

Messenger

December 2023



Celebrate the birth of Christ! Advent offerings and Christmas Eve Service times listed inside.





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LOOKING WITH THANKSGIVING, TO THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

by *The Reverend Andrew T.P. Merrow, Rector*

Dear Friends,

As we prepare for Christmas this year we also will be preparing to thank our Youth Minister, Sue Cromer, and our Senior Associate to the Rector, Sara Palmer, both of whom at the end of December are finishing their ministries with us as they begin the next chapter of their work and life in the church. We will, of course, be collecting a purse for each of them to acknowledge their faithful and life-giving ministry in our midst.

Mother Sara has accepted a call to be the rector of All Souls Episcopal Church across the river in the Diocese of Washington. This parish is excited about growing in the Gospel and increasing their numbers as they rebuild (like all of us) after Covid. Sara's warmth and enthusiasm make her the ideal candidate to serve as their next rector.



After 11 years of working with our youth and documenting the beauty of God's creation and people through her exquisite photographs, we rejoice at the lasting impact that Sue has made not only on our young people but all of us. Sue and I have been in conversation about the timing of this transition since the spring. She is accepting an interim position at a nearby parish so we will still have her close by at least for the short term. Under Sue's guidance, our kids have grown closer to Jesus and to the church and for that we are all so very grateful.

We will honor both Sue and Sara, giving thanks for their ministries after the 10am service on December 17th. If you would like to donate please make checks payable to Saint Mary's marked "purse" or online. As a result of our need for all us to be gathered together to celebrate and give thanks, we will not have Wilderness Church on Sunday the 17th. Wilderness Church will be held on December 3rd and next on January 7th.

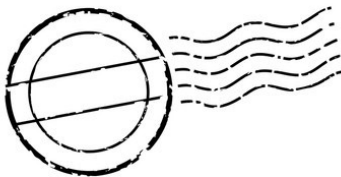
2023 has been the year of transition for clergy and staff at Saint Mary's. We will create the new position of Family and Youth Minister that Jackie has agreed to fill. I am so grateful that she is eager to bring her many gifts and talents to this new hybrid position, one that is normative to Episcopal parishes our size. That said, 2024 will need to be the year of strengthening volunteer lay leadership throughout our congregation. We each have gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ (the Church). The world more than ever needs the light of the Gospel to shine bright through our individual lives and through our collective witness as Saint Mary's. If you have not made a financial commitment for next year, please do. It is important for your individual relationship with God and corporately so that we can staff appropriately. We are committed to paying a living wage in very expensive North Arlington. I am also so grateful to Andrea and Holly who joined the staff taking the reins in administration and finance this year. Finally it is hard to believe that the Rev. Janettarose has been here only since August and ordained to the Priesthood in September. Her presence and leadership have already had a major impact in our common life together.

Sara and Sue are shining examples for all of us of ministers faithfully working for the harvest in God's vineyard knowing that God will not disappoint. As the old saying gets half right-the only constant in life is change. As Christians we also know that the other constant in life is God's faithfulness in all the changes and uncertainties of life.

Use the season of Advent to prepare not just for the birth of our Savior but to be reminded of the Risen Lord's constant presence working in and through us in all circumstances. And do make sure to be here to celebrate and say thank you on Sunday, December 17th after the 10am service.

Faithfully,

Andrew +



St. Mary's Episcopal Church
2609 North Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22207
November 19, 2023

Mother Sara bids us farewell on Christmas Eve

Dear St Mary's family,

I have really enjoyed my three and a half years with you. Thank you for all the kindness shown to my husband and me when we first arrived in May 2020 from Oxford, Ohio, in the middle of the pandemic. It was lovely to be able to move straight into the Rectory, filled with treats and basic foodstuffs, before finally moving into our own home in October 2020. I was glad to meet with many of you, masks on, outdoors, going for a walk or sitting outside even in cold weather, in order to get to know you! So many lovely people in the St Mary's community.

I enjoyed our services on Facebook live and our Bible studies. Wonderful when we could finally worship together in the church building! Thank you for your willingness to delve into the Scriptures; for some of you this was your first foray into reading God's Word. Joy!

