

The Desert Wind

SPIRIT OF THE DESERT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

873 D Coyote Gulch Circle Ivins, Utah

December 2011 Volume One Number Two

May the Holy Spirit, for whom our community is named, blow with the winds of inspiration and be the Breath of God for our continuing journey.



Welcome to Spirit's second newsletter moving into the Advent season and looking forward to celebrating Christmas.

We are Spirit of the Desert, an inclusive, Christ-centered faith community in the Episcopal tradition, dedicated to knowing Christ and to make Christ known. We practice Christ's unconditional welcome at Spirit of the Desert.

There are no strangers or boundaries at our church. We welcome the faithful, the seeker, and the doubter. Whoever you are on your spiritual journey, there is a place for you at Lord's Table at Spirit of the Desert. We use the Book of Common Prayer and proclaim the Nicene Creed and other ancient creeds of the church as symbols of our orthodox faith.

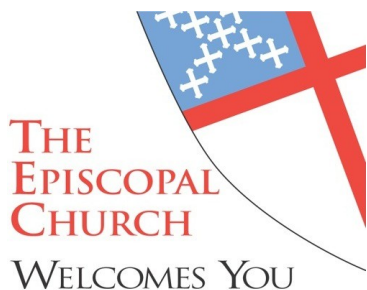
Sleep in on Sunday. Enjoy a nice brunch or take the family out to eat. Relax with the newspaper or your favorite book. Then, at mid day, celebrate the joys of God's creation at our Sunday afternoon service at 3:00 PM. Worshiping God in the beauty of the desert is an especially moving experience, and one that we hope you'll soon share with us. You don't have to dress up. There's nothing "suit and tie" about our service. If you show up in hiking shorts, ski clothes or a tux with tails you'll feel right at home in our friendly, caring community. We're not looking for "perfect" people, just come as you are.

Utah Bishop Joins Spirit, Grace at "Church in the Park" Service

On October 8th we enjoyed a Picnic in the Park with other churches from the Southwest Region. Our guest of honor was Bishop Scott. It was a time for greeting, sharing and praying with those we don't see often enough. The Eucharist service and music were wonderful. Worshiping together in such a beautiful setting convinced us that this should be repeated next year. We think that coming to Ivins Kayenta would be a perfect place to glorify God again.

Spirit Observes Animal Blessing

On October 9th we observed the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. We don't think he minded that we were a few days late...the animals didn't. After the service Lee prayed over each of our furry friends. The pets remained during Eucharist and behaved well - some seemed to be singing along with us. Bill Monroe is the proud owner of an adorable cat. She wasn't with us this time but we will get to know her as the months go by. He is a proud "daddy" all over again.



Diocesan Convention Was Rewarding for Delegates

October was certainly a busy month for Spirit. October 14-15 was the 2011 Diocesan Convention in Midvale. There were ten workshops, many were attended by our delegates and alternates. The eight resolutions passed with little serious discussion enabling the time for activities to move ahead of schedule. Food was abundant, visiting took place in every room and the music after the buffet dinner Friday night was a time for music and dancing. The Bishop showed us just how talented he was. Not only are we blessed to have him as our spiritual leader but his down-to-earth manner and good humor are a real joy.

Intercessory Group Meets to Pray for Those in Need

Spirit has an Intercessory Prayer group of dedicated ladies, led by Sue Miller, who meet once a month to pray together. Our last meeting took place outdoors in Kayenta on October 20th. A list of those who need our prayers is kept active and is tended to daily by these individuals. We care deeply about each and every individual, and we rejoice or mourn when a name is removed. Let us know when a prayer is needed for you, a friend, or family. All are welcome at future gatherings.

Friends, Family Remembered During "All Souls" Service"

All Souls Day was an opportunity to remember our beloved families and friends who rest in heaven, waiting for us to join them. The list of names will be on our altar each Sunday during November as a gentle reminder of their passing.

People in the Pews: "Profiles of People of Spirit"

Jim and Ila Craig have lived in Ivins since 1994, having moved sixteen times in eleven states since starting out in South Dakota where Ila and Jim were in elementary school together. Jim retired from the Federal Highway Administration, occasionally working for FEMA when disasters were involved.

