their siblings, with no time for fun, as our teenagers often experience. She assured me that these fun stockings were just the very thing they need to give them Christmas cheer.

After dropping off these gifts, Susan Chan Egan and I stayed on for St. Bede's' shift to volunteer with the EPH Distribution program. We spent 3 hours stocking toys. As we left we both agreed we made a huge dent in helping the EPA community of giving. They greatly needed our time and talent. We will most definitely sign up again next year and hope more parishioners join us for this special day.

I'm so proud to be a part of such a giving community. Thank you all for allowing this Teen Program to prosper.

*Angela Sherry*



***On Thanksgiving Day friends and family of parishioner Charlie Pellegrin celebrated completion of his Eagle Scout Project, an inviting picnic area behind Lehman Hall.***

*Charlie's work included planning the layout, preparing the site, and building the tables from concrete and lumber. St. Bede's now has a serene spot under the oaks for casual meals and conversation. Thank you to Charlie and all who supported the project.*

### **Bede's Bedhead Book Club Voted Most Meaningful for 2020**

Okay, well, that headline is a wee bit misleading in that even though we all concur about the value of this group, we are not (yet) very well known on The Peninsula. And we'll try to rectify that in the new year.

Our dates, discussion leaders, and book titles selected for the winter months are:

**January 15** Helen Greenwood *The Dutch House* by Ann Pachett

Multi-generational meditation on forgiveness.

**February 19** Elaine Kreigh *Searching for Sunday* by Rachel Held-Evans

Millenials misunderstand, then rediscover church.

**March 18** Mary Working *Snake Oil* by Becca Stevens

Founder's philosophy of Thistle Farm and Magdalene.

**In April, we will take a break for Easter.**

We have adjusted our meeting time in the Ford Room to 9:30 to be a not-so-early riser group. We will provide tasty light snacks and you bring your "cuppa" of choice, e.g. tea, coffee or other. Our discussion leader will offer questions to get us talking and we have not yet found that difficult to achieve. Come join us to explore fiction and non-fiction reading as a way to deepen your friendships and your faith. Questions? contact Deb Blackmore, coordinator [deb@blackmore.com](mailto:deb@blackmore.com).

## **Vestry View**

*This periodic report on the Vestry's actions and decisions is part of our commitment to serving the Bede's community. Following is a brief recap of key issues discussed and actions taken at the December Vestry meeting.*

**Community input.** Brendan Deocariza-Nee has recommended that we prepare a supply of homeless care kits that we can give to homeless individuals in our community when we encounter them. Such kits typically include small toiletries, snacks and information about resources available to them. He will present a more detailed proposal to the Community Outreach Committee in January.

**Children's and Youth Ministry (CYM).** Staci Homrig has helped to draft a job description for the Children's and Youth Minister. The description will be approved by the Personnel Committee and Vestry in January and then posted.

**Trinity School update.** The Trinity School board continues its work to better articulate the school's Episcopal identity, through both internal and external communications. They are crafting statements that will be used on the school's web and in marketing materials.

**Stewardship campaign.** Van Jepson reported that, as of mid-December, we have received \$272,000 in pledges, which is 83% of our goal of \$327,000. Fifty-six of 86 families in the parish have made a financial commitment to St. Bede's for 2020; another 30 prospective pledges are in process.

**Approval of the 2020 budget.** Vestry reviewed and approved the proposed 2020 budget submitted by the Finance Committee. The approved budget includes a shortfall of approximately \$16,000; these funds would be taken from operating reserves, if needed.

**Community outreach.** Stockings for teens served by Ecumenical Hunger were delivered to the agency on December 16. The dinner we prepared in November for the LifeMoves shelter in San Mateo was very successful, with approximately 30 Bede's volunteers participating. For 2020, we would like to consider doing these dinners for the shelter quarterly. Our Spring Gala is planned for Saturday, May 2, featuring Disco Bingo. The event will raise funds for the community outreach fund.

**Next Vestry meeting: Tuesday, January 14, at 7 p.m. in the Ford Room.**

– *Anne Vitullo, Junior Warden*

## Celebrations: January Birthdays and Anniversaries

### Birthdays:

- 5 Dora Ho,  
Staci Homrig
- 6 Sally Norman
- 7 Anne Vitullo
- 8 Michael Skey
- 15 Miranda Pinckert
- 17 Van Jepson  
Michael Pellegrin
- 24 Rose Flegel
- 26 Liza Taft
- 28 Michelle Swenson  
Elizabeth Flegel
- 29 Claire Lawrence
- 30 Matt Hayden-Gephart  
Linda Wenstrand

### Anniversaries:

Please let the parish office know if you have an anniversary this month!

## Milestones

### Baptism, December 25, 2019

Andrew Ankai Wang

*Give him an inquiring and discerning heart.*

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## St. Bede's Episcopal Church

2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA. 94025 • (650) 854-6555 •

[www.stbedesmenlopark.org](http://www.stbedesmenlopark.org)

### Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Gia Hayes-Martin, Rector  
Katherine McKee, Music Director  
Rani Fischer, Organist  
Siri Huntoon, Parish Administrator  
Angela Sherry, Bookkeeper

### Sunday Services and Programs

Holy Eucharist at 8 a.m. (Rite I) and  
10:15 a.m. (Rite II)  
Soulwork Adult Education at 9 a.m.  
Nursery at 10 a.m.  
Children's Sunday School at 10:15 a.m.  
First Sunday of the Month:  
All-Ages Worship

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