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THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Wednesday, Dec 21- Tuesday, Dec. 27



Weird Nativities

A few years ago, I overheard a conversation between two people about the new James Bond. Not the new movie, but the man who plays him. When the current 007 hangs up his Aston Martin, what worthy actor will inherit the keys?

One of the friends suggested the black British actor, Idris Elba, citing his good looks, sophistication, and all-round tough guy image as perfect for the role. His friend disagreed. "No. You can't have a black guy playing Bond. Ian Fleming, the writer of the original books, made Bond Scottish. Therefore, he must be white."

I would have spluttered into my tea, if I'd been drinking some. This opinion seemed so backward-

'white' is wrong and, actually, pretty disrespectful to the people of Scotland.

But there's another reason I found the idea of exclusively white people playing James Bond so troubling. It is the nature of art. **Not all art is an exact representation of reality. In fact, most of it is not.** When the Impressionists painted, they weren't trying to produce a photographic image of those waterlilies. An artist is free to draw, compose, design, and write whatever she wants in whatever form she wants. She is expressing her meaning, and does not have to do it in a literal way.

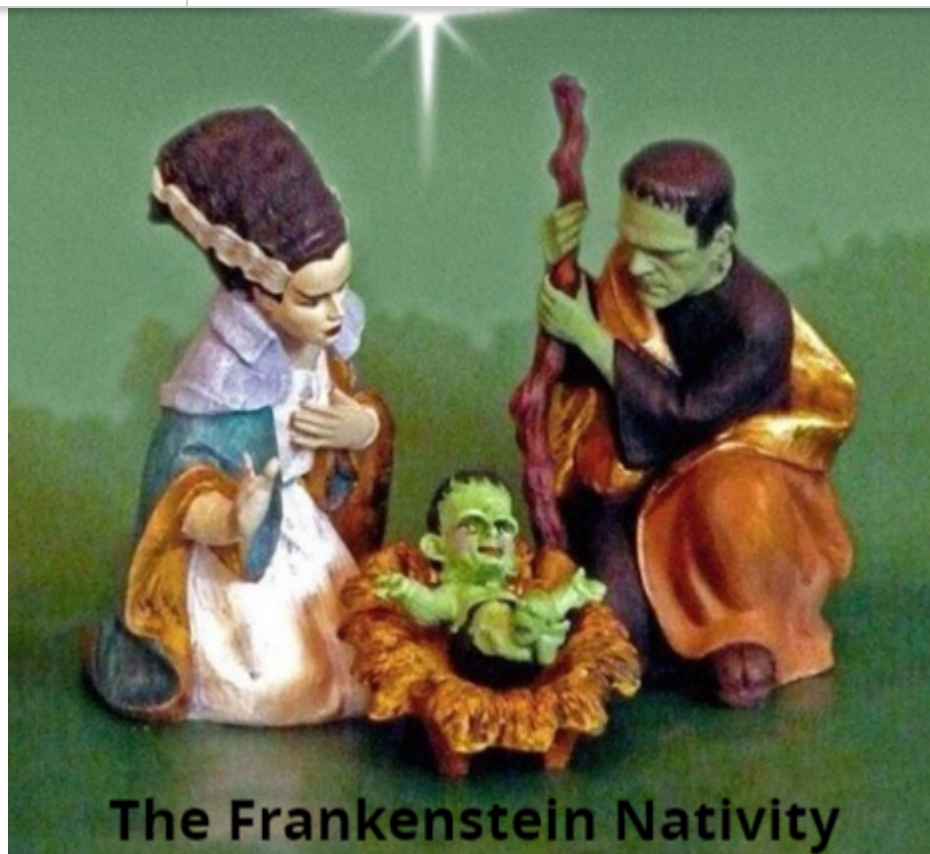
So, an actor's skin color need not be the same as that of a historical figure they are playing on the stage or screen. For example, before the pandemic, Gelind and I saw the Broadway production of Joan of Arc. Joan was played by the African-American actress Condola Rashad (from the TV show 'Billions'). Some literalists might protest, "Joan of Arc wasn't black!" **But that's not the point. It's art, not history.** For the producer of the play, the casting of Rashad expressed a truth that the playwright had possibly not even been conscious of. It was impossible to see Joan in shackles and not see shadows of slavery in our own land.

Well, this leads me into a fun comment about Christmas. Nativities. Have you seen how many there are out there? **And many of their creators have taken the same artistic license to make their point.** There's an Irish nativity – the magi are giving clover, gold and Guinness; a Canadian nativity – Mary and Joseph are dressed as Mounties, and there are moose and beavers in attendance; there's a minimalist Nativity, a Manhattan Nativity, and a Frankenstein Nativity (see them below); and my favorite – a Hipster Nativity (see above).

