



Advent 2025

Though we do not fully believe it yet,
the interior life is a real life, and the intangible dreams of
people have a tangible effect on the world.

-James Baldwin

Spiritual Awareness

I was well into adulthood when I was struck by a spiritual life. Mid-thirties. I wasn't looking for a spiritual life, I was just looking for a way to stop drinking. I was managing a good job and a nice apartment in a good building on Lake Shore Drive. I had a new car. I traveled all over the country giving talks about literacy and reading instruction. So I looked pretty good from the outside. But I also knew my life was sorely limited. I was having an affair with a bottle.

Different people have different routes into spiritual lives. Mine involved a spiritual program you live by following twelve steps. Other people make a practice of Ignatian Spirituality, or Buddhism, or by following a Dharmic path, or by living as lay monastics, married or not. Some people simply journal, or journal using a guide that helps them look into areas of their being they have never considered before, like their souls. The more and longer you live your spiritual program, the broader and deeper your spiritual awareness becomes. Many people live their entire lives without examining their souls or what they believe, or finding the link between what they believe and how they live; and they certainly have no idea at all about what they are missing. How their views of life change radically and for the better. How something until now unrecognized and unconsidered, like the Holy Spirit (or whatever it is called in their practice) drops in without particular invitation and changes everything, or gives them the exact, right thing to say to someone, or a question that can open up freedom to someone who is suffering. There is no other explanation, and it is exhilarating and humbling and joyful.

There are many roads to Rome, as they say and have said for millennia, and the trick is discovering what your best fit is. And Advent is a wonderful season to explore and broaden yourself in your spiritual awareness. It's a perfect season for spiritual awakening, because we are all waiting for the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. If we can spend this sacred time not just waiting patiently or impatiently, by filling our minds and our concerns with gift buying and decorating, or slice out some time for spiritual exploration, then we will have made meaningful progress. It's all about progress, not perfection, but waiting to be struck spiritual is unlikely a helpful route. What have you wondered about? Whose spirituality do you admire? Might you speak to that person about their spiritual awareness and the gifts it brings, about the peace and serenity despite being surrounded by chaos? About maintaining a Divine Consciousness in a very unhealthy nation, with unhealthy hatreds and cruel behavior? There are ways to do that, and they are contingent on having a spiritual connection to something bigger than you and learning how to reach that something. You don't even need to call it "God." I didn't call it God for years.

Once I got into the process toward the priesthood, which happened about 20 years into my spiritual practice, I referred to my life (and still do) as "freefalling for Jesus". I rarely know where my life is going but I am convinced I will be OK, because I always have been. It may be rocky

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or bumpy or very limiting, but my soul will be at peace.

If that description isn't appealing to you, look into the descriptions others give. You can actually start by searching "people with spiritual awareness" online. Some rabbit holes are worth all the time you spend falling into them. May your Advent be fruitful and blessed.

Love,

God: "I have a plan for your life"
What it feels like:



St. David's Episcopal Church

corner of SR 45 and SR 135
in Beanblossom,
5 miles north of Nashville
PO Box 1798, Nashville, IN 47448

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Senior Warden:
Tina Goodlander

Deacon:
The Rev. William Morris

Organist/Music Director:
Dr. Vicki King

Parish Administrator:
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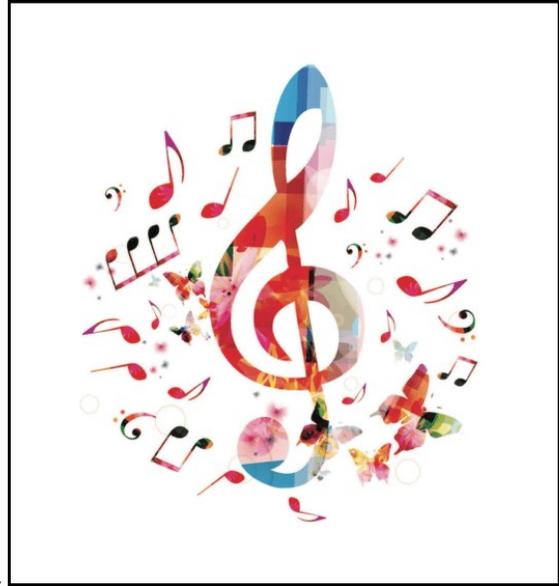
Parish Treasurer
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“The Song”

A friend of mine, Ira K Perdue, wrote this several years ago and I've always liked it. She gave me permission to put it in the newsletter;

I cried in church this morning. We sang my brother's favorite song, "Blessed Assurance", and I really starting missing him. Earl was my older brother and he passed in 1989 at the age of 40. Earl was about as tone deaf as a person could be, but he loved to sing. Most songs were unrecognizable, but he could hit every note of "Blessed Assurance." Well, at least 50%, which would be good for him.

