



THE BULLETIN

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
An Episcopal Community in the Heart of Houston, Texas

DECEMBER 2021
CHRISTCHURCHCATHEDRAL.ORG

AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY CARE LINE | 713-826-5332

The true meaning of Christmas

Fifty-seven years ago, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* aired for the first time on CBS. Since my early childhood, I've watched it every year, which means I've seen almost fifty times now.

Many people are unaware of how subversive Charles Shultz was when he made this first televised Peanuts cartoon way back in 1965. You see, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* was supposed to be one big, thirty-minute commercial for Coca-Cola. It wasn't merely that Coke served as the commercial sponsor for the cartoon. Rather, Coca-Cola actually *commissioned* it. In other words, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* had as its very intention the commercialization of Christmas. It was a big corporate ploy to use the Peanuts Gang in order to sell more soft drinks in the cold winter months. Charles Shultz took the commission, but he then slyly turned what was supposed to be a half hour Coke commercial into a sophisticated critique of the commercialization of Christmas!

No sooner has the cartoon begun than Snoopy enters a Christmas light contest advertised this way: "Find the true meaning of Christmas. Win money, money, money! Spectacular! Super-Colossal! Neighborhood Christmas lights and display contest."

To which Charlie Brown laments, "My own dog, gone commercial!"

The theme carries onto the set of the gang's Christmas play. Lucy reveals to Charlie Brown, "Look, let's face it. We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket. It's run by a big eastern syndicate, you know."

And this reality is reinforced for Charlie
CHRISTMAS, page 8



THE VERY REV.
BARKLEY
THOMPSON

Cathedral parishioners reflect on border mission experience

BY: KRISTIN JOHNSON

In early November a group from Christ Church Cathedral, which included members from both the Justice and Peace and Mission Outreach councils, along with a few Episcopalian friends from Austin, embarked on a pilgrimage to our Southern Border with Mexico. For some, this was their first trip, but a few others, such as myself, had been in recent years and I was blessed once again to have the privilege of joining Canon Simón Bautista on this trip.

During the weeks leading up to our departure, I spent a lot of time thinking about what I hoped this trip would accomplish. I think this was because so many of the people with whom



Our group standing in front of the border fence on the Rio Grande river.
Photo by Kristin Johnson

I shared my plans wanted to know the point of our pilgrimage. One member of our group mentioned that at times she felt defensive when talking to others about her plans to visit the border, and I echoed and shared in that

BORDER MISSION, page 6

Christmas services

Advent Lessons & Carols, Sunday, December 5

5 p.m. In-Person, Facebook/Vimeo

The Longest Night, Tuesday, December 21

5:30 p.m. Sign up in advance to attend online via Zoom

6:30 p.m. In-Person

Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24

4 p.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II, In-Person, Facebook/Vimeo, (Pageant)

6 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II in Spanish, In-Person, Facebook/Vimeo

8 p.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II, In-Person, Facebook/Vimeo

11 p.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I, In-Person, Facebook/Vimeo

Christmas Day, Saturday, December 25

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II, In-Person, Facebook/Vimeo

WATCH LIVE AT WWW.CHRISTCHURCHCATHEDRAL.ORG/CHRISTMAS

We celebrate with

- ☞ new members: **Mr. James “Jim” Cowan** and **Dr. William “Will” Taylor**
- ☞ **Stephanie Suarez** and **Anthony Griffin** who were married in the Cathedral on November 6.
- ☞ on November 7, the newly baptized: **Lily Jane Barba**, **Santiago Gabino Galvan**, **Eloise Harrington Ellsworth**, **Iris Jane Rainbow**, **James Clark Rainbow**, **Ruby James Ramsey**, **Charlotte Olivia Rycroft**.

We offer heartfelt sympathy

- ☞ We extend heartfelt sympathy to the family of **James Aycock** who passed away on October 7, 2021. James is brother to member **Nell Richardson**.
- ☞ We extend heartfelt sympathy to the family of **Tyler Hilton** who passed away on October 9, 2021.
- ☞ We extend heartfelt sympathy to the family of **Randy Ford** passed away on October 20, 2021. Randy is sister to member **Thomas Fitzhugh**.
- ☞ We extend heartfelt sympathy to the family of member **Joan Mary Lynch**. Joan is wife to **Robert Traylor**.