So, what's going on? Are these nativities blasphemous? No more than a blond, blue-eyed Jesus is blasphemous. (OK, maybe the Frankenstein one gets close.) You see, **the truth that God became a human being gives dignity and honor to ALL human beings.** God happened to be incarnated at a particular time, in a particular place, and to particular parents. But **the fact that God became a human (ANY human) allows us to imagine God in OUR skin, living OUR lives, empathizing with US in whatever situation we are in.**

So, bring on Idris Elba as Bond!

-Duncan





The Minimalist Nativity



**EVENTS AT ST.
JOHN'S**

ADMIT ONE

TICKET NO. #1937





Joel Gregory Christmas Organ Concert, December 22, 2022



The Welcome Course

An engaging program of presentations and discussions about The Christian Faith and the Episcopal tradition.

If...

- You're new to Christianity, or
- You've been to a lot of church services over a long time, but still have many questions about God and faith, or
- You've been a Christian for years, but have never had the chance to seriously examine your faith in a friendly, accepting place, or
- You want to make an adult declaration of faith and commitment to God by being baptized or confirmed, or

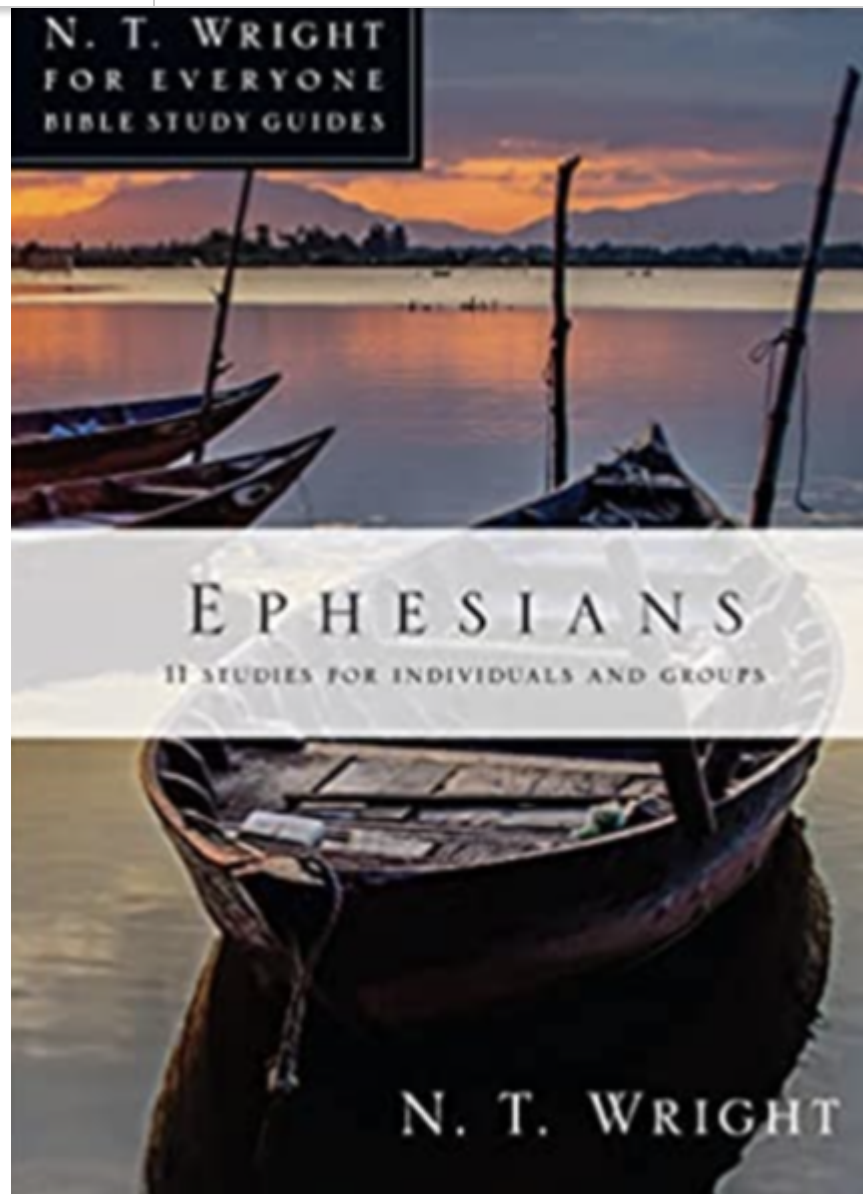
... then the Welcome Course may be right for you.

The Welcome Course Schedule

(Sundays at 9.15am in the Library)

January 15	Who is God?
January 22	What does Christianity teach?
January 29	How do we worship?
February 6	What about evil?
February 12	What is our purpose?
February 19	How should we live?