I loved leading the three women's retreats up in Shrine Mont, teaching you how to walk the labyrinth and sharing our lives on a deeper level. Fun! It was encouraging to hear so many of your faith stories in the Forums about how God was working in your lives.

I have delighted in your children and teens, attending the Confirmation retreats, and teaching several classes. St Mary's has been blessed with so many young people committing their lives to Christ each year.

It has been lovely to engage with Santa Maria in Falls Church, our beloved sister congregation. So many of you have gotten involved, attending special events at Santa Maria like the Good Friday Stations of the Cross, and the Thanksgiving service and meal. It has been a joy for us at St Mary's to help with the food distribution the last three years; we now feed about 400 families twice per month!

Since my ministry at St Mary's would end in June 2024, I have been applying for various positions in the Dioceses of Virginia and Washington DC. I am deeply thankful to God that I have been called as the ninth Rector of All Souls, Washington DC. My husband and I are glad to be able to remain in our home and stay in this area. I will begin to serve at All Souls on January 2, 2024. My last Sunday at St Mary's will be Christmas Eve 2023.



Thanksgiving Day at Santa Maria

I thank God for the ways St Mary's has grown with so many new people over the past three plus years. May God continue to bless each one of you as we head into Advent, Christmas and the New Year. God is with us!

Warmly,

Mother Sara +

An Anthology for the Ages

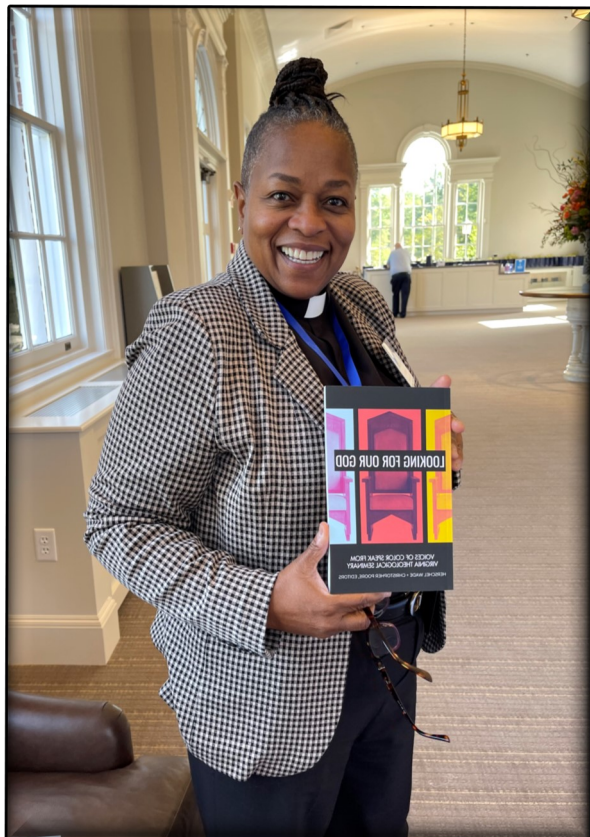
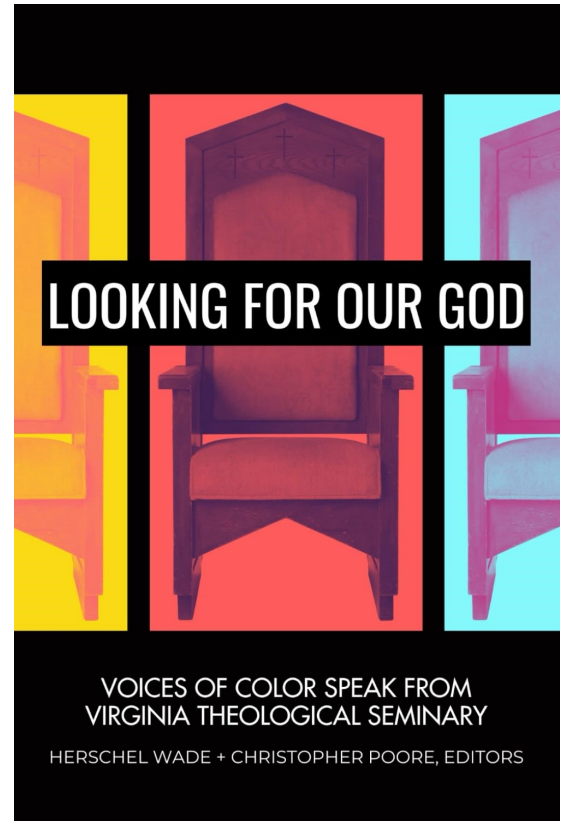
by *The Reverend Janettarose L. Greene*

