



## Christmas Narrative

*by Rev'd Benjamin Capps*

The twelve days of Christmas, perhaps more popularized by the seasonal carol than the liturgical season, hold within them a certain kind of magic. This short season is marked by the birth narrative of Jesus Christ, including the events leading up to his birth, and beckons us to enter into the story with a kind of awe and wonder. Awe and wonder are certainly appropriate postures when reflecting on the birth of Jesus. However, if this season of Christmas gets relegated to the domain of metaphors and magic, our understanding of the birth of Christ is sorely incomplete.

The Gospel of Luke is nothing if it is not a Gospel that is rooted in a particular time and place in history. Luke 2 gives us this kind of rootedness when the census is referenced.

Emperor Augustus provides a pin for the particular time in history and the city of Bethlehem is referenced next, placing this text in a particular place.

The birth of Jesus Christ, God's love incarnate, was sent to a particular place at a particular time and is about so much more than a mere analogy - it is a matter of history.

It is noteworthy, that place and time matter deeply to the narrative. We cannot strip Jesus away from these details. The reality of this census reminds the reader that Jesus entered into a bleak time in history - a time when God's people were longing in a profound way for a rescuer, a savior. A time marked by political and religious oppression, injustice and profound inequalities. The town of Bethlehem, a town not exactly known for its powerful legacy, cues the reader in to the humble nature of Jesus' arrival. The love of God incarnate came into that time, and that place, to show all of humanity what God looks like with skin on.

There is a sense in which wonder and awe is the natural response to this season. You might say that this was the response of all who encountered the Christ child. It is appropriate for us to contemplate deeply on the idea of Jesus Christ entering into the world - to roll the meaning around in our minds and to be moved by this profound story. However, let us never forget that Jesus Christ was a human being that walked on this earth, breathed its air, and was sustained by its fruit. That within the mystery of a God who came to earth as a tiny baby, there is truth and a concrete reality. God's love for all of humanity is made known in the sending of his son. His son that was sent into a particular time and to a particular place. His Son that loves us more than any analogy, metaphor or idea could ever contain.

## Derek Murr December Newsletter



*"I'm currently in a one year fellowship position with CCO and Good Sam. I graduated from Shippensburg University in 2017 with an economics degree. After a year of discernment and a lot of encouragement from my wife Katy, I decided to pursue campus ministry. I loved being a part of my campus ministry group in college,*

*especially doing outreach and I want to see more college kids know Jesus personally. I'm also a huge Phillies and Eagles fan so I'm really excited to be in this area."*

Early in the school year I noticed we had a group of cross country runners attending church on a weekly basis, but only a few were connected to our college ministry. If these were regular attenders of our church, why did we not know them? I wanted to change this and I invited Matt, a sophomore on the cross country team at Eastern, to grab coffee with me on campus.

We connected quickly over our mutual love of Philadelphia sports teams. We talked about his faith and his goals for college. I attended a cross country meet and supported him and his teammates throughout the season. However, this was not the easiest season for the team. Matt, one of the stars of the team, suffered an injury early during the season, which made his performance during his sophomore season less than he'd hoped.

It has been great to see God at work through Matt. He really never got down about his injury. As a result of his injury, he ended up writing a research paper on strength and conditioning and is working with his teacher on possibly getting published! I have seen Matt in church almost every Sunday and we are working on his relationship with God and gaining a vision for his life.

Would you please consider joining my financial support team so I can continue to reach students like Matt? I am in need of an additional \$1,200 monthly to reach my full goal. Any gift is greatly appreciated! Thank you for your prayers for me and please continue to pray for the students I get to connect with.

Derek



## Red Cross Blood Drive

January 28, 1-6pm Ashton Hall

Sign up to donate at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)



Women's InSight Ministry would like to thank ALL contributing bakers who took time, yummy recipes and ingredients to garner just over \$500 in scholarship monies through cookie sales at various Good Sam venues these past few weeks! Thank you thank you for your efforts that make attending our annual Women's Retreat a reality for several of our women! Mark your calendars for March 30-31, 2019 at The Flanders Hotel, Ocean City, NJ

## Kylie Roberts Garrety: CCO / Good Samaritan December Newsletter

Heather is bursting with God's spirit. To begin our time at Bible study last week, Julie asked everyone to share what we are thankful for. When it was Heather's turn, she said, "I have always been a committed Christian, but I am so thankful for the spiritual growth that is happening in my life right now." By the way she speaks, I can tell she can't help but share. She's overflowing with praise and love of God. Heather's response to the spirit in her life reminds me of Mary and Elizabeth as they sang songs of joy during that first Advent praising God for the work he is doing in and through them.