Please register for the Welcome Course by emailing Duncan:
duncan@stjohnsmontgomery.org



Winter Bible Study on Ephesians

Deonna will lead an 11-week Bible study on Paul's letter to the Ephesians beginning Sunday, January 8th, 2023. Two identical sessions will be offered to provide a variety of participation options.

- 1) Sunday mornings (in-person in the Archives room on the 3rd floor) from 9.15 to 10.15am.
- 2) Tuesday nights (via Zoom) from 7pm to 8pm.

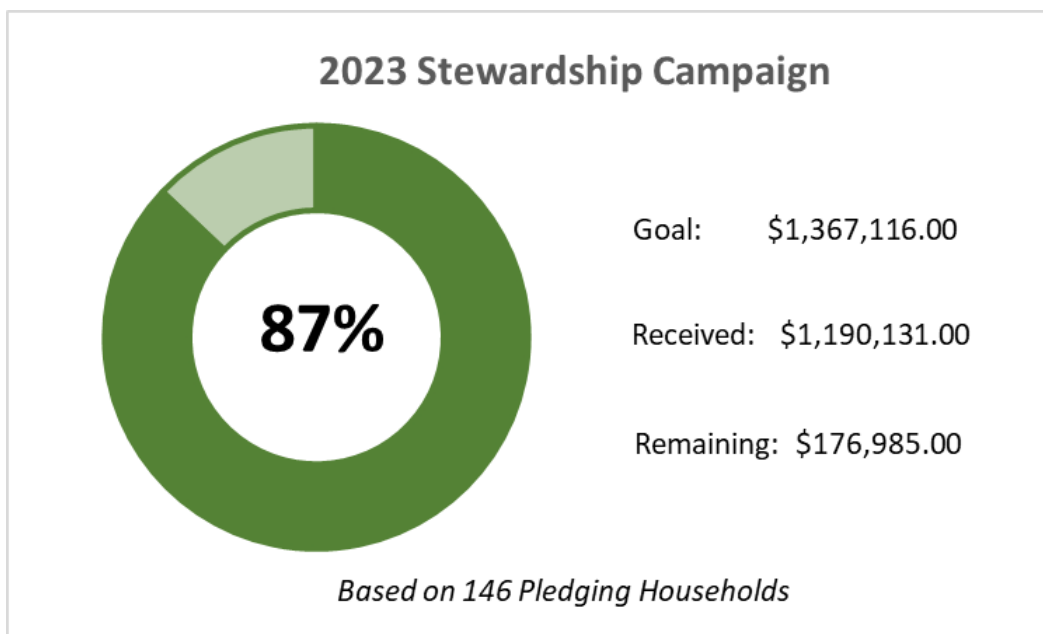
We will be using NT Wright's Study Guide *Ephesians: 11 Studies for Individuals and Groups*. You can purchase it online via the link [HERE](#) or from the bookstore after the New Year, the price will be \$12.00 (\$13.60 with tax).



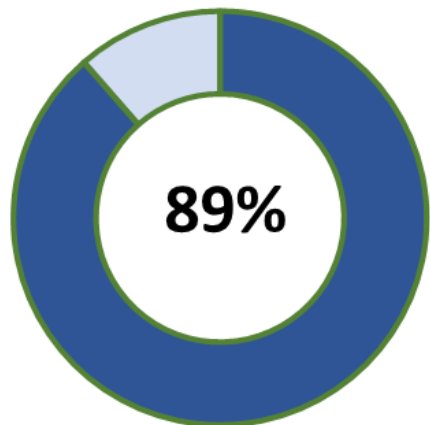
Mercy House Lunch Servers

Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to volunteer at [Mercy House](#) this fall. This has been a wonderful opportunity for Ascension and St. John's to come together in service. For anyone who is interested, the work is pretty simple. Mercy House prepares the food to be handed out and we just assist with bagging it and getting it out the door. Some meals are delivered via Door Dash and others are served to clients onsite in take-home containers. A new Sign Up Genius link is available with dates to volunteer for Thursdays (11:00 – 1:00) from December through March at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10CoC4AAEA622A4FC1-mercy1>.

This group could use a few people who would be willing to serve as substitutes on short notice when issues arise. If you are willing to serve in that role, please let Stephanie Norrell know. You can reach her at 334-467-6989 or sbnorrell@gmail.com.



[Click Here to Schedule your 2023 General Fund Pledge](#)



2022 Pledges: \$1,270,522.75

Payments Received: \$1,125,225.05

Balance Due: \$145,297.70

Please remit payments by 12/31/22

[Click Here to Make a Payment on your 2022 Pledge](#)

New pledge envelopes have been mailed and should arrive this week. We are using a new company, so they will look different. Envelopes will now be mailed quarterly instead of annually.

Weekly, monthly and annual pledges may also be made online using the St. John website. If you would like to make your pledges online, please let Heather Herring (heather@st.Johnsmontgomery.org) know so she can stop your pledging envelopes.



