



How is your Advent going? Do you know where you're going ?

Let us pick up where I left off last week — Remember?

***“Churches merge, close: We no longer live in Christendom.
We really have to accept that it’s a thing of the past.”***

So, I reflected on the merger of a number of churches in the Washington/Baltimore area. There have been mergers and closure among many mainline churches in the area. The article reports:

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland has closed a net eight churches since 2007 and plans to shutter one more — 174-year-old St. John’s Episcopal Church in Charles Village — if the congregation can’t present a feasible financial plan by January.

The Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran church has consolidated eight of its smaller churches into three.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore has launched a long-term plan to reallocate resources over several years, including folding parishes into a smaller number of worship centers called pastorates.

Two historic Reform Jewish synagogues — Temple Oheb Shalom in Park Heights and Har Sinai Congregation in Owings Mills — have announced they will likely combine.

And Bishop James L. Davis, presiding prelate of the second district of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which includes Maryland, has directed all 411 congregations in the jurisdiction to spend six months taking a “hard, possibly painful” look at their own operations.

Each church is to address a set of questions — How much has your congregation grown? how many visitors have you had? would you attend your church if you weren’t a member? — and weigh a range of options, from staying on course to shutting down.

It’s set to begin in February.

“Our first step will be trying to get people to converse one with another, and come to some understanding themselves about what might need to be done, before our rules and regulations have to move in and do what may be inevitable and necessary,” Davis says.

The driving force behind the trend is the well-documented decline in Americans’ commitment to organized Judeo-Christian religion.

Denominations large and small report falling membership numbers, decreased attendance and faltering financial support. The decline began accelerating in the 1990s.

The Episcopal diocese in the area has closed a net 34 churches and merged 5 others. In addition, the article recounts:” It has also helped two congregations blend with counterparts from the Evangelical Lutheran church and another to partner with an Evangelical congregation.”

This I found really fascinating to read, the Episcopal Leadership helped two congregations blend with counterparts. Naturally, all of those troubling questions came unbidden into my consciousness.

***How could two churches of different faith expressions come together like that?
Surely it is not possible for two separate traditions to merge in that way! Or, is it?
Wouldn’t one tradition be required to let go of at least some
of its practices/beliefs/expressions? Or, would it?***

—Fr. Gerry

December 17, 2017

Third Sunday of Advent

Mass Intentions — December 18th ~ 25th

Monday @ 7:30 am — Laverne Pahl (RIP)

Tuesday @ 7:30 am — Eugene & John Gooch (RIP)

Wednesday @ 6:00 pm — Carl Rainey (RIP)

Thursday @ 7:30 am — Craig Sleeper (RIP)

Friday @ 7:30 am — Fr. Patrick Noonan (RIP)

Saturday @ 5:30 pm — Bridget & Michael Hehir (RIP)

Sunday — ** NO 8:00 am MASS **

Sunday @ 10:30 am — Terry Wray Sr (RIP)

Sunday @ 5:30 pm — Christmas Vigil Mass

Sunday @ 11:30 pm — Choral presentation, then Midnight Mass

Monday @ 10:30 am — Christmas Day Mass (No 8:00 am Mass) — Margaret Caperton & Ida Romero (RIP)

New Prayer Requests

Special Intentions:

Linda Rainey

Christine Guillotte,

friend of Ann Divine and Ro Agosta

Tabby Yoo, friend of Melissa Baltz

Rest of the Soul:

Jim Peacock

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Monday — Friday, 8 am to 12 noon, in the Chapel

(No adoration when office is closed for the holidays)

Sacrament of Reconciliation — Parish Reconciliation Service — Monday, December 18th @ 6:00pm

See our website for announcements, full prayer list, contact information, and more!

website: www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com

office phone: 601-992-9547

Advent Reconciliation Service

December 18 — 6:00 pm; We will have several priests hearing confessions.

Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass Schedule

December 23 — 5:30 pm Vigil

December 24 — no 8:00 am Mass; 10:30 am Mass only (no Nursery; no Children's Liturgy)

Christmas Mass Schedule

December 24 — 5:30 pm Vigil; Midnight Mass (choral presentation begins @ 11:30pm)

December 25 — no 8:00 am Mass; 10:30 am Mass only (no Nursery; no Children's Liturgy)

New Year's Day Mass Schedule

January 1 — 9:00 am

Parish Office Holiday Schedule

Closed for the holidays — December 20th @ 12 noon through January 3rd; Opens again January 4th @ 8 am

Should you have an urgent need to contact a staff member or Fr. Gerry, someone will check-in daily on the office phone (601-992-9547) & email (office@saintpaulcatholicchurch.com).

NOTE: ***No Eucharistic Adoration December 21-Jan 3 since the office will be closed for the holidays

***Daily Mass will be @ 9:00 am December 26, 28, 29, January 1, 2 (Wednesdays remain @ 6:00 pm)