Heather is a freshman at Eastern and has become a regular at Family Dinner. She is gentle and bold. She passionately and unabashedly shares how God is transforming her heart. She cares deeply for those around her to know Jesus. It has been an honor to get to know Heather this year as she comes out of her shell and journeys more intimately with Christ.

Haleigh graduated with a degree in English two years ago, not quite knowing where her career was heading. Much like most students who study the liberal arts, she had a passion for her subject but justified her degree as being as closed to the arts as possible without taking too large of a risk. Haleigh was the first student I met when I moved to Delaware County to engage in campus ministry at Penn State Brandywine. Single-handedly, she was holding together an on campus Christian Club, Nittany Christian Fellowship. Since graduating and passing the torch of leadership to the next generation of students, she, like all recent graduates, weighed her options between her passions, her field as described by her degree, and the practical need of affording to stay alive. Once landing a job writing articles about the great accomplishment of students at PSU Brandywine, she knew God has plans for her future; her difficulty was discerning what those plans would be.

After multiple closed doors and a heart that wrestled for something bold, she discovered a Conservatory Student position available at Sight & Sound Theatre in Lancaster, PA. The thought of pursuing a career in theatre stirred up old passions for the performing arts, which she dismissed earlier in life to pursue "something more practical." Yet, the idea of contending with nearly a hundred other applicants seemed quite audacious, especially for someone who abandoned the hopes of theatre a decade prior.

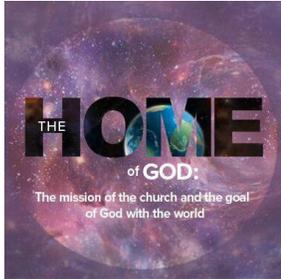
God remembered the passion Haleigh had for the stage. Through the Spirit's empowerment, Haleigh applied to Sight & Sound against all odds. Through the Lord's provision, Haleigh will be starting her conservatory in January of 2019 knowing that God remembers the desires of our hearts, even when we long for "something more practical."

Would you consider partnering with me and Nick as we participate with God's work in the lives of students like Haleigh and Heather? We have a \$6,000 goal for end of year giving that will sustain our ministries throughout 2019.



*Kylie Garrety ministers to college students at the Church of the Good Samaritan with outreach to Immaculata University and Eastern University.*

*Her position is in partnership with the campus ministry organization - The Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO). Kylie has worked with the CCO since 2015 after graduating with a BA in Youth Ministry from Eastern University. She previously completed a yearlong campus ministry fellowship with the CCO and has ministered to youth in both church and para-church settings. Kylie desires to journey with others to discover the fullness of life found in Christ. Originally from a small town in the Shenandoah Valley, Kylie loves all things outdoors and is always ready for an adventure. She is a loyal fan of the Tennessee Volunteers and lover of all sports. You'll often find Kylie at Valley Forge Park lounging in her hammock and reading a good book.*



## Diocesan Lent Day - The Home Of God

10:00am-3:00pm March 16, 2019

Church of the Good Samaritan

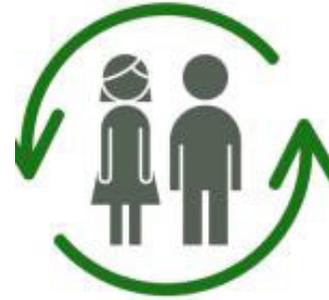
We're excited to welcome Miroslav Volf as the keynote speaker for a day of teaching, reflection, and workshops to help us engage with some Lenten reflection and renewal. Miroslav is an excellent thinker and stimulating communicator, and all are welcome. The day will include lunch, and there is a registration fee of \$25, which can be reduced in cases of need. Our Lent Day is co-sponsored by Philadelphia Theological Institute, the Diocese and the Church of the Good Samaritan.

God's plan of redemption is for the whole world, not just for 'the church'. The mission of the church is therefore to partner with God in God's mission in the world. The whole world is the 'Home of God'. The fulfillment of God's plan for the world is a 'new heaven and earth' which Revelation describes as being the dwelling place of God (Rev 21:3 'now the dwelling of God is with men'). Therefore this vision of the destiny of the world shapes the mission of the church. We live orientated towards that future in the present and imperfectly pre-figure it in our common life of community, generosity, hospitality and worship - for the sake of the world and in prophetic witness to the world.



Miroslav Volf

Miroslav Volf is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology, Yale Divinity School Founding Director, Yale Center for Faith & Culture. He was educated in his native Croatia, the United States, and Germany. He earned doctoral and post-doctoral degrees (with highest honors) from the University of Tuebingen, Germany. He has written or edited more than twenty books and over ninety scholarly articles. His most significant books include *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996); *After Our Likeness* (1998) in which he explores the Trinitarian nature of ecclesial community; *Allah: A Christian Response* (2011), on whether Muslims and Christians have a common God; and *A Public Faith: On How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (2011).