The flowers on the Cathedral Altar

- ☞ on Sunday, November 7 were given to the glory of God in loving memory of her brother, **Joe Head** and their parents, **Jane** and **Jack Head** and **Mary Louise** and **Robert Thurmond** by **Julie** and **Bob Thurmond**.
- ☞ on Sunday, November 14 were given to the glory of God in honor of their grandchildren, **Grace**, **Camille**, and **Lily Holland**, **Ann Greathouse**, and **Barrett Colvin** by **Antha** and **Bill Holland**.
- ☞ on Sunday, November 14 were given to the glory of God in loving memory of **James L. Ketelsen** by his wife, **Kathryn**.
- ☞ on Sunday, December 5 are given to the glory of God in loving memory of **Linda Anne Baldwin** and **Dorothy Geiselman Baldwin** by the family of **Robert B. Baldwin III**.
- ☞ on Sunday, December 22 are given to the glory of God in loving memory of **Robert C.** and **Madie M. Richter** by **Bob Richter Jr.**

A December dive into the idea of a migratory God

A man and his pregnant wife flee danger to find help and shelter in an unfamiliar place. This is the story of many a refugee family in today’s world, but it is also the story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. During December, Christ Church Cathedral will host a series of events, entitled *Migratory God*, that looks at the question of refugees from a number of different perspectives.

“We want to remember Advent as a time where we prepare to welcome the guest as well as the stranger in our lives,” said Canon Missioner for Evangelism and Formation **Becky Zartman**. “It is a time to look out for those who have special needs.”

First up is a presentation by **Charles C. Foster**, chair of Foster LLP and a Houston-based immigration attorney, at the Dean’s Hour on December 5 at 10 a.m. Foster was a Senior Policy Advisor for the George W. Bush presidential campaigns in 2000 and 2004, and an immigration policy advisor in Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign. Foster is the rare expert sought after from both sides of the political aisle for his thoughtfulness and wisdom.

He will speak on the immigration challenges facing the United States and Houston specifically, and discuss compassionate solutions that embody and strengthen the United States.

Dean **Barkley Thompson** said that as part of its ongoing emphasis on immigration and the biblical mandate to welcome the alien and stranger, the Justice and Peace Council invited

Charles Foster to speak at the Cathedral in early 2020. The pandemic postponed that visit, so the Council is pleased that Foster was able and willing to reschedule.

“Charles Foster has been a leading voice for a reasonable, sustainable, and empathetic approach to immigration in the United States, especially along our Southern border,” said Dean **Thompson**. “I very much look forward to what he will share with us.”

Then, on the evening of December 12, Houston theologian, and author **Phuc Luu** will look at the idea of refugee through the *Nativity*. His book *Jesus of the East: Reclaiming the Gospel for the Wounded*, was published in the summer of 2020 and continues to be widely read and well-reviewed.

Dr. Luu draws on his own experience as a Vietnamese immigrant for the book which illuminates the “good news” of the gospel.

“My family and I fled from a war torn country, a civil war between sisters and brothers,” Dr. Luu said. “This had devastating effects for the people and the land. Here in the United States, we found safe haven. So, the good news for me is to be part of a world where the reign of God is one of peace, where the Prince of Peace rules.”

Dr. Luu said that he wants to help readers remove the rose-tinted glasses to be able to see the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ as the reality of a household forced to flee for their lives.

“We cannot smell the animals, feel the anxiety of rejection and fear of life,” he said. “Many of us cannot see how dirty a barn can be, the animal feces on the ground, the rodents nesting in the corner. But this was where God was born. We are to see God in these places, the places of rejection, fear, and anxiety.”

As Canon **Zartman** observes, it is in Matthew 2 that an angel of the Lord warns Joseph in a dream about the approaching infant genocide.

