HOLY WAITING
The Rev’d Lauren McDonald

On Christmas Eve we will hear Isaiah’s words, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined." The prophet Isaiah is preaching words of hope to people in a very troubled time. They have waited a long time for the promise of joy. So, too, we live in a very troubled time, and we are also waiting.

Most of us do not enjoy waiting. We hate to wait on cars driving like snails in front of us. We hate to wait in line at stores, and so we impatiently scan the other lines to see if another one is shorter. We hate to wait in doctor’s offices or for test results or for summer vacation to arrive.

Advent is the beginning of the Christian new year. And yet, it doesn’t start with fireworks and parties. Instead, it begins when the days are shortest, with a time of waiting, of preparation. Waiting for the light to return. Waiting for the child to be born. Waiting for the promise of joy. It’s a time when we simultaneously wait expectantly for the birth of the Son of God and anticipate his coming again. It’s a time for sitting still and reflecting on who we are as Christians and how we can make space once again in our hearts for the coming of the Christ child.

Instead of embracing this time of waiting, we tend to fill our time with frenetic activity. We shop and eat and go to parties, and shop and cook and travel from place to place and eat and shop until, on Christmas Day, we drop with exhaustion. In the darkest time of the year, when the seeds and bulbs are buried in the ground, waiting through the cold and dark until they emerge with new growth in the spring, we run ourselves ragged so that we don’t have to notice that we are waiting. Instead of being still and listening and looking inside to see where we need to grow, we fill our time with productivity so that we don’t have to get too close to the dark waiting spaces inside us. Being still is too uncomfortable.

In her book, When the Heart Waits, Sue Monk Kidd tells a story about going on retreat to a monastery and observing a monk sitting perfectly still. When she later asked him how he could bear sitting there doing nothing, he replied, "When you’re waiting, you’re not doing nothing. You’re doing the most important something there is. You’re allowing your soul to grow up. If you can’t be still and wait, you can’t become what God created you to be" [page 22].

God is calling us to wait this Advent. To wait on the birth of a child. To wait on the return of the risen Lord. To wait and listen to our souls as they burrow deep in the winter soil and receive the nutrients they need to emerge again, a little farther along on the spiritual journey. This season, may we all make peace with waiting in the darkness, so that when we see the great light, we will be ready to rejoice!
Pilgrimage to the Past
Anne Conkling

Visitors to Williamsburg include the serious historian, excited, energetic fifth graders on a field trip, happy honeymooners, alumni from our very distinguished college, antique lovers who regularly visit specific rooms or pieces of furniture, and perhaps, most poignant, are those with a real and lasting connection to our early American beginnings.

At Bruton Parish, we daily welcome seekers searching for God — meaning and truth and peace — high value staples in a troubled world. Often these seekers are descendants of colonial residents, connected to our church and town generations ago. We help them touch a piece of themselves by seeing and hearing and, just for a little while, walking in the same space their relatives walked and breathed and prayed. This is the story of one such experience.

On November 9, 2017, there was a usual request from a visitor to visit a specific grave in the churchyard — in this case Catherine Blaikley, who is near the tower, buried close to two of her grandchildren. The guide involved knew something of the family history and the conversation went from Catherine’s life, career, property and legacy, all the way to the fact that her prayerbook is in the collection at Colonial Williamsburg, and perhaps these extended great-granddaughters might like to see it. A sweet new friendship was ignited, conversation turned into action, and 25 months later, three sisters made their pilgrimage to Williamsburg. Coming from Alabama, Illinois and Virginia, they were welcomed by historians at the Research department, viewed the prayer book to which their sixth great-great-grandmother turned for solace, and made a sure and certain connection to her life, her faith, and her story.

Context is critical to any script, whether it is family, Biblical or historic. Midwives in Colonial America were highly valuable, important, well-known members of a community. Trusted with new life, they could be privy to all sorts of information, as they attended a mother before, during and after delivery, and were often in the homes, churches, courts and funerals. In the case of our Catherine, she was a local, born about 1695, married on September 11, 1718 to a merchant who also was a watchmaker, and set up housekeeping right across from the church, on the corner of Nassau and Duke of Gloucester.

She probably started working as a midwife about three years into widowhood. This was an acceptable extension of her female role as home maker, nurse, healer and wise woman. As a widow, she acted as a feme sole — could incur debt, participate in court cases, own land and property, be taxed, and interact in the commercial world. Prior to her husband William’s death, she was a feme covert, covered with the protection of a man, and a reflection only. English law and tradition were very clear about a woman’s place in the jigsaw puzzle of life. She also took in lodgers of the better sort during public times, and managed to sustain a high standard of living, evidenced by the inventory of the house.