I can remember riding in the car with him singing that song many, many times. The words of the chorus are, "this is my story, this is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long." And that pretty much summed up my brother's life. He was a pastor and the life of service and love that he led, praised his Savior all day, every day. He was one of the kindest, gentlest, most giving souls I've ever known. He also had an amazing sense of humor. And, "Blessed Assurance" is my reminder.



When he died I was angry, hurting, depressed, etc. I wouldn't go to church because I was so angry. Finally, after about 6 weeks, my family got me to church. I told them I would be okay unless they started to sing "the song". At the time, the church we were attending really didn't have an order of worship and the pastor would routinely ask for something to be sung. First five minutes of the service, an older couple got up and sang, "Blessed Assurance." So the tears started and I was ready to bolt for the door, but my daughter, Heather, mouthed, "Mom, you're okay." So, I sat through it.

Then the pastor got up and said, "Wasn't that great? Let's all sing, "Blessed Assurance." Okay, I could make it through twice. Then the offering, and the pianist played.....what else, "Blessed Assurance." Now it was starting to get funny. We followed that up with the invitation and, once again, "the song". Total, we sang or listened to Earl's favorite song 5 times. I was a frightful mess by the end of the service, but we were all laughing a little because I knew what had happened. I imagined that Earl had gotten together with the Lord and cooked up a way to let me know that he was okay and I was going to be okay. I'm sure he got a good laugh out of it too. So, if you see me at church and we're singing "Blessed Assurance, be forewarned that I will cry. But they are happy tears because I had the most amazing brother named Earl.

—Jennifer Heller

Poetry

...and then what?

Wise men came guided by
a star

A trip from the East
and

They didn't stay

but
Returned home
by a different
route

and
Why come so far

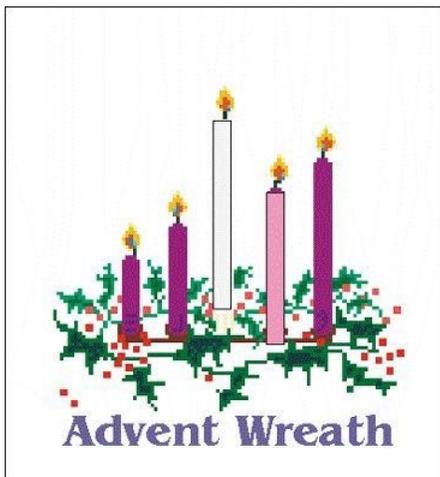
Bearing gifts and falling down
to worship the Child

and leave

We don't know
nor like open-ended finishes

but
that's so often the way of life:
a mystery
both coming and going

*For Curt, who asked the question
—Phyllis Sindlinger*



Getting Ready to Get Ready

It's October and
I'm already getting
ready for Christmas
because
stores are decorated and
playing Christmas music
and
I have the stationery and stamps
for our annual letter; I'm
thinking of what
to write and what picture
to send
and
A few gifts are in
the guest bedroom closet,
ready to be wrapped...
the deadline for sending them
is looming
and
Tickets are already purchased for
the early December
Yuletide Celebration in Indy
And how we will entertain
this year has
to be decided soon

I've been so busy getting ready for Christmas
and
there's so much more to do
but
my hope is that when the season of Advent
comes
I can stop, take time
and
truly get ready for Christmas.

—Phyllis Sindlinger

The Manger: a Call to Action

The Advent season in preparation for the birth of Jesus is a time for personal reflection, commitment, and prayer. Two individuals, the Reverend Martin Bell, a priest, writer, and conference leader of Christian Self Understanding and Verna Dozier, an English teacher, writer, and conference leader who Bishop Michael Curry describes as a “gospel voice summoning us to a discipleship that dares to follow Jesus in the transformation of God’s creation from the nightmare it often is into the dream God intends it to become”. Both have taught me to celebrate Jesus’ birth while looking deeper into his life and teachings. As a child places the Christ child in the manger, my eyes travel to the large cross behind the altar and remember Jesus taught us to love one another, died on that cross, and was resurrected by God and I am called to be a co-creator with God.