MIGRATORY GOD, page 5

A Migratory God Advent Series

Charles C. Foster Presentation
10 a.m., December 5, Reynolds Hall

Phuc Luu
6:15 p.m., December 12, Latham

Mitch Albom
7 p.m., December 15, Cathedral

Sancocho Supper / Grand Posada
6 p.m., December 19, Reynolds hall

ADDITIONAL DETAILS
www.christchurchcathedral.org/migratorygod

Celebración de Posadas

Each evening December 16–23, 7–9 p.m. the Latino congregation will be getting together to reenact the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and their search for a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to baby Jesus. The Posadas are a wonderful community binding experience that brings great joy to children and adults. Except for the Grand Posada, which is happening in the campus of the Cathedral, all Posadas in the neighborhoods will include a short form of Holy communion. Come! Walk with us, sing with us a song of hope, this is what Advent is all about: the expectation of the promise of a better tomorrow.

The Longest Night

BY JODY GILLIT, MINISTER FOR PASTORAL CARE

As the nights grow longer and things still seem so uncertain, I've been searching for comfort in new ways. I've just read Father Greg Boyle's new book "The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness," and the word tenderness keeps coming up.

I watch the sunset, and I see the transition of light to twilight fade towards darkness, a tender slide into the night.

I hear the birds chirp, and I think how lovely they are, how tender their voices sound as they each sing their own song.

I think about Advent, and how we are told it is a season of anticipation; yet I'm not completely convinced that what I feel is the anticipation of good. I feel the sadness of all those we cannot have with us this year, and of those who choose not to be with us, and my heart is tender and raw.

LONGEST NIGHT, page 5



Houston Christmas tradition comes to the Cathedral

The Houston Chamber Choir is delighted to bring their annual Christmas program to the historic Christ Church Cathedral. Three identical performances will be presented on Friday, December 10 at 7:30 p.m. and at 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 11.



Jeff Grass Photography

Set in the warm glow of the Cathedral's beautiful sanctuary, Candlelight Christmas will offer heartwarming favorites like "Tomorrow Shall be My Dancing Day" and "In the Bleak Midwinter" along with new classics and the world premiere of a setting of "Pat-a-Pan" by well-known Houston composer Marvin Gaspard. Featured guest artists are Cathedral Organist Daryl Robinson, Director of Organ Studies at the Moores School of Music, and the Treble Choir of Houston at Christ Church Cathedral directed by Marianna Parnas-Simpson.

This one-hour concert is a perfect way to bring the Christmas spirit to you, your family and friends.

For more information please visit: HoustonChamberChoir.org/candlelight-christmas

Join us in helping our community by bringing small toiletry items that will be donated to The Beacon and used in their Day Center program. Five days a week, individuals experiencing homelessness receive a hot meal and have access to laundry facilities and hot showers inside the facility. Small shampoos, conditioners, soaps and razors are always appreciated, so bring your unused travel toiletries or purchase new ones and drop them in the red wagon at the entrance!

Christ Church Cathedral parishioners will receive a 15% ticket discount for the in-person concert and/or the digital release by using the code SINGOUTCCC at the final checkout page when purchasing tickets online.

*Complimentary parking at The Cathedral Parking Garage



Annual Parish Retreat returns (to normal)! Jan. 14-16

You're invited to the beautiful Piney Woods Friday to Sunday, January 14-16 for the first normal Annual Parish Retreat since 2020! Save the dates for a weekend filled with chili, old friends, and wonderful worship. For more information on the retreat or to register visit www.christchurchcathedral.org/events.

Cathedral generosity enables ministry, blesses others

BY KAREN KRAYCIRIK, MINISTER FOR STEWARDSHIP

The prophet Isaiah was called to ministry through a vision and accepted that call without hesitation. The Cathedral community has answered the call for the 2022 Every Member Canvass generously and faithfully, and we are excited to share an update on our stewardship campaign. To date we have received, 459 pledges of financial support for the coming year. Of those, 28 are new and another 260 are increases over 2021. Pledges to date total \$3,167,522.

Just as we aim to be the best stewards of the gifts given to Christ Church, we also aim to be as transparent as possible when it comes to our financial needs. As mentioned throughout the EMC, several of our alternative revenue streams are down due to circumstances beyond our control. COVID-19 continues to

affect the operations of Treebeards restaurant, Cathedral House Episcopal School, and our parking garage — all of which provide necessary funds to the Cathedral's annual budget.

