

THE MAGDALENE



**FROM THE DESK OF
FR. NEIL...**

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

The prayer that we pray on Christmas Day during our service, found in our Prayer Book, teaches us and gives us a much fuller understanding of what Christmas is about and in what way God is involved. The prayer says, "Almighty God, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen."

At Christmas time, we tend to focus so much on the infant Jesus, the wise men and the star they followed and angels singing "Glory be to God on high." And to focus on these things is good, right and important. However, just like the way the prayer ends, in a Trinitarian pattern, the entire prayer reminds us of just how important the Father and the Holy Spirit are in the Christmas story as well.

It is the Father who sent the Son. Even though the Son of God came of His own will, the Father - as well as the Holy Spirit - were in perfect harmony and agreement that the second person of the Trinity, the Logos, the Son of God, would come down, take our nature upon Himself

through a birth to the blessed Virgin Mary. The Father has given us His Only Begotten Son to make this sacrifice.

The Son willingly took upon Himself the form of a servant. He laid aside His glory and descended to the lower parts of the earth to live among us, die for us and rise to life again for us.

And, the Holy Spirit also plays an important and equal role in the Christmas story. The prayer mentions that He regenerates us and he makes us children of God by His grace through adoption. This is the great and yet invisible work that the Holy Spirit does for and to us that goes, much of the time, unnoticed and underappreciated. Jesus came to earth, born of the Virgin Mary by the spirit so that His work of redeeming us could get underway. At the same time the Holy Spirit is the one applying that work to us. Paul writes, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5, ESV).

The fullness of time was when God determined that Jesus would be born. He was born of a woman, telling us that He was born human. He was born under the law, so that He would not bypass it, but obey the law and fulfill what it required for us and in our place. He redeemed us who were under the law and yet failing to fulfill it and were destined to be lost eternally. And He did all this so that once we put our faith and trust in Him, we receive adoption. We are adopted as sons of God, not because of anything that we did, but because of what Christ did. We are now sons (and daughters) of God the Father, by the saving work of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Finally there is a renewal aspect to the Christmas story as well. The Holy Spirit is also said in our prayer to be renewing us daily. This is another work of the Holy Spirit. This is sanctification. So not only does the Father, from all of eternity choose to save us. Not only is the Son, from all eternity appointed to be the savior of mankind. Not only from all of eternity does the Holy Spirit bring us back into a right relationship with God. But from all of eternity, it has been the plan of our Father to redeem us through the Son in the power of the Spirit so that each of us will daily be renewed in grace and sanctification. We do not celebrate Christmas just because it is a wonderful reminder of Jesus being born. We celebrate Christmas because in doing so, we are drawn ever closer to God every day by His sanctifying work of grace, which will culminate in our final glory and eternal dwelling with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God, world without end. Amen.

to give thanks to God for giving us His Son to walk among us.

We will be trimming the Narthex Christmas tree after the **10:00 service on December 2nd**. The Guild will be serving a wonderful selection of Christmas treats to enjoy while we decorate. Please join your Church family for the celebration of Our Lord's arrival.

**WILL YOU GIVE A PAIR OF SOCKS
FOR YOUR BROTHER?**

In Deuteronomy 16:17, we read, "Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you." So it seems that God blesses us. We give. He blesses us again and we give again.

For Advent, we are asking that each person give a pair of cotton socks or underwear to a brother or sister in need. We will be collecting these gifts in a receptacle in the Narthex. At the end of Advent and in joyous celebration of the birth of our Lord, our offering will be given to those in need at Mary's Kitchen.

Let us pray that we continue to reach out to others, not to boast, but out of a pure desire to please God so we can continue to receive His blessings in our lives.

CURRENT EVENTS

**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON
& CHRISTMAS PREPARATION**

All men of the church are invited to lunch at "Avila's El Ranchito" restaurant in Orange on Saturday, December 1st. We will meet at the church at 10:00am. It should be a great time for fellowship. Plan to stay an additional 30 minutes and help Fr. Neil with Christmas preparations.