Her death notice in the Virginia Gazette describes her as an “eminent midwife, who delivered upwards of 3000 babies”, quite a feat in our little town.

One of her own children lived to marry and produce children, so descendants abound in many states, particularly in the South.

Catherine’s life and work were a source of great pride for her family, and generations treasured her. Esther Welch Adams was thrilled when part of her family settled in Fredericksburg, Virginia in 1976. Their home was in a subdivision named Ferry Farm, after the early home of George Washington. Esther and her mother passionately researched their family’s past. Their efforts became a book called The Tishomingo County Connection. Through the years the family made many pilgrimages to Williamsburg, always coming to Bruton, where they visited the grave sites of both Catherine and William, and were drawn to the Blaikley Durfee house and gardens.

This 2019 visit was a joyful day-long adventure, and in the process we followed Esther’s directions to William Blaikley’s grave. The name is no longer readable, thanks to years of acid rain, but the date is correct, as is the location. Thanks are due for the assistance and hospitality of Linda Rowe, Carl Childs, Doug Mayo and Marianne Martin and staff at the Rockefeller Library. They welcomed the family, shared time and answers and the prayer book, along with a deed for land purchased by William from John Custis. Their hospitality and expertise made the day!
The sisters graciously donated a copy of the book to the Research department, hoping to assist future seekers in their journey to family connections.

Catherine’s daughter Mary left behind a piece that some of us would dearly love to locate. As with most Colonial ladies, needlework was an important skill, and in 1740 she completed a sampler. About the turn of the 20th century, one of the cousins with the last name Johnston contacted the College of William and Mary about the sampler, and it was mentioned in the William and Mary Quarterly. Two researchers from Colonial Williamsburg had reached out to members of the family, looking for the sampler’s whereabouts. If it can be located, it would be one of the earliest pieces from Virginia. Hopes are alive that someone in the family now spread across the country might have it tucked in a closet or hidden away in a drawer!

We are delighted to welcome the three sisters from three states as new members of Friends of Bruton! Our worldwide congregation grows steadily. While our church was the center of the town and lives of countless people since 1715, as we begin our 305th year, we constantly share hospitality, faith, history and a living connection to the beginning of the United States of America.
This question is becoming more and more frequent, both from our myriad visitors and newer members who are expecting to see familiar pink and purple candles. Part of the answer is tradition, a powerful word in Episcopal history. For many years, Bruton used only Sarum colors on the altar—red, white and blue. Sarum refers back to the Sarum plain in old England and Salisbury Cathedral. Historically speaking, and especially speaking in Colonial terms, white candles were the purest, finest and most expensive. Colonial candles could be made from tallow or berries, which varied in color and could be very smoky.

White candles came only from the spermaceti oil found in the head of the spermaceti whale, and capturing the oil became a profitable part of the whaling industry. As candles bring light, they also represent Christ as the light of the world. It follows that only the best and purest of any item on the altar would be associated with Christ. Some denominations use pink and purple candles in Advent wreaths. Often churches add a fifth candle in the center, and it is always white. This one is the Christ candle, and is lit only on Christmas day.

The wreath is a circle, symbolizing eternity. Evergreens stand for eternal life in Christ. Herbs of many sorts are added, and many have Biblical reference and meaning. Our herbs generally come from the parish herb garden at the Parish House. As time goes on, you can count on new traditions and new meaning added to this centuries old custom.
THE HYMNS WE SING - ADVENT: THE SEASON OF WAITING

Jim Morford, Chair

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus.
Born to set Thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou Art,
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart."

One of life's earliest and most lasting lessons is waiting. At first waiting to be fed or changed. Waiting for answers. Waiting for the phone to ring. Waiting for a spouse. In the military it was hurry up and wait. As children, the wait for Christmas to arrive was interminable.

The hymn, "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," was written by Charles Wesley. It looks forward to Jesus' Second Coming. It begins, "Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free." Wesley looked forward to the time when Jesus would come again to set us free from fear and sin.

Wesley knew what it meant for people not to be free. When he was about thirty years old, he traveled to America on a mission, where he saw slavery in its rawest form. He recorded in his journal that he had seen parents give their child a slave to torment. Wesley was so shaken by the evil of slavery that he nearly had a nervous breakdown. It wasn't long before he returned to England.