We have come a long way in our EMC campaign, but we still have some distance to go. In order to fund our mission and ministry fully in 2022, our goal is 600 pledges for a total of \$3,460,000. Your Cathedral vestry is in the process of preparing the budget for 2022 and hopes to finalize it at the vestry meeting on December 15. If you have not yet made a pledge for 2022, please join us in making a financial commitment to the work of the parish for the coming year.

Every gift counts, every pledge makes a difference, and every contribution renews our commitment to

God, answering the call and saying, "Here I am. Send me" — just like Isaiah. We look forward to the new opportunities that God will set before us, and we invite your continued support through time, talent, and treasure. Thank you to all who have made an Every Member Canvass pledge for 2022.

Ways to make your pledge

- Pledging is easy and can be done online. Visit christchurchcathedral.org/emc for more information.
- Return the pledge card you received by mail to 1117 Texas Ave, Houston, TX 77002.
- Make a pledge over the phone at 713-590-3338 or by email by contacting Karen Kraycirik, minister for stewardship.



Youth Sunday, Fall Gathering, and more

IN PICTURES



Above, below: Cathedral Youth participate in Youth Service Day at the Beacon.



Above: Reynolds Hall during the Dean's Hour.



Above, below: Parishioners and staff enjoy a pleasant evening at the neighborhood gathering November 9 hosted by Sherri and John Allen.



Right: Youth pose for a photo in the Bishop's Courtyard on Youth Sunday after helping plan and lead services that morning.

MIGRATORY GOD, from page 2

"They flee in the middle of the night to Egypt and stay as political asylees until it's safe to go back to their country," she said. "That's definitely a migratory God."

A fictional examination of this idea is the plot of best-selling author Mitch Albom's *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*. Albom will discuss the book on the evening of December 15 at the Cathedral as part of a longstanding partnership with Brazos Bookstore.

"It's a book that asks the question what if God actually showed up as a stranger in a lifeboat?" Canon Zartman said. "How does God show up?"

To finish off the series in a special — and traditional — way, the Grand Posada on December 19 at 6 p.m. will also offer a soup dinner and a reading from author John McLaughlin's *The Good Stranger's Sancocho Surprise/El sancocho sorpresa del buen desconocido*. McLaughlin, a good friend of Padre Simón Bautista, runs a non-profit in Haiti and the Dominican Republic called Education Across Borders.

McLaughlin's book is a retelling of the classic 'Stone Soup' but with additional themes of the Good Samaritan and Jesus' Loaves and Fishes.

"We're going to have sancocho (a traditional Dominican soup) and conversations among all our different communities and congregations," Canon Zartman said. "We'll eat together and listen to John talk about his work and read the book, and have the Grand Posada."

Canon Zartman notes that the posadas are all about the experience of God as a stranger.

"Joseph and Mary are knocking on the doors, and they are all saying you can't come in — until of course, somebody lets them in," she said.

The aim of all the events in the December series is to appeal to a range of interests and ages and to bring all closer to God this season.

Also in December, the Mission Outreach Council will be finalizing plans for the Cathedral to sponsor a refugee family from Afghanistan. Afghani families are being settled in Houston through Interfaith Ministries Houston and Episcopal Migration Ministries. Christ Church will have a team of parishioners who work closely with our sponsored family to help them adapt to their new home.

"God is with the poor and marginalized," Dr. Luu said. "God is with the sick and the despondent. God is wherever we see pain and struggle. Is God with us in joy and happiness? Yes, but it is when we bring joy and happiness to the places deprived of these things that God is with us."

LONGEST NIGHT, from page 3

In the past we have offered the Longest Night service, and I have often heard that is the service for people who have had someone die in the previous year. But I feel there are many others who might find this service comforting. The holidays can be hard for many. Sometimes being around all the "joy" can make us feel more isolated and less in the holiday spirit. Some of you may even be thinking about skipping the holidays altogether this year, hoping that will make it less painful.

Whatever your situation, if the thought of the coming holiday brings an anticipation that is not comfortable, please accept this invitation to join me at one of The Longest Night services, occasions to worship and gather in the tender light of community and comfort. Even when you want to be alone it can be reassuring to know you are not alone. The Rev. Canon Becky Zartman will lead us in worship and a time of reflection and contemplation, and Sally Keller will fill the space with the warm, comforting tones of the cello.