During this season, I am reading Confronted by God: The Essential Verna Dozier, a collection of writings that capture Verna’s wit and wisdom and reading a book of Martin Bell’s prayers written for Waycross Campers worship. I am sharing samples of prayers and will share Confronted by God if anyone wants to read.

Martin Bell Prayers:

Jesus’ message sounds to simple Lord:
 To put you in front place—the God of all Creation—and to love each other in justice
 And truth. Grant us the strength to carry out
 Your holy mission in this place and this Moment.
 Receive our imperfect prayers,
 O Holy One, we keep on trying to influence you, Lord, with our petitions and intercessions,
 We forget that prayer is meant to
 Bring us in line with your will, not
 Persuade you to ours. Turn us again.

A Night Blessing

sent by Gene and I With Christmas Cards (2023) and read nightly

May this new night of rest, repair the wear of time,
 Restore your vision of a deeper light,
 Heal the wounds of disappointments, and restore
 Youth of heart for the adventure that awaits us tomorrow.

Amen

—Donna Niednagel



Bean Blossom Music Series

**SUNDAY
Dec. 7th
7:00 PM**



Corner of Rt 135 & 45
www.stdavidsbb.org
812.988.1038

“Courts and Countryside: Music of the People”

The Calamansi Quartet



Noah Arcenas, Tyler Tran, Olive Loentz, Nick Hilliard

Meet-the-artists reception to follow.

**Join us for this family-friendly event.
Free-will offering. Donations gladly accepted.**

**To add your name to the Bean Blossom Music Series
email list, write to beanblossomsounds@gmail.com**

Bean Blossom Music Series   **@stdavids_beanblossom**

Getting Better Acquainted with Lisa Sbai

By Jan Drum

Lisa grew up in an extended family with strong Roman Catholic history, with early schooling in a four room Catholic school in the bucolic southern Indiana countryside. Following high school in Newburgh, IN, she continued her education at university in Evansville where she earned a degree in biology. Her adventurous spirit led to a move to the desert southwest, where she worked in a clinical laboratory and completed studies to earn a Master's in Organizational Management.

She met her husband Bill in Scottsdale, and through a series of job promotions, lived in northern Illinois and North Carolina before settling "back home again in Indiana" where she worked for Eli Lilly for 21 years. Lisa and Bill decided to spend their retirement years Brown County because of its simple, natural Indiana beauty. After moving to Nashville in 2024, she decided it was time to find a church. So once again St. David's is the recipient of either a blessing or very good luck. (You can decide if there's a difference.)



Because she does things thoughtfully, she read about Brown County's various churches and decided St. D's sounded like a good fit for her. She was pleasantly surprised to discover our many similarities to our Roman Catholic friends, the friendliness and warmth of the St. David's congregation, and how active the church is in the community with so many opportunities to serve.

When most of us encounter Lisa, we probably wouldn't hear about her professional background since she's now pretty much a professional volunteer. She is part of St. David's outreach committee and vestry, covers books at the library, shows up for woodlands protection events, helps at St. David's food pantry, and she has a special place in her heart for the Humane Society where she works in cat care and with the spay and neuter program. She is currently taking an on-line course in ornithology and it's perhaps no surprise that she loves to do feather art and is an avid birder. An animal lover, she has three rescued cats: Budweed, Reesie, and Lucky who fill her life with joy.



News from the Choir Corner

from Vicki King, Music Director

We've been having a lot of activity in the music ministry—lots of guests—Joanna Ximenes, Pianist from Florida, Chris Armijo, Recorder, Ruth Mayhew, Flutist, Quinten Benak, Flutist, and Nate Johnson, Saxophone. The choir premiered Nate's lovely setting of the Lord's Prayer on All Saints Day and plans are being made for the congregation to sing it during Advent.

We welcome Randy Keko to our bass section!

Looking ahead to Advent: the choir will again have a lovely Lessons and Carols service on December 21st. And you won't want to miss Christmas Eve candlelight service.

I am so grateful to have Jan Benham and Adie Smith enhance our worship with their talents.