Several months ago two of my erstwhile Virginia Theological Seminary classmates asked if I would consider contributing to a book they were thinking about putting together. I'm so glad I said yes. Classmates Herschel Wade and Christopher Poore served as the editors. The book is entitled, *Looking For Our God: Voices of Color Speak from Virginia Theological Seminary*.

Their objective was to create a space where students, staff, and faculty of color could express themselves fully and still be comfortable in the sacred space and rarefied air of Holy Hill without having to contort ourselves or our thoughts or feelings to meet unnecessary and oftentimes impossible standards.

My contribution starts on page 59, it is an exegetical remix on Jeremiah 31:31-34 and a popular 1980's song "The Rain." It was written with deep respect and reverence for my Old Testament professor Rev. Dr. Judy Fentress-Williams, who shared with me that the song "The Rain" by Oran "Juice" Jones was not only a classic but one of her all time favorites.

This book is about belonging, acceptance, and transformation of not only people but also the institution known as VTS.



Looking for Our God, not a monolith, it is a rich and layered mosaic of voices, opinions, style, and perspectives; all artfully arranged and simmering around the belief and celebration of our Triune God.

A New Covenant | Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the LORD', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

St. Mary's Visits the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations in DC

by Mark Lagon, Ph.d.



Photo of parishioners with Mother Sara Palmer at Office of Government Relations

On Saturday October 21st, a couple of folks from Saint Mary's (namely Mother Sara, Mark Lagon, Marjorie Barclay, and Kevin Ahearn) paid a visit to the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations in DC to learn a little about the work they do. We met with two of the staff there, whose names were Lindsey Delks and Susie Faria. The Office's job is to encourage members of Congress to pass bills that reflect resolutions passed by the Episcopal Church's General Convention, which is held every three years. They also operate the Episcopal Public Policy Network, which is dedicated to keeping Episcopalians informed about legislation of interest to the Episcopal Church, and providing resources that allow those of us who don't work on Capitol Hill to get involved in getting such legislation passed.

If you'd like to know more about the work they do, you can check out their web page at

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/office-government-relations/>

The National Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations was as informative as it was hospitable. The dialogue in a historic building of religious organizations next to the Supreme Court and across the street from the U.S. Capitol was inspiring and indicative of rich opportunities for witness to public causes of justice for Mother Sara Palmer, Kevin Ahearn, Marjorie Barclay and the Mark Lagon.

Susan Faria and Lindsey Delks of OGR painted a picture of their office's role engaging the Congress and Federal Government on issues prioritized in resolutions from General Convention. They made clear how with a lean team they cover a broad swath of domestic and international public policy issues (evidently, as the metaphor goes, the light-weight boxer punching far above their weight class). Observing the white board in the OGR conference room of issues the staff cover in their portfolios – from access to voting to human trafficking - drove home the breadth and importance of the office's agenda informing policy-makers.

The St. Mary's group engaged the OGR staff on specific issues that are priorities in their advocacy and might be in our own. Most notable were issues (grounded in General Convention resolutions) of criminal justice and the differential treatment of groups based on race.