We will be offering two forms of the service on December 21 — an interactive online Zoom worship service at 5:30 p.m., and a more traditional in-person service at 6:30 p.m. in the Cathedral.

Register to watch via Zoom: www.christchurchcathedral.org/longestnight

THE CATHEDRAL BOOKSTORE

The Bookstore's Advent Newsletter is online

Christmas cheer can be an elusive emotion these days, and shopping is a big part of the problem. Bright advertisements overpower the warm flickers of wonder, and the gentle magic of anticipation doesn't have much chance to build in the face of the full-frontal force of Black Friday. Mary and Joseph have not even made it to the Bethlehem city limits yet before the hay has been dusted out of the manger and replaced with monogrammed pillows and cashmere throws. Frankincense is out this season, French perfume is in. And you'd better get it all fast, because supply chains are broken.

Despite this commercial pressure, joyful gift-giving doesn't have to be just a memory from Christmas Past. The Cathedral Bookstore offers an antidote to the hype. Imagine instead: It's a chilly December Sunday. After worshipping in a historic church where you listen to the strains of "O Come O Come Emmanuel" and watch another candle light up the Advent wreath, you stroll through the Bishop's Courtyard to catch up with friends. Buoyed by coffee and conversation, you come into the Bookstore, where you find a special book or gift for your loved ones. We wrap your choices for you in pretty paper and bright ribbons, and you head home with renewed energy, able to experience the joys of the season. Or, during the week, you take lunch hour to stop by the Cathedral, attend the noon service in Golding Chapel, have a tasty Treebeards meal, and pick up your presents, wrapped and ready to deliver.

To facilitate these scenarios, we've curated our annual Advent Newsletter, book and gift suggestions which you can find on the website at www.christchurchcathedral.org/adventnewsletter. Call ahead and order for pickup or come in and browse. You'll find gifts unique to the Cathedral, including embroidered Cathedral aprons (perfect for everything from Altar Guild duties to smoking brisket in the backyard), Dieter Ufer's handmade wooden Christmas trees (the last ones he says he will make), Resurrection Angel stained glass windows (packaged with Dean Thompson's beautiful sermon "Clipped Wings") and many other items that are both useful and delightful, such as Kei & Molly's bright tea towels, elegant 2022 desk calendars, tea cozies, seasonal candles, and beautiful artisan jewelry.

Spend Advent preparing your heart and enjoying your people, not rushing around shopping. Simple gifts chosen with love and wrapped with care while you connect with Cathedral friends old and new will help to fan the flames of Christmas cheer far more than enduring one more round of Rudolph at the mall or hunching over a computer screen praying for pre-Christmas delivery will. Take a look at our Advent Newsletter, and remember: We're here to help!

All of us in the Bookstore wish you a peaceful Advent, a Merry Christmas, and a healthy and happy New Year!



BORDER MISSION, from cover

sentiment. A few times when I spoke to well-intended friends and family about my church trip to the border, reactions ranged from questioning, “What is the point of that?,” to a few comments about this being a fool’s errand, to a blank stare that clearly communicated, “I don’t want to touch this topic with a ten-foot pole.”

I grew up in South Texas and have always been proud of our unique and rich culture, which is strongly tied to and influenced by our Mexican and Latin American neighbors. Many of my friends were children of immigrants or immigrants themselves. I fondly remember crossing the border for shopping trips; eating dinner at the Cadillac Bar in Nuevo Laredo; and camping with college friends on a trip that started in Big Bend and ended with us being ferried across the Rio Grande to Boquillas del Carmen, a small village on the Mexican side of the river. Those days are sadly over and I long for them to return. Now our border is associated with cartels, a wall, migrant caravans, wild interactions with border patrol, and heavily debated immigration policies.

During our time in the Rio Grande Valley, we visited with asylum seekers; a pastor housing approximately 150 refugees in Matamoros, Mexico; humanitarian aid workers; and US Customs and Border Patrol agents. We had the privilege of visiting the Humanitarian Respite Center located in McAllen, a Catholic Charities initiative run by Sister Norma Pimental. Sister Norma has been given the moniker of “the Pope’s favorite nun,” and Time Magazine listed her as one of “The Most Influential People of 2020.” Meeting Sister Norma feels a little like meeting a famous movie star.