## Relationship Refresh

A practical workshop for getting to know yourself and your partner at a deeper level to break free from the stuck places to a deeper connection. Led by Cheryl Sparks, PhD.

Friday, February 1:- 6:30-9pm, includes dinner

Saturday, February 2: 9:30-3:30, includes lunch

\$60 per couple, scholarships available

Register online at [good-samaritan.org/events](http://good-samaritan.org/events)



## Parents Pins & Pasta

Parents, Pins & Pasta will be January 6, from 4-6pm at Devon Bowling Lanes! This event is for the whole family! We will be serving dinner. Jonathan will meet with the parents to discuss the coming semester and the summer trips and programs.

## Youth Confirmation Class starts in February!

All students in grades 8-12 who have yet to be confirmed are welcome to sign up for the class. An information meeting will be on Sunday, January 6 at 10:15am in Room 223 for parents and students. Feel free to contact Jonathan Hobbs if you have any questions: [jonathan.hobbs@good-samaritan.org](mailto:jonathan.hobbs@good-samaritan.org).

## High School Winter Retreat

The HS Retreat is January 11-13 at Lake Champion! This retreat is for anyone in grades 9-12.

Contact Jonathan Hobbs for details: [jonathan.hobbs@good-samaritan.org](mailto:jonathan.hobbs@good-samaritan.org).

## Volunteers Make Our Church Community Run

by Jeanne Lomanno, Assistant to the Rector/Office Manager

Just take one look at our ministries directory and you can begin to see the many ways that our community helps us connect with each other, grow in our faith and reach out beyond our borders to help relieve suffering and offer hope. This could not be possible without so many volunteering their time and skills. I encourage you, as the new year begins, to consider how you might get to know more people better by helping our community do all the wonderful things that it does!

In the office, we could use some substitute coverage at the reception desk. If you like to answer phones and help with office tasks, this may be an opportunity for you! Computer literacy is important. We have a great team and work well together. Time slots are usually four hours long. Contact: [jeanne.lomanno@good-samaritan.org](mailto:jeanne.lomanno@good-samaritan.org).

Acolytes: Fourth graders to adults. The acolytes rotate to assist the clergy during services. Training is provided, no experience is needed. Contact Fred Rollo: [rollohome@comcast.net](mailto:rollohome@comcast.net).

Ushers: Particularly for the 9:00 service. It's a place to get to know more people as you welcome worshippers, distribute programs, collect the offering and direct people to communion. Contact Stew Crumpler: [stewart.crumpler@verizon.net](mailto:stewart.crumpler@verizon.net).

Choirs: Adults and children are needed. Adult choir rehearses on Thursdays from 7-9pm. The Children's Choir rehearses Sundays 3:45-4:45pm. Come sing, pray and laugh! Contact Rick Zuch: [richard.zuch@good-samaritan.org](mailto:richard.zuch@good-samaritan.org).

Small Group Leaders: This is a place to be part of a group of people who wish to grow deeper in their faith and understanding. Most group members become good friends and the groups usually interact socially. We have a lot of small groups but believe it or not, we need more! From my experience, being part of a small group was how I really felt connected and part of this community. Contact John Whitnah: [john.whitnah@good-samaritan.org](mailto:john.whitnah@good-samaritan.org).

HELPS Ministry Counselors: Emergency assistance is provided to people in need of help with utility bills and other absolute necessities. One counselor just retired; we are down to two counselors. It would be best if we had four on the team. It takes a bit of patience and a heart for the downtrodden as well as detailed vetting and documentation. It has been an immense blessing to those who have worked in this ministry. Contact [helps@good-samaritan.org](mailto:helps@good-samaritan.org).

Thrift Shop: If you like working in a shop providing lots

of needed items to people at a low cost, this is for you. Volunteers work three hour shifts. Contact Cathy Puleo: [catherine.puleo@comcast.net](mailto:catherine.puleo@comcast.net).

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” — **Mahatma Gandhi**

“The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.” — **Helen Keller**

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” — **Winston Churchill**

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.” – **Dr. Seuss**

“I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.”– **Mother Teresa**

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” – **Author Unknown**

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.”-Jesus Christ

**VOLUNTEER**  
*you can make a difference!*



# January 2019 Events Calendar

January 2  
Retired & Refired

January 6  
Youth Confirmation Information Meeting  
Parents, Pins & Pasta

January 9  
Healing Meeting with Dr. Frank Sizer

January 16  
Retired & Refired

January 19  
Caregivers Group

January 26  
Family Ministries Vounteer Appreciation Brunch

January 28  
Red Cross Blood Drive

January 30  
PRAXIS