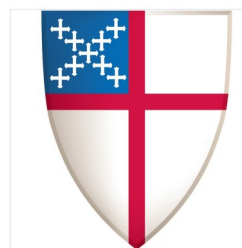
Faria and Delks raised particular opportunities for prayerful Episcopalians in advocacy to members of Congress as constituents, and as "ambassadors" within church and local communities for issues of social

"The Office's job is to encourage members of Congress to pass bills that reflect resolutions passed by the Episcopal Church's General Convention, which is held every three years."

justice. One takeaway was how Faria and Delks stressed that all legislators, irrespective of party, ideology or inclination to serve the dignity of “the least of these,” need to hear from churchgoers on issues to motivate them to move those causes higher on their priority list amidst a wide and messy array of issues and thousands of bill introduced. Sometimes simply noting the existence of some other legislator’s worthy bill to co-sponsor and hence increase the chance of getting to the floor and passage is a significant achievement for Episcopalian citizens. Whether more or less experienced in Washington advocacy, to a person, members of the group were struck by opportunities to address the priorities of our own church community (racial justice and pluralism, stewardship of the planet in face of climate change, and beyond.)



“Sometimes simply noting the existence of some other legislator’s worthy bill to co-sponsor and hence increase the chance of getting to the floor and passage is a significant achievement for Episcopalian citizens.”



Coat, Mitten and Glove Drive to keep our Neighbors Warm this Winter

St. Mary's is collecting new and gently used coats, mittens and gloves for donation to warm our neighbors during the expected cold winter. By **Sunday December 10th**, we will accept donations of men's, women's and children's coats, mittens and gloves. The mitten tree, racks and bins will be available in the lower level for your donations. The recipients are our sister church, Santa Maria, PathForward who support the unhoused and those in permanent supportive housing, and VHC Pediatrics who serve children from families which are at or below 200% of the Federal poverty level. Thank you for supporting this work.



Please share the warmth.

OUTREACH REPORT

from Shalom Orphans Center



October 16, 2023

Dear Lynn and St. Mary's Arlington Out-Reach Committee

Re: Report and Appreciation

Greetings in Jesus name! I pray you are all doing well.

On behalf of Shalom Orphans Rescue Center, Kenya, I hereby write to express our heartfelt gratitude for the immense support we received from St. Mary's Arlington Episcopal Church. May God bless you so much. I also register my heartfelt gratitude to the Rev. Sarah Palmer whom I shared with the projects I initiated in my community in Kenya to share God's love with the vulnerable. She prayed with me and for the project and shared with me about St. Mary's Outreach support. She also collected clothes for our children from the congregation. May God bless the Rev. Sara.

We received a total of \$5500.

This sum of money enabled us to buy food stuff, toiletries that will support the program up to December 2023. We were also able to construct a two-doors pit latrine and a separate bathroom. The essential amenities have saved the children from going to the bush to relieve themselves. The latrine is very beneficial because they are now living in a conducive environment free from cholera and some diseases that can be found in dirty environments.

We also bought school uniforms for ten children and they are happy and feeling blessed. Thank you all for putting smiles on the vulnerable childrens' faces.

The grant has been used a means of spreading the gospel of love in our community. It has made a difference in the lives of the children. They are able to take three meals a day. The children's academic performance has improved because they go to school happy and ready to learn knowing that they have something for lunch. Their self-esteem has been developed. All these we give glory to God.

Words may not express our deepest appreciation, but we are humbled and grateful for the support. We are sending our prayers and love to St. Mary's Arlington congregation, outreach committee, and Lynn. We look forward to continue being in partnership in God's mission.

The Reverend Carolyne Adhola

On behalf of Shalom Orphans Center



Living out our Faith at Home this Advent

by Jackie Ly, Family Formation Minister

Nestled at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains sits my parents' little Christmas tree farm, where friends and neighbors come by after Thanksgiving to select and cut their own tree. Each tree takes a minimum of 7-10 years to grow to about 6 or 8 feet tall, and they are very susceptible to environmental threats (pests, weather, and our favorites, bear and deer!) so you could say that this is a labor of love and patience for my family. Every year, I stroll through the rows of Turkish Fir, Korean Fir, Blue and Serbian Spruce, White Pine and about fifteen other varieties wondering which one I might cut down and decorate in my own home. Because of the increasingly small selection, and because I know just how much work goes into caring for every tree, I feel a sort of call to pick the trees that have some "character"- it might have a crooked trunk, some yellowing needles, or even some missing branches because of our favorite wild friends! In many customers' eyes, my tree might be overlooked, even criticized for its imperfections, but I choose it because it is beautifully and wonderfully made, just like each and every one of us imperfect children of God. As we prepare for the coming of our savior, let us never forget how beloved we are, flaws and all.