Most people arrive to the Respite Center with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. They have been on harrowing journeys that take months, if not longer. They are in a foreign country with no knowledge of how to navigate it. They did not come here because they want to take advantage of others or engage in nefarious activities — they came because they were desperate. If by the grace of God they make it to Sister Norma, she will ensure that they receive a meal, a hot shower, clothes, and assistance in transitioning to their next destination.

At times, the Respite Center can have hundreds of people inside. There were about thirty people there during our visit, all of whom were young families and all sought asylum after being detained then brought to the center by US

Customs and Border Patrol. Immigration policies invoked during the Trump administration and continued under President Biden make it very difficult for asylum seekers to be granted entry into the US. Current policies, however, do allow families with a child who is six years of age or younger to move forward with the asylum seeking process (this is not a guarantee asylum will be granted), and it was those to whom we served food, read books, and listened to their stories.

Together with Cathedral member, Sonia Mascorro -Velasquez, I visited with a young father and his small son who was about two to three years old. He told us that his family had traveled from Southern Mexico to escape extreme poverty and the dangers of living in areas that are heavily controlled by the cartels. He has a cousin who lives in California whom he hoped could help him find work and provide a better life for his family.



One of our pilgrims, Rich Oppel, reading to a boy at the Respite Center

they were kidnapped, sold to a cartel and held for forty-five days until a family member could pay their ransom. During this time the father and mother were placed into forced labor, the father preparing drugs for sale and the mother working in the kitchen. I asked the little boy his name. When he did not answer, the father explained that during their kidnapping if the little boy cried, the father was beaten in front of him to teach him not to act out, so now the little boy was afraid.

When we met with Customs and Border Patrol, an agent showed us a cell-phone produced video of a ten-year old boy that an officer had stumbled upon in the bush like desert. The boy was alone. He had been wandering by himself for hours and was crying uncontrollably for his “mama and papa.” They believe he was left behind when the group he was traveling with might have departed hastily in the middle of the night, failing to wake up the boy. Thankfully, the agent found the phone number of a US relative scribed inside the boys belt.

These types of stories are ubiquitous, particularly as it relates to the desperation facing immigrants in their home countries and the dangers they face in their attempts to go elsewhere. Right now, our border is essentially closed to those who wish to come here from Central America. Customs and Border Patrol estimate that the vast majority of those who cross other ways are detained and returned to the other side of the border. When we asked why people continue to come here — putting their lives and their children’s lives at such risk knowing the

unlikelihood of success — the answer is because they believe they have no choice. Some will go back, but many have nothing to go back to.

To overly simplify the problem, our neighbors are desperate to leave their homes, they put themselves in danger to come here, but we cannot let them in. Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to this problem and there are obvious political aspects surrounding this issue. I think many of us are exhausted by the “polite” dinner debates with colleagues, friends, and loved ones on issues such as these. But when you put a face, particularly that of a small child, to a problem, it no longer seems right for that to be a “taboo” topic that isn’t to be discussed at a dinner table along the lines of religion and politics.

As Heather and Fred Lazare, who I had the pleasure of getting to know better on our trip, put in a text to me once we returned, “So much of the border discourse is focused on ‘policies’ and ‘systems.’ Based on what we observed, we feel strongly that all discussions of the border should lead with people and their stories.”

In Matthew, we read “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’” Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

Like others on our trip, I once again left the border with more questions than answers. I look forward to the upcoming Dean’s Hour on December 5 to hear Charles Foster speak on the topic. Foster currently serves as the Chairman of Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston Advisory Board and was also a senior immigration policy advisor to both President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama. I have no doubt this will be an interesting discussion and I hope you will join me there.

In the meantime, I will reflect on how easy it was for me to give someone who was thirsty a bottle of water, how grateful the Respite Center was when our group provided pants to the men who had none, and how simple it was to make a ham and cheese sandwich for someone who was hungry.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit christchurchcathedral.org/events or call **713-222-2593** to learn more about these and other events at the Cathedral.

● Registration recommended ▲ Registration required ✕ Registration closed ★ Childcare available (3 mo. to 12 yrs.) 🧑 Bring a friend!

