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FROM THE RECTOR

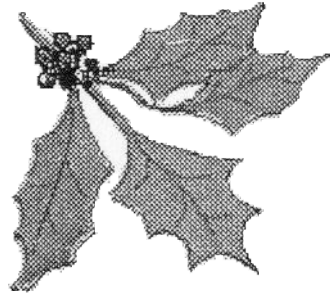
“Happy Holidays!” One hears this a lot. I guess it is a way of acknowledging the holiday season without committing to something specific like Hanukkah, Kwanza, or even Christmas. I rather like the idea of “Happy Saturnalia” myself. After all, this is how most of this end-of-the-year observance got started, at least in the west.

Whenever I see a Christmas tree, I cannot help but think of the dark forests of Germanic Europe and the worship of Wotan. That was long before Christianity. When I see many, many lights strung over

houses, I cannot help but think of the ancient Roman holidays with their festival of lights in the darkest time of the year.

We have co-opted many customs in our worship of the *Man Born to be King*. Our worst darkness comes when there is no hope. So light the lights! Deck the trees! And Come let us adore Him who best expresses our hopes.

-John Ruef



**“Come let us adore Him who best
expresses our hopes.”**

FROM THE VESTRY

At the congregational luncheon in December, outgoing Senior Warden Langhorne Jones and vestry member Norm Reynolds received applause and thanks for their service to Emmanuel.

Two new members were elected to the vestry during the meeting: Richard Camp and Elizabeth Mullis.

Junior Warden Garrie Thompson summarized work done by the vestry and many other members during the past year, including repairs to the roof, painting of the entire roof, ongoing repairs to the pipe organ, renovation of kitchen cabinets, refinishing of the floor in the parish hall, and improvements to the nursery, children's Sunday School room, and choir rooms. He reported that floor renovations in the hallways will be made in the near future.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES

February 8, 2004, the adult Sunday School will begin a new series of classes on the life of Paul. Anyone who is interested is warmly invited to join the group for this interesting program of study.

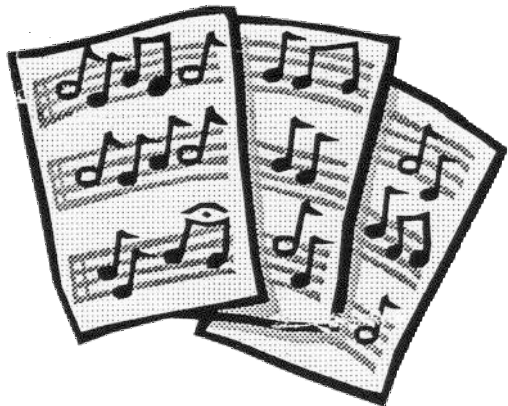
REMEMBERING JORDAN COLES

Jordan Coles, long-time member and friend to countless members of Emmanuel and people throughout the area, died recently. The funeral service was held Dec. 20 at Emmanuel. Jordan had been a resident of a retirement community in Bedford in recent months.

CHRISTMAS IN HISTORIC CHATHAM

During the annual festivities for Christmas in Historic Chatham, the Emmanuel Choir performed twice under the direction of Kenyon Scott. On Friday evening, Dec. 5, the choir sang "Joy to the World" to open the annual community caroling event on the steps of Pittsylvania County Courthouse. That event was attended by more than 300 people.

The next day, the choir hosted a hot-lunch fundraiser in the parish hall followed by a performance in the church by the Main Street Madrigals, which includes many members of the Emmanuel Choir. The group was conducted by Kenyon.



BUDGET REPORT

At the recent congregational luncheon, John Geyer provided an update on Emmanuel's finances. He indicated that good management of the church's investments through Legg Mason have grown the fund to well over \$300,000. John pointed out that although the investment account has done well, Emmanuel faces a likely operating deficit for 2003. The church's budget is roughly \$60,000 per year, and experts have recommended that that budget will need to rise to approximately \$100,000 annually in order to provide funding for a full-time rector in the future.

DID YOU KNOW...

... The Christmas tree used this year at Emmanuel was generously loaned by Mary Hicks Heitzler and her sister, Nancy. A new state law prohibits the use of live trees in churches and other public buildings that do not have automatic fire-suppressing sprinkler systems.

COFFEE HOUR

Refreshments at each Sunday's coffee hour are provided by volunteers at Emmanuel. A new signup sheet for coffee hour in 2004 is awaiting your choice of a Sunday to serve as the host—it's a rewarding way to participate in the life of the congregation. If you are unable to host a coffee hour by yourself, why not share the duties with one or more others?



NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The *Pruden Parish Press* is a quarterly newsletter from Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The next issue will appear in April 2004. To submit comments or provide information for publication, contact Ann Duke.

NURSERY

A nursery is now available during Sunday 11 a.m. services. For information about the nursery, contact a vestry member or simply stop by the nursery after church on your way to coffee hour! Spread the word to your friends and neighbors who have small children and may decide to visit Emmanuel and make use of the nursery.

