



# The Circuit Rider

Life in the Big Bend Episcopal Mission – January 2007

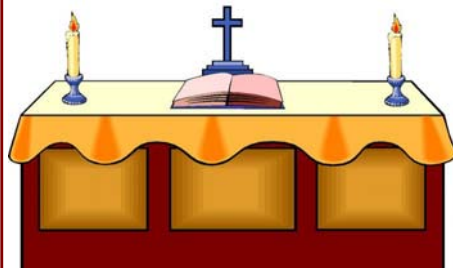
## Threshold Holds First Service in New Chapel

On Saturday December 16th, members of the Threshold board gathered at the new retreat house in Ft. Davis for a meeting and worship service. The new chapel was barely under roof at the time, but Vespers was celebrated at 5pm on schedule. The Threshold is current accepting donations to help with completion of the buildings and provide for furnishings. Contact Aurie West, Tom Graf, or any Threshold member for more information. For more information on Quiet Days, and the goals and activities of the Threshold, see the Threshold web site at [www.thethreshold.org](http://www.thethreshold.org).



## Thank You Altar Guilds

Sincere thanks for another year of faithful service goes out to all the members of the



Altar Guilds of St. Paul's and Saint James' – and to Elle Webb, the one woman Altar Guild at Sts. Mary and Joseph. The work that these people do behind the scenes to support and enhance our worship is a vital ministry in all of our congregations. Their washing, ironing, polishing, setting up and taking down – to say nothing of fretting over flowers, candles, wine and wafers – often goes unnoticed, but it would surely be noticed if it *wasn't* done. Please know that your faithfulness and care it is appreciated by us all.



**The next Threshold Quiet Day will be held at the First Christian Church on the town square in Marfa on Saturday, January 6th. Doors open at 6:30am and the day ends at 2:30pm. Everyone is invited to come for as little or as much time as they like. Bring a book. Give it a try.**

## Annual Mission Retreat Scheduled

The annual Big Bend Mission Retreat will be held at the Longhorn Motel north of Study Butte again this year. The theme will be "Living in to our Baptismal Vows." Activities will begin at February 23rd with a buffet dinner and run through noon on Sunday February 25th. No formal activities will be scheduled on Saturday afternoon. Look for a more detailed schedule next month. Everyone is welcome to attend. The only cost will be for motel room and individual meals. Participants are welcome to attend for all or part of the retreat.



Motel rooms and R.V. spaces are limited. A reduced room rate of \$65 per night is available for participants. Making room reservations will be your responsibility. Call 432/371-2541 to make reservations. Tell them you are with the Big Bend Mission Retreat. Scholarships for the expenses are available, contact the vicar. Please plan to attend.

## Mary and Joseph get New Stable

Jerry Yarbrough constructed and donated a new stable for the crèche at St. James' in memory of Jack Probst. The figures for



the crèche were donated by Jack and Judy Probst in 2005. Thank you Jerry for your thoughtful gift. It is very likely to provide shelter for Mary and Joseph for years to come.

"Joy is our portion in His fellowship. Joy goes with confidence and creativity. It is His joy, and that is not a small joy or a repressed joy. It is a robust joy. For nothing less than joy can sustain us in the kingdom rightness that possesses us, which truly is a weighty and powerful thing to bear. It is not for nothing that Mother Teresa of Calcutta required that her Sisters of Charity be people who smile."

- Dallas Willard  
*The Divine Conspiracy*

## Archbishop of Canterbury Christmas Sermon

Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, preached on Christmas day about “The poorest deserve the best.” The entire text of his sermon can be found at [www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sermons\\_speeches/061225.htm](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sermons_speeches/061225.htm). Here are some excerpts from his timely and thoughtful message.



“Three days ago in Bethlehem, I was holding a new born baby in my arms. He had been abandoned by his mother, found by the side of the road and taken into the St Vincent Creche, attached to Holy Family Hospital – along with dozens of other children who had been similarly abandoned, usually because they’d been born to single mothers in what’s often still a fiercely patriarchal and puritanical society. But other stories from the crèche and the wards remind you of some of the even bigger challenges of the region.

“And what stuck in my mind and I’m sure the minds of my colleagues was a remark made by Dr Robert Tabash, the medical director as we stood over an incubator in the intensive ward. All of this was important, he said, simply because ‘the poorest deserve the best’ (I promised I would quote him today by name; it’s the least I can do to give him the honour he merits). ‘The poorest deserve the best’: when you hear that, I wonder if you can take in just how revolutionary it is. They do not deserve what’s left over when the more prosperous have had their fill, or what can be patched together on a minimal budget as some sort of damage limitation. And they don’t ‘deserve’ the best because they’ve worked for it and everyone agrees they’ve earned it. They deserve it simply because their need is what it is and because where human dignity is least obvious it’s most important to make a fuss about it. And – to put it as plainly as possible – this is probably the most radically unique and new thing that Christmas itself brings into the world.

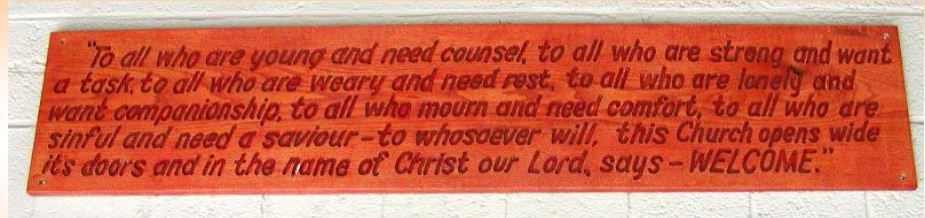
“Humanity itself suffers from poverty, the moral and imaginative poverty that time and again reproduces the same patterns of fear and violence.”

## Worshippers Turn out for Christmas Services

Despite the unusual coinciding of Christmas eve and the 4th Sunday of Advent this year, worshippers attended both morning and evening services. Many thanks to everyone who helped make the churches festive for Christmas. The time for the transition in decorations was short, but you did a great job. Thanks also to the choir at St. Paul’s, to the providers of eggnog, and to everyone else who helped make five Big Bend Mission services in one day go off without a hitch.



**Last Month’s Question:** Where is this sign located?



**Answer:** This sign is located over the main entrance to St. James’s Church in Alpine.

**This Month’s Question:** Who was St. Valentine?



### Hard Questions

Do you hold other people to higher standards than yourself? This is a common human failing. In my work with horse industry personnel, job seekers and employers complain about each other’s short comings all the time. Usually the complaints come from someone not meeting someone else’s expectations. Someone didn’t keep their promises, over stated their abilities, or treated someone else with impatience and disrespect. These problems frequently boil down to expectations being unrealistic. Too often we expect others to be faultless while tolerating all sorts of weaknesses in ourselves. When we expect other people to be perfect and are confronted with their weaknesses, we get frustrated, angry, and disappointed. When my clients complain about each other, I tell them they have a choice. Either they can accept and prepare for the reality that people are not perfect, or they can spend their lives being frustrated, angry, and disappointed. I suggest that they give up the expectation that human relationships will go smoothly, start expecting bumps in the road, and prepare themselves to handle the bumps in the road more effectively. The best way to handle human weakness is to expect it and to make it our life’s work to enable others to improve on their weaknesses, not to complain about them - Seth



“I wish I had the answer to that, Fred.”

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