

January 6, 2013

Happy New Year to all of you,

As we enter a new year there is often a tendency to look ahead toward dreams and hopes for the future. We may set new goals, make new promises to ourselves and others, be drawn to renewing intentions and commitments that became somewhat obscure as the old year wore on with daily responsibilities and demands. Entering a new year gives us a chance to take stock of circumstances, evaluate priorities, re-define our purpose and clear a path forward with renewed hope and energy. This is true for individuals and also for communities. In light of all this it seems fitting that Sophia Christi's first liturgy of the year falls on the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. Baptism—the sacrament of initiation—symbol of entry into new life, of reception into the life of God, of membership in the family of God. There are so many levels of meaning to this multi-dimensional symbol of Baptism that a short paragraph can only point toward a doorway that leads to further reflection. Jesus stood in that doorway and opened himself to the Spirit, to the fire of transformation and renewal, to the voice of God affirming his very being. Divine companionship and guidance lay at the core of his life. Jesus beckons us to stand in those waters with him again and again and open ourselves to that same Spirit of renewal and transformation, open ourselves to his God and our God. What will that mean for us as a community? Where will we be called this year? Will we hear the voice from heaven saying “you are my beloved sons and daughters; with you I am well pleased” as Jesus did? Can we trust the waters of Baptism and stand in the Jordan of this community together affirming the Divine life we share? Can we say “yes” to living as God's family in the world according to the vision we've been given?

Our readings for January Liturgies: January 12 & 13 – Is 42:1-4,6-7; Acts 10:34-38; Lk 3:15-16,21-22. January 27 – Neh:8:2-4,5-6,8-10; 1 Cor 12:12-30; Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21.

### **Mass Schedule This Month**

Our Mass in **Portland** will be Saturday, **January 12**, at **Northminster Presbyterian Church, 2823 N. Rosa Parks Way at 5:00pm**. Potluck follows. Please bring your favorite entrees, vegetable dishes, salads and desserts. Choir rehearsal begins at 4:00 and all interested singers and musicians are invited to come and participate.

Our Mass in **Eugene** will be **January 13**, at **First Congregational Church, UCC, 1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 4:00pm**. Please bring your favorite dish to share at the potluck afterwards: entrees, veggies, salads, and desserts. Please come at 3:00 for rehearsal if you are interested in being part of the choir as a musician or singer.

On Sunday, **January 27**, at **10:30am** we will celebrate Mass in **Battleground**.

The address is 26605 NE 96th Ct., Battle Ground, WA. For further information or directions call Helen at 360-687-7475 or email her at [umphrey@ipns.com](mailto:umphrey@ipns.com).

## Pastoral Update

Don't forget to pick up and fill out a **registration/ministry form** when you come to Mass this weekend if you haven't already done so. You may also receive and return this form, as well as pledge cards, via email. Let me know if you prefer this method and I'll be happy to send one or both to you. Both are also available at all Masses.

## Christmas Eve in Eugene

Our third annual Christmas Eve celebration in Eugene drew 23 people to the home of Dianne and Amanda. The liturgy was "lovely, warm and intimate, just what I needed," one community member wrote. Another said "coming to this Mass is now our family's tradition." During the dialogue homily each of us took time to reflect on the hopes we bring to the Christmas manger. Many shared their hopes and their experiences of human generosity and goodness during the past year. We sang carols and gave birth, again, to the Christ within us and within Sophia Christi as we shared Eucharist with one another. All of you were present in our hearts around the altar that night. Together with you in spirit, we sang our joy as we beheld once again the birth of Jesus in and through the love of our extended community.

## Parish Council Update

In the months ahead Parish Council members will be putting time into energizing both the Eugene and Portland arms of our extended community. The heart of our community, its center, its core, is Christ (compassion) intertwined with Sophia (holy wisdom). Members of Sophia Christi are the arms of welcome, acceptance and love that open to embrace the People of God. Our challenge is to embody this vision, put flesh on our dream and re-ignite the embers of Pope John XXIII's Vatican II Church. That's our calling, I believe. We are seeds buried in the rich loam of Vatican II theology and ecclesiology waiting to germinate with great vigor and amazing resilience when the time is right. We keep those embers glowing within the ashes of recent history in the meantime. Our job is to stay the course. We keep our faith alive and our hope steady by coming together, re-membering the Body of Christ, encouraging one another, listening to Spirit, providing comfort, inspiring new directions and actions for the greater good of God's world and God's people.

## Website Update—[www.sophiachristi.org](http://www.sophiachristi.org)

Check out our website when you have a chance and send your ideas and comments to Bill Urban [realdealurban@gmail.com](mailto:realdealurban@gmail.com) and John Coutu [jcoutu1969@gmail.com](mailto:jcoutu1969@gmail.com). If you have photos you are willing to share please send them along as well. Also, if you are interested in becoming more involved in developing the site or in creating a social media presence for Sophia Christi, please contact Bill and John at the email addresses above.

Watch the calendar for notices of upcoming events in both Portland and Eugene.

**A pastoral reminder**--if you or someone you know has a pastoral need that isn't being met, please don't hesitate to give me a call. You have my email address in this mailing, and my office phone number is 503-286-3584. Feel free to use either one. You can contact me anytime for conversation, home visitation, sacraments of reconciliation or anointing, home Masses, weddings, funerals, memorial services or other pastoral care needs.

### **Food for the St. Andrew Episcopal Food Pantry**

Please remember to bring food and personal hygiene donations for the Food Pantry when you come to Mass next weekend. **Look for the basket at the entrance to the sanctuary when you come for Liturgy on Saturday or Sunday, and please be as generous as possible.**

By this time in the new year many of us have returned to work and resumed the routines that characterize our lives. Some of those routines are hard-won, having been forged of deliberate changes to old habits. Many are comforting, like old clothes that are now worn, soft and "perfect" with age. But some of those routines are numbing, even deadening. What will allow God's life within us to challenge the tendency to return to "normal" in those areas of our lives where the "norm" is to shut down, to close heart and mind to the Spirit's still small voice? Where does prayer fit into the routine of our days? How do we open to the Spirit within and allow God to guide us individually and collectively into the new year? If we begin asking this question of each other then listening, each of us, for a sound or a word, or watching for an image in the quiet of our lives each day, what might be revealed? What might Jesus initiate in us? Where might Sophia lead this community gathered in her name and in the name of Jesus, the Christ?

Blessings of the Epiphany,

Toni