ST. JOHN'S TREASURE HUNT

WE ARE SO LUCKY TO BE SURROUNDED WITH AMAZING TREASURES HERE AT ST. JOHN'S! JOIN US FOR A TREASURE HUNT AROUND THE CHURCH. EACH WEEK WE WILL FEATURE A PRECIOUS ITEM LOCATED SOMEWHERE IN THE CHURCH BUILDINGS OR GROUNDS. IF YOU FIND IT, TELL MS. SARAH AND GET A REWARD.

Can you find me? Clue: I overhear the most lovely sounds!

If you have a favorite treasure that you'd like us to highlight email Constance@stjohnsmontgomery.org.



Clue: I'm at the center of the celebration!



WEEKDAY OFFERINGS

Tuesdays

- 7:30 AM Holy Eucharist in Chapel
- 9:00 PM Compline (Facebook Live)

Wednesdays

- 11:30AM Contemplative Prayer in the Library

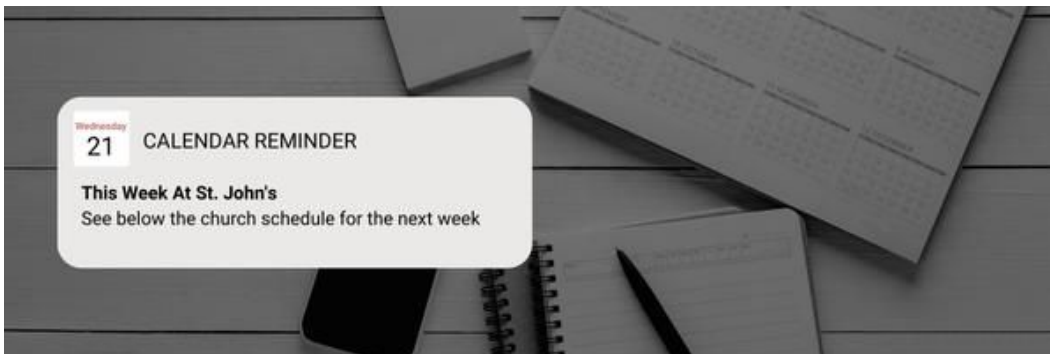
- 12:05 PM Healing Eucharist in Chapel
 - 9:00 PM Compline (Facebook Live)
-



Listed below are who will be serving as Ushers, Acolytes, Altar Guild, Lectors and Flower Delivery on Sunday.

10:00 AM – Holy Eucharist Rite I

- *Eucharistic Ministers:* Virginia Banister
 - *Lectors:* William Haynes, J.R. Marshall
 - *Ushers/Greeters:* Christy Anderson, William Haynes, Cissy Johnson
 - *Altar Guild:* Chuck Moore
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DECEMBER
2022

11:30 AM Contemplative Prayer
5:00 PM Instrumentalist Practice

12:05 PM Healing Eucharist in Chapel
12:45 PM Cursillo Reunion Group
1:30 PM Archives Committee Meeting
7:00 PM Christmas Organ Concert
9:00 PM Compline (Facebook Live)

5:0 PM Children's Christmas Service
7:00 PM Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist Rite II
10:00 PM Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist Rite I- with Incense

SUNDAY 25

10:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite I

MONDAY 26

Church Office Closed

TUESDAY 27

6:30 AM Al-Anon Meeting in Loft
7:30 AM Holy Eucharist in Chapel
8:30 AM Prayer Group in SCR
3pm J. Conely organ practice
9:00 PM Compline (Facebook Live)



Your prayers are requested for the following parishioners: Jim Bennett, Bill and Lida Bowman, Rod Frazer, Karen Jarrell, Leslie Little, Ken Mahan, Christopher Marshall, Richard McCrory, Eddie McDowell, Marilyn Pickett, Shirley Price, Carrie Shaw, Evelyn Sherbert, Tommy Tyson, Larry WorriLOW.

Prayers are also requested for these friends: Jodelle Oakley, Rowan Osbourne, Johnathon Pace, Karen and Angelo Pacheco, Robert Proctor, Sarah Stone Walker

During Advent we will be refreshing this list. Please let us know if your friend needs to remain on this list, or if you have a friend in need of prayer. You may email prayer requests to Constance@stjohnsmontgomery.org

If you or someone you know needs Pastoral Care, please contact December's pastoral care team: Betsy Cannon, Michelle Shaw, Josie Eskridge, Mary-Nelms Parsons, Renee Taylor, Laura Knapp

[Click here for this Sunday's Lessons](#)

[Click here to meet our staff and vestry](#)



Links to all of the St. John's Offerings

Church Services:

[St. John's Facebook Page](#)

[St. John's YouTube Page](#) (Sunday morning services & adult Christian Ed classes)



Our mailing address is:

St. John's Episcopal Church
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Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone: 334-262-1937

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