

From the Clergy Assistant

“Preach the gospel at all times— if necessary, use words.”

St. Francis of Assisi

On Sunday, February 6, Adam Aguirre will be our guest preacher.

Many St. Elizabeth’s parishioners will recognize Adam as the nephew of Forrest and Hilary Jones who worships with us at the 10:00 service every Sunday. Originally from Wichita Falls, Texas, Adam graduated from Grinnell College in 2006. He has been working with the homeless population for three years, most recently in Seattle, Washington and in Austin, Texas before that. Adam is currently working as an AmeriCorps member in Paterson, New Jersey, where his service sites include the Well of Hope Drop-In Center, St Paul’s CDC and St. Paul’s Emergency Men’s Shelter. On February 6 Adam will be sharing with us some of his reflections on how he has been engaged in “preaching the gospel at all times”—and how he has experienced it “preached” to him—in his ministry in Paterson. We are grateful to Adam for his willingness to share some of his reflections with us, and we look forward to this special opportunity on February 6.

Three Kings Sunday Preaching

On Sunday, January 9, those from St. Elizabeth’s who went on the pilgrimage following the star to St. Paul’s Church in Paterson for their Three Kings Sunday celebration certainly experienced the “preaching of the gospel” in many different ways. Of course, the children and youth of St. Paul’s literally preached the gospel through their wonderful Epiphany pageant, but there were so many other beautiful moments of “preaching” which some of us shared on the bus ride home. One parishioner especially liked how the entire celebration alternated between Spanish and English so that neither language seemed to be predominant. Another loved the way the children were given so many opportunities to “shine” through singing beautiful solos or through playing their musical instruments.

One of my favorite “preaching moments” occurred when the angels were dancing—“dancing angels”—how wonderful! What made this moment so poignant was the way the older “teen angels” and the very young angels interacted. The choreography might have appeared simple, but I know *I* would have had a tough time remembering and following it all. The way the older angels modeled, encouraged, and gently and graciously directed the younger angels was wonderful. And, in turn, the way the younger angels followed every little move and gesture of the older angels, focusing and taking them all in, was quite endearing.

This interaction, within a dance which lasted but a few minutes, spoke volumes about the fragility and strength of formation both of individuals and community, how important it is for our children to have strong, loving teen role models, and how equally important it is for our teens to recognize the importance of serving as positive mentors and role models. If there had not existed a level of trust and love among these dancing angels, the whole experience would have been quite different not only for them, but for all of us sharing in the moment. I am grateful to all of those who help in forming thoughtful followers of Christ and in fostering positive relationships, whether it be in the context of a pageant, family, church school, choir, outreach, or any other number of ways in a community; we are all called to such ministry.

The Rev. Joan F. Conley