**TREE TRIMMING TAKES
NO TIME AT ALL**

Think of trimming the Church Christmas tree not as another decoration to put up but as our way

St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church
 205 So. Glassell Street
 Old Town Orange, CA 92866
www.stmarymagdaleneacc.org
 Rev. Fr. Neil Edlin, Rector

Sunday Services:
 8am Mass
 10am Choral Mass &
 Children's Sunday School

Wednesday Service &
 Anointing of the Sick: 9am

**WOMEN'S GUILD CHRISTMAS
FELLOWSHIP PARTY**

The Guild Women cordially invite all women to attend their **Annual Christmas Fellowship Party with Gift Exchange, Saturday, December 8th at 11:00am.** Our special thanks to Marceil Burgess and Julie Pence for hosting this event at Marceil's house. The address and maps are available in the narthex.

Please bring a \$15 wrapped Christmas gift. This gift can be anything you might give to a woman for Christmas. Please no gift cards or white elephants.

Your fresh baked Christmas goodies are always welcome.

**ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS CAROLING
THROUGH THE ORANGE CIRCLE**



Do you feel like a good old fashioned Christmas? **Join us in the Narthex at 11:30 on December 16th** as we begin our stroll through Old Town Orange singing traditional Christmas

Carols to merchants and shoppers.

Be sure to wear red or green and good walking shoes. We will sing for about 45 minutes then eat at the Blue Frog. You are welcome to bring a friend or just collect one on the way to sing along with.

**CHILDREN SING FOR
CHRISTMAS**



On Christmas Eve at the 5:30pm Mass, our Children will lead us in singing "Silent Night". Please come and support them in their Premier performance.

NEWS

**IN GRATITUDE
FOR HIS BLESSINGS**

SMM Church has been truly blessed this year with so many new people who have come to join us. We have eleven new members and a couple of returning members.

God has also refreshed and replenished our Children's Program with new teachers and new children.

Please pray with us this Christmas in gratitude for His holy presence in our lives and our church.

**LOOKING FOR A CHARITABLE
CONTRIBUTION?**

Monetary donations to SMM are truly a gift to our own parish, our missions, and our selected local charities. In fact, these donations directly to SMM Church are what are used throughout the year to pay for church expenses, upkeep to the buildings and grounds, and other administrative needs.

Your donation to SMM Church is also considered a charitable contribution for income tax purposes just like Samaritans Purse, Ronald McDonald House and others. There is one single difference between SMM Church and other charities. SMM Church takes no portion of your giving for administrative needs. 100 percent of your money goes to the intended recipient.

Our treasurer will even provide you with a personal annual giving receipt at the end of the year.



MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS COUNT TOWARDS MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to everyone who pledged to give money to the church for the upcoming year via an annual pledge card. **Your gift, written on a “pledge card”, makes up the revenue dollars recorded on our 2019 Annual Budget.**



If you are new to the Church and plan on giving a monetary gift regularly, please ask our Treasurer, Lynn, to provide you with a box of envelopes and a number so that she may keep a record of your charitable giving. She will also give you an annual receipt of your combined charitable contributions.

If you don't feel like you can predict what you may give to the church, your spontaneous contribution may still be tracked by simply using an envelope from the pew rack and writing your name on it.

MEN STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

Our special thanks to our new ushers and acolytes who have stepped up to help at the 10am service.

Mike Cochran, Patric Taylor, Amal Fernando, Jay Mendis, Don Hobson, and Jim Strate.

If you are interested in participating as an usher or greeter, please contact Sharon Edlin.

NEW YEAR HAPPENINGS

HELPING HANDS FOR TEAR DOWN

All parishioners are asked to stay after **10am Sunday Mass on January 6th** to box and put away the Christmas tree and decorations.

Please sign up with Karen Carlson if you plan on helping. We need a couple of men to carry boxes upstairs.

2019 ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

What happens at an Annual Meeting? The short answer is that it is a Reporting of the Operational and Financial affairs of the church. Theological and organizational topics are not covered in this meeting so please direct your questions to Fr. Neil outside of this meeting.

You will hear reports from all of the Officers, and Guild/Group Chairmen about what their group has accomplished over the year. Most importantly, you will **hear Fr. Neil's vision for SMM in 2019.**

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 27th at 11:15am in the Parish Hall. **A no-host Brunch will be served for \$7.00 per person.** You are also welcome to bring your own brown bag lunch.

Children under 7 years old are free. A child friendly meal will be available.

PLEASE STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AS A MEMBER

The good news is that all persons, eighteen years or older, who are baptized, confirmed, attendees for at least three months and contributing to the church may be considered a member of the church.

All you need to do is provide Fr. Neil with a copy of your sacramental paperwork. Please contact Fr. Neil for details on how to transfer your paperwork.

All bona-fide members of the church are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting on January 27th.