DECEMBER

DEC. 1

The Dean's Book Club ★

6:30–8 p.m., McGehee Conference Room. *This Is Happiness*, by Niall Williams.

DEC. 3

Bridge Night

6:30 p.m. McGehee conference room

20/30s Christmas Party

7:30 p.m., The Treehouse.



DEC. 4

Advent Quiet Day

9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Reynolds Hall. With Sister Hannah.

DEC. 5

Dean's Hour Special Guest ★

10–11 a.m., Reynolds Hall. With Charles C. Foster.



DEC. 5

Advent Lessons and Carols

5 p.m. The Cathedral. The Cathedral Choir ushers in Advent with its annual service of Advent Lessons and Carols. Following a pattern established over 100 years ago at Kings College, Cambridge, the service will offer Advent readings followed by carols of the season. Readers will include leaders throughout the parish. This is one of the most anticipated celebrations of the year and a perfect way to introduce your friends and family to the Cathedral. Start your Advent with this beautiful service.

DEC. 9

Alzheimer and Dementia Support Group

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., second Thursday of the month.

DEC. 10

Candlelight Christmas

3:30 p.m. and at 7:30 p.m., The Cathedral.

DEC. 11

Threads of Comfort and Joy

10–11 a.m. A gathering for those who love to knit and crochet, second Saturday of the month.

Christmas at the Cathedral

2–4 p.m.

Candlelight Christmas

7:30 p.m., The Cathedral.

DEC. 12

You Have Found Favor: Embracing a Generative Spirituality

10–11 a.m. Advent, and the Annunciation in particular, serve as important reminders that we are called to be part of God's on-going, co-creating work. Drawing on two decades of working with young people, the Rev. Rich Nelson will lead an exploration of ways we can deepen our own generative spirituality and participate more fully in God's creating.

St. Lucy's Day Tea and Toast

5:45–6:30 p.m., Latham Lobby/Bookstore

Migratory God Presentation ★

6:15–7:45 Latham. With Dr. Phuc Luu.

DEC. 14

Community of Hope – Circle of Care

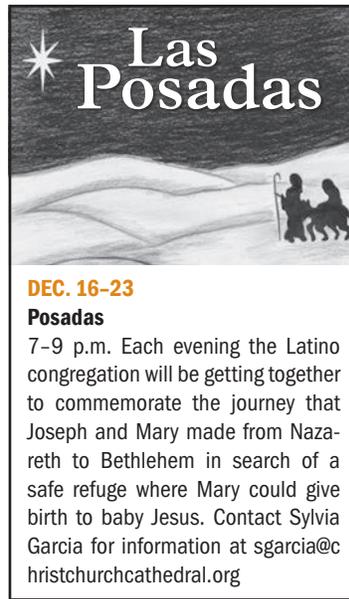
6–8 p.m., Second Tuesday of the month.



DEC. 15

Mitch Albom ★

7 p.m., Cathedral. Internationally acclaimed author Mitch Albom will discuss his latest book, *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*, a novel of hope and faith. Details at www.christchurchcathedral.org/migratorygod



DEC. 16–23

Posadas

7–9 p.m. Each evening the Latino congregation will be getting together to commemorate the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to baby Jesus. Contact Sylvia Garcia for information at sgarcia@christchurchcathedral.org

DEC. 16

Amazing Women of Faith

6:30 p.m. In-person gathering of women, where the stories and lives of Amazing Women are shared and discussed. Contact Canon Becky Zartman to attend. Third Thursday of the month.

DEC. 18

Christmas Camp

9:30–10:30 a.m., Jones 205–208. Dress rehearsal for pageant.

DEC. 19

Spirit of Christmas Gift-Wrapping Party

5:45–6:30 p.m., Latham Lobby, Mellinger, Jeffers.

A Charlie Brown Christmas

10–11 a.m., Reynolds Hall. Grab your security blankets and join Linus and your Cathedral family for our annual screening of A Charlie Brown Christmas. This event is for children of all ages, and children at heart.

Sancocho Supper / Grand Posada,

6 p.m., Reynolds Hall



DEC. 21

The Longest Night

5:30 p.m. via Zoom, 6:30 p.m. in person

DEC. 24

Pageant

4 p.m. Reynolds Hall and Cathedral.

