

The Carpenter's Helper

This Week...

Harry Potter Day

Magic, Fun,
and Theology

Weekly Parish Schedule

Add your group's event to
the calendar: email
stthomassooffice
@googlegroups.com

Advent Evening Prayer

December 1, 8,
15, and 22

Based on the number of excited children who showed up to Harry Potter Day at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral on Nov. 16, you might find it hard to believe that the last book in the series was published 12 years ago. About 80 children – far more than the cathedral staff initially expected – from around the Bay Area came to make wands, play Quidditch and learn how prayer can fend off scary feelings.

Rowling, a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church, has said that the parallels between her books and the Gospels are intentional, although she rarely delves into more details. The only explicit connection to Christianity is the appearance of Biblical passages on two gravestones in the final book, but readers have long observed allegorical elements in the stories. "To me [the religious parallels have] always been obvious," Rowling told an interviewer in 2007. "But I never wanted to talk too openly about it because I thought it might show people who just wanted the story where we were going." **Some of Rowling's own faith journey is hidden in the books**, Miles said. "I love to tell kids the trivia that most of them don't know – even the ones who know every little bit of trivia – which is that Harry receives his Hogwarts [acceptance] letter on his 11th birthday because that's the day that J.K. Rowling was baptized," Miles told Episcopal News Service.

Harry Potter Day was a mix of fun and more serious topics, of religion and Potter lore. It started with morning prayer, followed by "Defense Against the Dark Arts," which in the series is a Hogwarts class in repelling curses and creatures like the boggart, a manifestation of one's worst fear. In the books, this is done with a Patronus – a sort of spiritual guardian in the form of an animal. On Nov. 16, the children learned that **prayer can be its own kind of Patronus** when fear becomes overwhelming.

(...)And since Hogwarts students take Potions classes, the children then learned about another kind of supernatural transformation: the Eucharist. The Rev. Kyle Oliver, who has developed a set of cards that break down elements of the liturgy to explain them more fully, "walked the kids through the entire Eucharistic prayer, explaining all of the little magic pieces," Miles said. "And then we had a closing Eucharist and a group photo. Everybody went home happy!" In her sermon at the Eucharist, the Rev. Lindy Bunch, priest in charge at Trinity St. Peter's in San Francisco, focused on Dobby, a lowly enslaved elf who ends up making the ultimate sacrifice to save Harry and his friends. She connected his story to Romans 8, which talks about how Christ frees all from bondage and ends with the famous passage: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God."

"We're not teaching them that there are bad things in the world. They already know that," Miles said. "But we're giving them tools and emotional help to stick together, to fight, [to] hope. We're giving them hope."

– Egan Millard is an assistant editor and reporter for the Episcopal News Service. He can be reached at emillard@episcopalchurch.org.

PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday, November 24

Family Church Sunday

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:00am (U) Youth Confirmation
9:15am (P) Adult Education
9:15am (U) Nursery
10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II
11:45am (GH) Coffee, Fellowship
2:00pm (C) Girl Scout Troop 513
7:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

Monday, November 25

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA
7:30pm (GH) Scottish Dance

Tuesday, November 26

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA
4:30pm (U) Girl Scout Troop 719
5:00pm (CO) AIDS Delaware
6:00pm (U) Girl Scout Troop 513
7:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance
8:00pm (U) KIS AA meeting

Wednesday, November 27

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA
10:30am (C) Bible Study
4:00pm (C) Blue Hen Bounty
5:00pm (C, N) ECM
5:45pm (P) Centering Prayer
8:30pm (GH) South College Speakers AA

Thursday, November 28

Thanksgiving

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA
10:00am (U) Newark Music Makers
7:30pm (U) Bluegrass Jam

Friday, November 29

6:30am (C) Sunrise Serenity AA
12:00pm (C) Al-Anon
6:30pm (P) Women's AA

Saturday, November 30

-available-

Sunday, December 1

8:00am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:00am (U) Youth Confirmation
9:15am (P) Adult Education
9:15am (U) Nursery
9:30am (C, U) Children's Worship
10:30am (N) Holy Eucharist Rite II
11:45am (GH) Coffee, Fellowship
12:00pm (C) CREW Youth Group
2:00pm (C) Girl Scout Troop 513
7:00pm (GH) UD Ballroom Dance

location key:

(C) Classroom	(MR) Music Room
(GH) Great Hall	(U) Undercroft
(N) Nave	(BO) Business Office
(P) Parlor	(RO) Rector's Office

ST THOMAS EPISCOPAL PARISH

ADVENT EVENING PRAYER

December 1, 8, and 15
at 6 in the evening

A booklet of prayers for each Sunday in Advent will be available soon! You may choose to pray them at home on any day and in any sequence.

On the first three Sundays in December (1, 8, and 15), at 6pm, you are invited to join Fr Howie and others in praying these prayers together in person at the church.

On the fourth Sunday (22), please join us at 5:30 for the Christmas Pageant!

Watch for a recorded version to be available through electronic media.

ALL ARE WELCOME

QUICK...SAVE THESE DATES!
before your Holiday calendar fills up!

***Make special time each week to slow down
and remember the reason for the season.***