Ila was a secretary and received her teaching degree at forty five. She is a wonderful seamstress, among other talents, and has created the Spirit of the Desert banner and the altar cloth.

The Craigs have three children: daughter Jackie lives in Portland, Oregon, and works for the Forest Service. Her daughter is in her first year of college. Son Rick lives in Missoula, Montana and has one child. Rick is a woodworker and an author. He just published his first novel. Son Joel lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico,

has no children, and works for the City of Albuquerque in animal control.

Spirit members were all invited to the Bloomington Country Club to meet the entire family at Jim's and Ila's 50th wedding anniversary celebration last year. One of the highlights of the gathering was a video, with music, documenting their lives. Ila has been sewing her clothes all these years and kept many of them. Members of the family, mainly the grandchildren, modeled the time-appropriate attire! You had to see the leisure suit - it was a show stopper.

We are so blessed to have Jim and Ila with us and be a part of our Spirit family.

Ellen and Don Tadken got a jump on the Holidays leaving St. George on Tuesday, the 22nd of November, for Washington D.C. spending Thanksgiving with their son. On November 27th they boarded Holland America for a cruise of a lifetime - to travel the Amazon River. They expect to return home on Christmas evening. This busy couple love to share their adventures with us. We look forward to their safe return and hearing all about this vacation. They wished each of us, as we wish them, a Happy and Blessed Christmas. See you soon, Ellen and Don.

Skye Montgomery, the daughter of the Rev. And Mrs. Lee Montgomery, has made quite a "splash" on the other side of the Pond. Recently matriculated (the formal process of entering a university) Skye has settled into life at Corpus Christi College at Oxford University where she is working toward her second Masters Degree in American History. According to reliable sources, Skye spends much of her time attending (optional) lectures, researching her thesis, and chasing away the "rubbish foxes" (urban foxes that scavenge for food in Oxford's trash bins). She is a frequent diner at "High Table," a table for the use of fellows (members of the Senior Common Room) and their guests. Recent photos of Skye depict her in "subfusc" (full academic regalia worn at Oxford). According to Skye, a number of myths surround subfusc and its use in examinations. For example, there is a myth that subfusc has a counterpart in "fullfusc", said to be a full suit of armor, which if worn to Finals examinations automatically results in a student being given a First (the highest score possible). In her "spare" time Skye sings in the Corpus Christi Chapel Choir and serves her fellow Oxians as "Biscuit Fairy," keeping the Common Room stocked with biscuits, tea and coffee, thereby making those research-or-essay-filled days a little bit more tolerable. Skye is returning to Utah for the Christmas

holidays and looks forward to reconnecting with her Spirit of the Desert family.



Skye dressed in "sub-fusc" at Oxford.

Spirit's Outreach Activities Respond to Community Needs

Spirit of the Desert participates in many outreach activities. We will feature one such activity in each issue of our Newsletter. Our **5th Sunday Collection** is the topic now. In each month of the year that has five Sundays, we take up a special offering for a designated charity. We have chosen **Doctors Volunteer Clinic, Dixie Care & Share, and Ivins Animal Shelter** as our local charities. When a special need arises we interrupt our usual rotation to help meet those needs. This year we made donations to Doctors Volunteer Clinic, Veterans Nursing Home in Ivins,

Advent Is Resplendent With Holidays of Light

Advent is a season resplendent with holidays of light. Just behind us is Diwali, a four-day celebration known as the Festival of Lights, observed by Hindus around the world. Just around the corner is Advent, a time of preparation for that day when our Christian belief tells us the Light of the World was born in a lowly manger.

Just a few days away from Christmas the beginning of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights is observed around the world. And the day after Christmas those of African heritage will affirm their principles for living by lighting the first of the seven candles of Kwanzaa.

As the snow begins to fall and the warming glow of the sun grows more and more faint, we light our candles of Advent, Hanukkah, Diwali, and Kwanzaa. As darkness surrounds us, we gather to observe a season resplendent with holidays of light.