Wesley was criticized by some for not remaining in America to join the fight against slavery, but his weapons were his sermons and his hymns. For the next several decades, Westley's sermons and hymns lent their power to the efforts to make people free — free from slavery — free from fear — free from sin.

From a somewhat different perspective, author Rebecca VanDeMark wrote: "(Charles) Wesley, who is considered one of the greatest hymn writers of all time and said to have written 8,989 hymns in total, composed some of the most memorable hymns of the church including, Come, though Long Expected Jesus. The hymn was based on Charles' prayer and concern for the situation of orphans in 1744 and his intent that people remember the significance of Advent in the midst of the Christmas season. The hymn was so popular that it was reprinted almost 20 different times throughout his life. It is a prayer that begs the Lord to be among us — the prayer and cry of all of those in waiting seasons. While most hymns from the Christmas season tell parts of the Christmas story, Wesley focused on the concept of waiting and the cry of many hearts for the Lord to "come" into all of our lives. This hymn calls out to the longing in my own heart — the deepest parts of my heart and shares the hope of this season we are entering — the beautiful baby that came as Savior of the world.

If you are like me, dear friends, in a season of waiting with no exact end date, I hope that you will take heart in Jesus; our long expected Jesus, who has come and is with us,”

* Rebecca VanDeMark is an author. Among her several books is December Caravan, which is a collection of short stories sharing the hope of an ever-present God.

Known as The Lily portrait, the painting is said to date from 1749, when Wesley was 42, and is generally attributed to the prolific and well-regarded British portraitist Thomas Hudson. It is the only painting of him as a young man. It now hangs in the museum at the New Room, Bristol.

A PRAYER FOR OUR FRIENDS OF BRUTON

Amazing and wonderful things can occur when we keep our fragile lives wrapped in prayer. Whether it is the Lord's Prayer or the early sixth century Jesus Prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.) or a myriad of other possible prayers, each one brings a benefit and a sense of blessing and calm. It can be as simple as, Lord, have mercy!

The prayer selected for this issue is Advent Prayer from the Church of England.

God Our Father, the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of Your Son. Though Mary was afraid, she responded to Your call with joy. Help us, whom You call to serve You, to share like her God's love and healing. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. Amen.

Visit bit.ly/friendsprayers online if you have a prayer request. Your confidential requests will be forwarded to our clergy, who will lift you up in prayer daily for a month.
MALCOLM KEEPING, UK VISITOR TO BRUTON
Jim Morford

Of the thousands of tourists who stop by Bruton Parish Church each year, quite a few hail from the United Kingdom. It is a great pleasure to visit with them. I often tell our state-side visitors, who marvel at our venerable old church, that visitors from England are likely to observe that we have here "a rather quaint and lovely modern chapel". Most enjoy visiting this decedent of the Church of England.

When Malcolm Keeping and his wife recently visited Bruton, he was quite taken with our story and, upon his return home, he wrote a brief history for his parish magazine. Mr. Keeping's parish, St Nicolas Cranleigh in Surrey in UK, traces its origins to c. 1170. Reprinted here is Mr. Keeping's article which, with only a couple of minor inaccuracies, is a wonderful tribute to Bruton Parish Church.

An interesting footnote is that on the north side of a pillar at St Nicolas Cranleigh is a 12th century carving known as the "Cheshire Cat" reputed to have been the inspiration for the character in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland".

BRUTON PARISH CHURCH WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA
Malcolm Keeping (reprinted with permission)

If it were not located where it is, but in a small village in England, like Bruton in Somerset after which the parish was named, there would be nothing particularly special about this parish church. It was established in 1674, not very long after the British colonised Jamestown on the coast, with a brick building completed in 1683. The present building was constructed in a standard cruciform structure, between 1711 -1715.

This was shortly after Williamsburg became the capital of the Colony of Virginia — still under British rule, of course — and the plans were drawn up by the Governor at the time who needed to ensure there were pews for himself, the council and burgesses, as all persons in public office were required to attend church on Sundays. Those box pews are still in situ, but I think the most remarkable feature of the place is that four future Presidents of the United States of America had personal pews at that time — George Washington (first - who reputedly never smiled!), Thomas Jefferson (third), James Madison (fourth) and James Monroe (fifth). Their names still appear on pews, although due to continuing restoration, I can't guarantee they are in their original positions!