I was SO excited to have my sister, Reba Williams, visit from Birmingham. She sang in our soprano section,. She loved St. David's and was able to take advantage of Brown County's lovely leaves.



Vicki King and her sister at the piano



Vicki and friend playing a duet.

Deacon's Corner

by Rev. William Morris, Jr., Deacon

The Celebration of Setting Examples

Back in November, one of our Sunday readings was taken from 1 Corinthians 11:1, where Paul exhorts the folks of Corinth to “be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Paul encourages his followers – and us – to look at his life as an example of how to live a life in Christ.

As we turn the calendar to December, and head towards Christmas Day, I am thinking of the saints in St. David who I have, in fits and starts, attempted to imitate.

And, as I decorate a metaphorical Christmas Tree of Spirit, I want to adorn and decorate it with ornaments that acknowledge my thanks and acknowledgements to so, so many. These “ornaments” are not listed in any order of importance, but is a humble attempt to say “thank you” and “Merry Christmas” to all.

I place the Ornament of an Angel as I think of our friend and brother, Gene Niednagel, who set the highest example of grace and humility. His example continues to bless my life.

I place a Candle of Peace for my Sister at the Altar, Yvonne Oligier, and her gentleness of spirit.

Three sturdy, hand-hewn Angels are placed on the tree to honor Fathers Richard Halladay, Verne Sindlinger and Jonathan Gosser, and the sense of Christian nobility and dignity that each one possesses.

Three ornaments of the wise men represent so many of you, but I think of dear sisters in Bible Study - Jan Benham, Linda Shackelford and Jane Savage - all of whom have trod and trekked verse by verse, chapter by chapter through New and Old Testament, alike: reminding me of the wisemen coming far away to find the Baby Jesus.

There are holy green and red bulbs that remind me of Vicky King and ALL the members of the St. David's Choir who guide us weekly into musical worship and praise of the Kingdom of God.

Of course, no tree is complete without tinsel, which gleams and twinkles like the stars over Bethlehem. This tinsel reminds me of all the stalwart and sturdy saints of St. David who have served on committees, planted and tended flowers, and given a unique beauty to our church.

Of course, a tree cannot stand without a good, reliable stand, which reminds me of our long-time indefatigable, members, Donna Niednagel, Sandy Ackerman and Joan Amati, as well as all those who have served dutifully on our to build the foundation of St. David's.

A nice addition to any Christmas tree are popcorn strings, which are placed on the tree in honor of all the Saints who have worked in the food distribution programs, helping a countless number of families through the desert of hunger. And, those who have stuffed backpacks and contributed time and money to all these causes.

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I'd like to add some sturdy toy soldiers who, to me, are represented by Sisters Jean Brown, Adie Smith, Lauren Woodworth, and Tina Goodlander, who have adorned our home church with invaluable organizational skills (skills which never fail to amaze me).

Under the tree are an abundance of presents, all wrapped in the love we share for each other, such as: The gift of this newsletter (Jane Herr), the gifts of all the tasty food so well-prepared each week (Carol Ruffin, Gail Fields, Jane Herr and a cast of dozens), the glimmering gifts of musical guests (Annie Hawk and Jan Holloway); the gift of conversations-in-community (Mike and Marilyn Day), the gift of rock-solid financial stewardship (Ralph and Maggie Linscott and Bob Westbrook), the generous hearts of our Outreach Committee (Marylin Day, Gail Fields, Lisa Sbai, Skip Wood); the gift of illustrious art and mind-boggling technology (Cori and Ed McCabe); an angel of health looking out for our physical well-being (Jennifer Heller); and our majestic group of matriarchs and patriarchs (Jane Land, Carol Ruffin, David and Jane Savage, Sally Simpson, Phyllis Sindlinger, and many others of us in AARP and beyond).

And, as we decorate our Tree of Examples, we need music, and I think of our choir, our great musical guests, and Mother Kate Wilson (possibly singing "Silent Night, Holy Night") and her gifts of wisdom and hope—with a healing dose of good humor), and there is Brother William (perhaps singing "It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like A Boogie-Woogie Christmas").