"I know just how much work goes into caring for every tree..."

Here are some ways that you and your family might prepare for Jesus' birth at home this season:

Make an Advent wreath (from a St. Mary's Kit or from materials you have at home).

The four candles around the wreath represent hope, peace, joy and love, and the fifth candle in the middle represents **Christ, the light of the world.**

Think of ways that you can be a blessing to those in our community.

Remember those in need by bringing in a coat or gloves during our collection drive, show kindness to your neighbors, and remember them in your prayers before dinner or before bed.

If you decide to decorate a tree at home, read this blessing:

*"God who created the birds of the air, the fish in the sea, the stars in the sky, and the trees in the ground, bless this tree as we decorate it and make it a joyful symbol in our home. May its branches remind us of the shade and shelter You provide for us and for many creatures. May its trunk remind us of Your strength. May its lights bring us peace. May we remember Your gift to us this season, the gift of baby Jesus." Amen**

**From "Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home" by Traci Smith*

A Special Advent Calendar

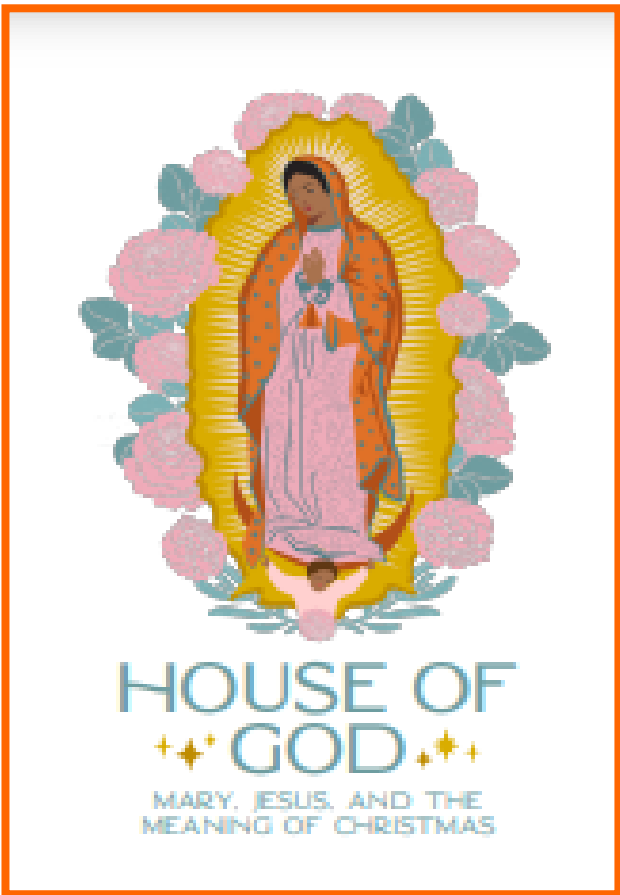
Ideas for Living Joyfully: Forty Days of Celtic Advent & the Twelve Days of Christmas 2023-2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Practice Grace. No need to do them all or every day. Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart! <i>The Nativity journey – Place Mary and Joseph in one corner of the room; the wise men in another corner; the shepherds, another. Keep Jesus hidden. Set up the stable with animals, and enjoy helping each figure journey to Bethlehem.</i></p>			<p>November 15 Visit a beautiful spot in or near your home. How is God preparing you for Christ's birth?</p>	<p>16 Call a friend & tell them one thing you appreciate about them.</p>	<p>17 Give thanks for one thing you enjoy in your work</p>	<p>18 Spend the evening without screens or internet. What will you do?</p>
<p>19 Say Hi to a person standing on the fringes. Move Mary & Joseph closer.</p>	<p>20 Take a loved one on a walk, arm in arm or hand in hand.</p>	<p>21 Smile at people you see, whether you know them or not, and enjoy their smile!</p>	<p>22 CS Lewis Day Go on a nature walk and look for God's creatures. Aslan Lives!!</p>	<p>23 List what you are thankful for, tell God, tell each other. Start a gratitude list.</p>	<p>24 Make a meal for someone in need or visit someone who is lonely</p>	<p>25 Give someone you love a long hug</p>
<p>26 Welcome a new person at church. Move Mary & Joseph closer</p>	<p>27 Pick up trash you see in your neighborhood.</p>	<p>28 Turn off recorded music and sing some favorite songs with loved ones</p>	<p>29 Write a gratitude note to a family member or friend, hide it in their pocket or lunch</p>	<p>30 Write notes to singles and elders, encouraging them, so they know they are not alone.</p>	<p>December 1 Color a picture for a child in your life</p>	<p>2 Take a break from the internet and look out the window. Just look. What do you see?</p>