Isn't it interesting that when it is darkest, we celebrate with festivals of light. When the earth is most desolate, we sing carols of joy. When the harshest and bleakest of the seasons is upon us, we can turn to gentleness, kindness and forbearance. Our courage can rise above the darkness of our circumstances.

Forced into hiding with her family in an attic in Amsterdam during the

Holocaust, one of the darkest periods of human history, a young girl wrote in her diary on December 7, 1942.

"We just gave each other a few little presents and then we lit the candles. Because of the shortage of candles, we only had them alight for ten minutes."

Only a few pages away, she penned her credo: "Despite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart."

Imagine the faith and the vision she must have possessed to be able to write that kind of a statement of faith while locked away from the light of the outside world. Imagine being able to say that people are really good at heart after being persecuted and forced into hiding to avoid the unspeakable horrors of concentration camps established to exterminate her race. Confronted with darkness, Anne Frank chose the light instead. She clung to Light in the Darkest of Hours.

Anne Frank's unfaltering faith in the goodness of humanity is proof positive that, even in the darkest of circumstances, we, too, can choose the Light. With vision unimpaired, we too, can discern the goodness of all people and recognize the spark of divine fire that burns within them. With vision unimpaired, even the faintest of stars can still lead us to a humble manger and a child of light.

“Bricks for Haiti” Help to Rebuild Haitian Cathedral

When we think about all the disasters that the USA has suffered we may forget that Haiti was devastated beyond belief from an earthquake. Rebuild Our Church in Haiti is a national, grass-roots effort to rebuild the spiritual, cultural, and educational center of the largest diocese in the Episcopal Church. Some of Haiti's church schools are the only schools they have at the present time, taught by Episcopal priests and nuns. Brick by brick, the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Haiti will become a reality once more because of the contributions from members of Utah Episcopal churches. Don't let this Advent season pass by without remembering these brave people. Your gift of \$10.00 a brick will make their dream a reality.

Baffling “Partridge” Carol Explained by Congregant

There is one Christmas Carol that has baffled many throughout the years. What in the world do Leaping Lords, French Hens, Swimming Swans and especially the Partridge who won't come out of the Pear Tree have to do with Christmas? Well, here is one explanation to clear up that baffle.

A partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.

Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.

Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.

Four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

Five golden rings recalled the five books of the Torah or Law.

Six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the Holy Spirit's gifts of prophesy, serving, teaching, exhortation, contribution, leadership and mercy.

Eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Ten lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.

Eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

Twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed.



"A Quiet Understanding" Hymn Captures Communion's Meaning

We sing this every Sunday during communion: "There's a quiet understanding when we're gathered in the Spirit, it's a promise that He gives us when we gather in His name. There's a love we feel in Jesus, there's a manna that He feeds us, it's a promise that He gives us when we gather in His name. And we know when we're together, sharing love and understanding, that our brothers and our sisters feel the oneness that He brings. Thank You, thank You, thank You Jesus for the way you love and feed us, for the many ways You lead us. Thank You, thank You Lord."

Join Our Spirit Family For an Advent Journey

By a decree from Caesar Augustus, Mary and Joseph went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the City of David that is called Bethlehem. So too will we be lead through the days of Advent to the birth of the Christ child. Sundays during Advent will be more than simply lighting the candles. Lee's sermons will lead us through our preparation for Christmas Day. A time to unwrap the presents. A time to begin unwrapping the greatest gift of all. The simple song of Christmas - Silent Night, Holy Night - reminds us to sleep in heavenly peace. It isn't something we have

earned; there is nothing we might ever do to entitle ourselves to this peace. It was carefully given, a gift of pure love. It was carefully chosen just for US, to bring joy, amazement, peace and renewal. We don't always find presents under the tree that fulfill all our desires. Every day of our lives is a new Christmas Day. May your fondest wish be granted. May you and your family celebrate the holidays in this spirit.

Our Christmas celebration will be on Christmas Eve at 3 p.m. Be present with us to open your hearts before your presents. It will be an early beginning and a joy to the world.

**FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN,
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN AND
HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL, COUNSELOR, THE
MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING
FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.**

Isaiah 9:5