Last, our tree-decorating metaphor shall be blended with another metaphor, that of Dickens' near-immortal story "A Christmas Carol", including the Ghosts of Christmas Past (Jim and Judy Huber, Gene Niednagel, Andrea Barber, Steve Biggerstaff, Theresa and Steve Sims, Mary Bargiel, and a holy list of many others); Ghosts of Christmas Present (ALL the present members (and attending non-members)), and Ghosts of Christmas Future (Quinn Cole, Juniper McCabe, Asher Nolan, Knox Nolan, Gordon Smith, Westley Smith, and Everett Woodworth.).

And, above all, let us not forget, there is a precious baby Jesus under the tree, lying in a manger, surrounded by shepherds (Jim Drum, David Jennings, John Wood, David Savage, Ben Smith, Tim Stant, Len Glosque, Ben Woodworth) and angels (Jan Drum, Fran Dugan, Susie Chestnut, Donna Glenzer, Linda Gosser, Sarah Phillips, Laura Wenzler, Louis Wenzler, Laurie Stant) singing to the heavens: "Gloria In Excelsis Deo, Peace on Earth and Goodwill to ALL."

Note: To those whose names I've missed, I deeply apologize for this shortcoming. This piece was created at the last minute.



Pictures from the Diocesan Convention



Joan and Brother William



Joan and Adie

Birthdays and Anniversaries

December

9 Quinn Cole (Bess & Eric's son)
 10 Matt & Denise Fulton (anniversary)
 12 Donna Niednagel
 27 Jim & Jan Drum -(Anniversary)
 28 Phyllis Sindlinger
 29 Deborah Hutchison
 31 Bahati Fulton

January

15 Susie Chestnut
 16 Skip Patchin
 18 Jan Drum
 22 Gordon Smith (son of Ben & Adie Smith)

February

3 Cori McCabe
 4 Mike Day
 5 Jaden Fish (Donna N. grandson)

7 Logan Fittz
 14 Jane Land
 15 Sandy Fittz
 27 Linda Lee Gosser

March

3 Gail & Danny Fields (Anniversary)
 5 Bob Westbrook
 12 Cynthia Kafoure
 12 Angie Aumage
 14 John Johnson
 19 Theresa Sims
 20 Maddy Fulton
 21 Kyle Fittz
 24 Frank Fulton
 28 Laurie Stant
 28 Bess Smith (Joan Amati's daughter)
 30 Michael Kafoure

Don't see your birthday or anniversary - drop me a line at jane@rjherr.com

Newsletter Submissions?

Please send your news items, stories of spiritual growth, book reviews, jokes, cartoons, recipes, etc. to Jane Herr (812)320-2340 or 4923 Stevens Rd., Nashville, 47448 or (the preferred method!): jane@rjherr.com

Next deadline for submissions:
 Lent: February 8, 2026



St. David's Episcopal Church
 PO Box 1798
 Nashville, IN 47448

SERVICES

Sunday 9:30 AM Holy Eucharist

Wednesday 5:30 PM Communion

In-person services may be temporarily suspended when Covid cases increase in Brown County. You can attend our worship services via zoom and/or Facebook. Please contact the church office for more information.

Schedule of Special Services and Parish Events

Tues	Dec 2	Compline on Zoom <i>(Compline continues on Tuesdays)</i>	7:15 pm	
Wednesday	Dec 3	Celtic Evening Prayer <i>(to continue on Wednesdays through December 17)</i>	5:00 pm	St. David's
Friday	Dec 5	Zoom Bible study <i>(bible study continues Friday mornings)</i>	7:30-9 am	
Friday	Dec 5	Euchre <i>(Euchre continues on the 1st Friday of the month)</i>	7 pm	St. David's
Sunday	Dec 7	Bean Blossom Music Series	7 pm	St. David's
Tuesday	Dec 9	Pub Theology	5 pm	Out of Ordinary
Saturday	Dec 13	Saturday Art Party	1-2:30 pm	St. David's
Sunday	Dec 14	Vestry meeting after service		Ackerman Hall
Sunday	Dec 21	Lessons and Carols service	9:30 am	St. David's
Wednesday	Dec.24	Christmas Eve candlelight service	5:30 pm	St. David's
Thursday	Dec 25	Christmas morning Eucharist	9:30	St. David's
Tuesday	Jan 6	Epiphany		
Wednesday	Jan 14	Dinner Church <i>(Dinner Church continues on 2nd Wednesday of the month)</i>	5 pm	St. David's
Sunday	Feb 8	Lent newsletter info deadline		