



Why Dec 25th?

by Bill Blizzard
 Vestry Liaison: Communications

Have you ever considered why we celebrated the birth of Jesus on December 25th? Or why this time is both sacred and at the same time celebratory in a secular sense? I did, and I asked.

"Dear Bill, When Christianity entered the Gentile world, it seemed to make sense to celebrate the birth of Jesus, who was known as the "Light of the World", at the darkest time of the year in the northern hemisphere. There were great pagan celebrations at that time to mark the end of the sun's seemingly relentless march into darkness and its return to light. Part of that celebration was called 'the Saturnalia,' and was marked with parties, gifts, great festivity and sometimes with overeating and overdrinking. When the birth of Jesus became identified with the Saturnalia, then its combination of the sacred with the secular entered our practice and defines it to this day." John S Spong [Retired Bishop]

To further understand this we have to start at Epiphany, and work our way backwards. According to the Episcopal Church ...

Epiphany - During the first centuries of the Christian Era the winter solstice was recognized on Jan. 6 in some places. Christians chose this day to celebrate the various manifestations, or "epiphanies," of Jesus' divinity including his birth. The day was called "The Feast of Lights." By the fourth century the solstice was recognized as Dec. 25. Jesus' birth was celebrated on this day in both eastern and western churches. The western church continued celebrating the coming of the Magi on January 6th, while the Eastern Church continued to celebrate his Baptism and the Wedding at Cana on this day.

Advent - The first season of the church year, beginning with the fourth Sunday before Christmas, and continuing through the day before Christmas. The name is derived from a Latin word for "coming." The season is a time of preparation and expectation for the coming celebration of our Lord's nativity, and for the final coming of Christ "in power and glory."

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas!



Ubuntu *

by Mary Ratliff
 Connect Team, Co-Leader

* "I Am Who I Am Because of Who We are Together" – Exodus 3:14 and Desmond Tutu

This Month We Welcome Carmen Tarpai



Carmen, we're so glad that you decided to make our family a part of your life. We'd like to get to know you a little better, so tell me, how long have you attended services?

I began attending COGS in early February of 2019.

Are you coming to Good Shepherd as an Episcopalian? What other churches have you attended?

I have been exposed to a few different religions from childhood into adulthood. I was born and raised in Romania as a Seventh Day Adventist – remained as such until I reached 18, then married a Catholic and was later baptized as a Catholic. To me a name is just a name – how you act and how you love is how a true Christian is seen.

How did you find Good Shepherd?

I found COGS through a fellow parishioner.

What inspired you to continue attending?

The feeling of openness, acceptance and of belonging is why I attend and will

continue to make COGS my spiritual home. The parishioners are amazing at COGS, they are all warm, loving and give back to the community in any way the need is presented. In my experience, when you come across a place or people that give nothing but an outpour of support, security, love, and inner peace... you hold on tight and reciprocate!

What would you want to tell others about COGS to encourage them to come and explore our parish?

Just come, come once and there is never any pressure... see if it's a fit for you. I would tell them of my first encounter walking into the church – the feeling I had been there before and the immediate feeling of coming 'home'! All are welcome, anytime!

Please tell us a bit about yourself outside Good Shepherd - your jobs, your family, hobbies - whatever you like.

I am a mother, a daughter, a sister and a friend to many which I am lucky enough to love back. I have never known a stranger in my life. I live to serve and give all I am and have to my loved ones. I have 3 wonderful children. My eldest Ashley is a superwoman by many accounts. She is 25yrs old, finishing her RN schooling while working two LPN jobs and parent to both my grandchildren Aaliyah (6) and Meer (5). Alaina is 19 yrs old and she is working two jobs savings up money to put herself through the SPC nursing program. Robert is my 15 yr old and a sophomore at Seminole High, loves to play football and hanging out with his friends. I enjoy being near or in the water as much as possible. Love the beach and recently taken up kayaking – just bought my first kayak a few weeks ago. Love to landscape, cook, entertain and travel ... especially love to cruise. I am a family person all around, everything I do is for them.