These men were to be among the instigators of the Declaration of Independence, following outrage at King George's imposition of taxes to fund the Exchequer after expensive wars in Europe — "no taxation without representation" — particularly the Stamp Act in 1765 and that on tea resulting, of course, in the Boston Tea Party.

Bruton Church was, therefore, at the centre of the turmoil during the Revolution but, in the later days of that period, the state capital was moved to Richmond, resulting in a loss of all the prominent citizens, with their wealth. The church was also required to sell all its glebe lands, further reducing income, leading to deterioration through lack of maintenance.

Next came the Civil War, when the church was used as a hospital for wounded confederate soldiers, causing more damage to the fabric, but from 1880 it began to recover. In 1903 the Reverend W.A.R. Goodwin arrived and energetically embarked on a period of renovation, but it was not until his second incumbency in 1926 that the matter progressed dramatically under this visionary minister. His dream was to restore Williamsburg to its colonial origins, to ensure that the scores of buildings that had featured in the life of the colony and the founding of the nation were not forgotten, but could be preserved for future generations.

The millionaire John D. Rockefeller Junior had owned a holiday home in Williamsburg for some time, when it had developed into a quiet, not particularly attractive provincial town. Goodwin shared his dream with him and managed to persuade him to put up five million dollars for a feasibility study and work on some of the original buildings. Rockefeller was soon enthused with the project and eventually provided a total of seventy million dollars, taking a very close interest in all the activities of the restoration.

Bruton Church was part of that work, having a complete restoration as an authentic replica of its original splendour and today it is a vibrant parish church, with four services on Sundays and a full diary of events. These include frequent organ recitals with its own two accomplished organists and visiting players from nearby churches — and nearby in America can mean 100 miles way! There is clearly no lack of funding now, as when we were there in September they had just installed a new organ at a cost of two million dollars, the console of which is capable of being moved from a normal position at the side to the centre of the chancel to be visible to the audiences for these recitals.

This article was prompted by the history of the church, and has only scratched the surface, but the history of Colonial Williamsburg itself is a fascinating story which is worth exploring!
Friends of Bruton Launches Oral History Project
Jim Morford

In keeping with its mission to promote and preserve the spiritual and historic heritage of Bruton Parish Church, the Friends of Bruton Committee has initiated a project to capture the memories of long-time members of Bruton. In what is hoped will become an all-church project, a working group coordinated by Bill Armbruster is developing the project. Group members Linda Rowe and Anne Conkling are lending their expertise gleaned from their experiences with similar projects. The project is also benefiting from the enthusiastic participation of William & Mary student Azana Carr, who is sharing her experience with oral history programs.

A preliminary list of nearly three dozen people who are either long-time members of Bruton or have in depth knowledge of the church and the community has been developed. The 17th, 18th and 19th century histories of our parish are preserved in the written record. While those resources also exist for the modern history of the church, we will be adding an oral history by capturing the recollections of those who have experienced the life of the church for the past several decades.

The project will involve interviews to be conducted by parish members who will visit with those who agree to participate and make audio recordings. The recordings will be transcribed and interviewees will be given the opportunity to review, edit or redo the recording. In some cases it may be desirable to do a return visit and make a video of an especially interesting recollection that would lend itself to a video.

Recordings and transcriptions will be preserved and become a part of the permanent historic record of Bruton Parish Church. The records will be especially helpful if, at some time in the future, there may be an effort to write a definitive history of Bruton. The recordings may also serve to stimulate articles for The Bruton Fount. Other uses might include presentations in the Heritage Center and on the website.

The coordinating committee is developing the order in which letters of invitation will be sent to prospective candidates for interviews. The letters will spell out the details of the project. As Bill Armbruster writes in the invitation letter, "We are excited about this project and what it means to the preservation of the history of Bruton Parish Church."

Cornerstone Renewal
As the end of the year rapidly approaches, it’s a good time to check up on your tax deductible charitable donations. If you have not already done so, be sure to renew your membership in the Cornerstone Circle. Cornerstone members help to fund Friends of Bruton projects such as the Oral History project discussed above. It’s easy to make your tax deductible donation. Go online to our website at www.brutonparish.org, and click the green GIVE button. Choose FOB-Cornerstone Member under Select Fund.

If you wish to become a first-time member, with your initial contribution of at least $100 you will receive a Bruton Parish Weathervane lapel pin. The weathervane is the symbol of Friends of Bruton. It is proudly worn by Cornerstone Circle members to show their support for the mission of Our Worldwide Congregation to preserve and promote the spiritual and historic heritage of Bruton Parish Church. To make your donation by check, please make it payable to Bruton Parish Church, include Cornerstone Membership in the memo, and mail it to the church.