DEC. 26

Pastorela in the Cathedral

1–3 p.m.

DEC. 26–27

Christmas Holiday

Cathedral offices closed.

WEEKLY

SUNDAYS

Children's Sunday School

10–11 a.m., Jones 201–208.

Youth Sunday School

10–11 a.m., The Treehouse.

Cathedral Tours

Following the 11 a.m. service every Sunday and after the 9 a.m. service on the third Sunday of the Month (Dec. 19).

Latino Youth Sunday School

1:30–2:30 p.m., The Treehouse.

Tea and Toast ★

5:45–6:30 p.m. in the Bookstore and Latham Lobby.

TUESDAYS

Tuesday Early Morning Men and Women's Bible Study

7–8 a.m., Zoom. Led by Canon Vicar Kathy Pfister.

WEBS: Women's Evening Bible Study

6:30–7:30 p.m., Zoom. Led by Canon Becky Zartman.

Seed Group

6:30–8 p.m., alternating Tuesdays.

WEDNESDAYS

Men's Morning Bible Study

7–8 a.m., Zoom. Hosted by Dean Barkley Thompson, the Men's Bible Study gathers weekly to explore the scriptures. No prior Bible study is required for participants.

Women's Morning Bible Study

9:30–11 a.m., Zoom. Gather for sincere and truthful conversation on the scripture reading for the following Sunday.

20s and 30s Wednesday Nights

6:30–7:30 p.m., Zoom

Buscando La Luz

7 p.m., Mellinger. A program offered by the Latino Ministry of the Cathedral to our Spanish speaking language congregation. Dec. 1 and 8.



Did you know you can read **The Bulletin** on our website? If you'd like to go "online-only," contact Ramona Sikes at rsikes@christchurchcathedral.org or call her at 713-217-1347.



The Pastorela / Christmas Play

Sunday December 26 our Pastorela will feature a group of children from our community. A Pastorela is a play that recreates the passage when the shepherds follow the Star of Bethlehem to go find the Christ child. It is also a great opportunity to experience the Nativity through the eyes of a child. The play will be part of the 1 p.m. service in the Cathedral. Please make plans to attend as your presence is the best support for our children actors.

CHRISTMAS, from cover

Brown when he visits the Christmas tree lot, filled with pink and blue aluminum trees, signifying the artificiality, superficiality, and commercialization of everything Christmas. But Charles Shultz didn't focus only on what Christmas had become. His message wasn't, ultimately, one of critique. Rather, it was one that cut to the very heart of the matter: The true meaning of Christmas.

In an interview on NPR about the fiftieth anniversary of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, producer Lee Mendelson relates that Charles Shultz insisted the holiday cartoon include a reading of the Nativity narrative from Luke's Gospel. Shultz met resistance. After all, what does the Bible have to do with selling Coca-Cola? But Charles Shultz maintained that there was no other way to tell the story. In fact, without the Nativity reading there is no story. There is no Christmas.

And so, when Charlie Brown, in his hopeless desperation, cries out, "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" Saint Linus of the Sacred Blanket steps forward and replies, "Sure, Charlie Brown. I can tell you what Christmas is all about."

Linus walks to center stage, asks for a spotlight, and recites in the eloquent language of the King James Version, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord

came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior, which is Christ the Lord.'"

When Linus finishes speaking, the most remarkable thing happens. There is a full ten-second silence in the cartoon, as Linus walks off stage and back to Charlie Brown. That is a lifetime on screen, valuable seconds filled with nothing. It is as if Charles Shultz recognizes that Linus' words—Holy Scripture's words—need a liturgical pause, so that the viewer can abide momentarily in the quiet stillness and understand the magnitude of what has just been shared, on CBS, in primetime, during a Coke commercial.

It is, indeed, what Christmas is all about. It is that without which there is no Christmas at all.

You see, the source of our hope is nothing that our superficial and commercialized culture has to offer us at any time, and especially at this time of year. The source of our hope, now and always, is that God chose to be born among us, to enter into our contingent, dangerous, and often lonely world so that we would never, ever be alone.

We will watch *A Charlie Brown Christmas* as a parish during the Dean's Hour at 10 a.m. on Sunday, December 19. I hope you'll join us!