Holiday Music at Bruton

December 10 @ 8pm
A Journey Through Advent: Bruton Choirs & Orchestra
to include Ave maris stella by Cecilia McDowall

Doors open at 7:30pm, no ticket required (a freewill offering will be gratefully received).

Parking is permitted on the Duke of Gloucester during any service, concert or recital.

Historical Organ Recital
W&M’s Wren Chapel @ 10am
Saturday, December 7 - Rebecca Davy
Monday, December 9 - Norman Elton
Tuesday, December 10 - Rebecca Davy
Thursday, December 12 - Rebecca Davy
Friday, December 13 - Thomas Marshall
Saturday, December 14 - Rebecca Davy
Monday, December 16 - Rebecca Davy
Tuesday, December 17 - Norman Elton
Wednesday, December 18 - Rebecca Davy
Thursday, December 19 - Rebecca Davy
Friday, December 20 - Rebecca Davy
Saturday, December 21 - Thomas Marshall
Monday, December 23 - Norman Elton
Tuesday, December 24 - Rebecca Davy
Thursday, December 26 - Rebecca Davy
Friday, December 27 - Thomas Marshall
December 29
9:15 & 11:15am Services
Christmas Lessons & Carols
Friends of Bruton Resource Advisors

The Rev’d Jan Brown, Deacon, Bruton Parish

Colin Campbell, Former President & CEO
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (Emeritus)

Jo Anne Coy, Charter & Cornerstone Circle Member

Rebecca Davy, Bruton Music Director & Organist

Marty Easton, Bruton Development Director,
Cornerstone Circle Member, Bruton Member

Channing Hall, III, Cornerstone Circle Member,
Attorney, Bruton Member

Marcia Hibbitts, Bruton Guide, Cornerstone Circle Member,
Bruton Member

Valarie Holmes, Colonial Williamsburg
Interpreter

Dr. James Horn, President
Jamestown Rediscovery

Dr. William Kelso, Director of Research
Jamestown Rediscovery (Emeritus)

Virginia Lee, Daughters of the American Revolution,
Bruton Member

Albert Louer, Charter Member, Cornerstone Circle Member
Bruton Member

Dr. Carl Lounsbury, Senior Architectural Historian
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (Emeritus)

The Rev’d Lauren McDonald, Associate Rector
Outreach & Women’s Ministry, Bruton Parish Church

The Hon. T. Montgomery "Monty" Mason
Senate of Virginia

The Rev’d Dr. Daniel W. McClain
Associate Rector & Canterbury Chaplain

Joe Poole, III, Director of Special Gifts
Colonial Williamsburg

W. Taylor Reveley, III, Former President
The College of William & Mary

Susan Riggs, Manuscripts and Rare Books Librarian
at Swem Library, William & Mary & Williamsburg
Historic Records Association Archivist

Linda Rowe, Historian, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
(Retired), Charter Member, Cornerstone Circle Member,
Bruton Member

Scott M. Spence, Architect, Bruton Member

Joseph L. Spruill, Sons of the American Revolution,
Bruton Member

The Rev’d Joshua Stephens, Associate Rector
Family Ministry, Bruton Parish Church

Friends of Bruton Committee

The Rev’d Christopher L. Epperson, Rector

Bill Armbruster, Guide, Cornerstone Circle Member, Bruton Member

Donald Bogus, Charter Member, Cornerstone Circle Member, Bruton Member

Isabel Burch, Cornerstone Circle Member, Bruton Member

Anne Conkling, Guide Trainer,
The Bruton Fount Editor, Bruton Member,

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William O. Kafes, Cornerstone Circle Member, Bruton Member

James C. Morford, Committee Chair,
Charter Member, Cornerstone Circle Member, Bruton Member

Linda Rowe, CW Historian (Retired), Charter Member,
Cornerstone Circle Member, Bruton Member

Bruton Parish Church

The Most Rev’d Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop

The Rt. Rev’d James "Jay" Magness
Bishop Diocesan Pro Tempore

The Rev’d Christopher L. Epperson, Rector

The Rev’d Dr. Daniel W. McClain
Associate Rector & Canterbury Chaplain

The Rev’d Lauren M. McDonald, Associate Rector
Mission & Women’s Ministries

The Rev’d Joshua P. Stephens
Associate Rector - Family Ministry

The Rev’d Jan Brown, Deacon