<p>3 Kneel down when you greet & talk to a child Four-week Advent begins</p>	<p>4 Take a friend to tea (or coffee), leave the smartphone in your bag</p>	<p>5 Color a mandala. Pray for someone as you do. Move the Wise Men closer.</p>	<p>6 Send a loved one on a treasure hunt Today. Give them clues & giggle a lot</p>	<p>7 Say Hi to people behind the counters. Wish them a good day.</p>	<p>8 Notice the eye-color of people close to you and marvel at their beauty</p>	<p>9 Light candles for whatever place or situation breaks your heart and pray.</p>
<p>10 Move Mary & Joseph closer. What journey are you on?</p>	<p>11 Take a walk and enjoy the Christmas lights</p>	<p>12 Share some favourite music that makes you smile</p>	<p>13 Enjoy grilled cheese and tomato soup or another favorite comfort dish</p>	<p>14 Read a story out loud to your friend, child, parent, or spouse</p>	<p>15 Notice the really small things in life, like bugs or dust bunnies</p>	<p>16 Mail a note to someone. Describe how they are gift to you!</p>
<p>17 The "O" Antiphons: Wisdom (Isa. 11:2-3) & Laudate Sunday Read Mary's Song: Luke 1:46-55. Light a pink candle for JOY</p>	<p>18 Lord (Isa 33:22) Ask God how he wants to be the Lord of your life. Listen. Move the Wise Men closer.</p>	<p>19 Root of Jesse (Isa 11:10) Write memories of God's faithfulness in your life on paper ornaments & hang them on the tree.</p>	<p>20 Key of David (Rev. 3:7) What door of your life do you need God to open & bring grace? God has the key to every door.</p>	<p>21 Morning Star (Isa 9:2) At dawn, pray for God's light to shine in a place or situation breaking your heart.</p>	<p>22 King of Nations (Isa 9:6) Listen to "For Unto us a Child is Born" What does it mean for Christ to come again? Move Mary & Joseph almost to the stable</p>	<p>23 Emmanuel (Isa 7:14) How is God with you? How are you God's presence to others? Sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (all the verses!)</p>
<p>24 Christmas Eve Where have you experienced God's Joy this Advent? Mary & Joseph enter the stable.</p>	<p>The Birth! Adopt someone who needs a family or be adopted if you need one. <i>Put Jesus in the Nativity; add the Shepherds, too.</i></p>	<p>26 St. Stephen's Day The First Martyr Genesis 1:3 The Twelve Days of Christmas Begins!</p>	<p>27 Isaiah 58:10 Bring flowers to someone who needs their day brightened.</p>	<p>28 Feast of the Holy Innocents Matt. 19:14 Pray for children around the world</p>	<p>29 Isa 60:19 Notice the really small things in life. The Magi move closer.</p>	<p>30 Ps 43:3 Write a list of who and what you are thankful for from 2023.</p>
<p>31 Matt 5:14-16 Take a moment to be kind to yourself: plan a day of rest and do something you enjoy.</p>	<p>January 1 John 8:12 What are your hopes for 2024? Pray for God's wisdom.</p>	<p>2 1 Peter 2:9 Write a thank you note and mail it.</p>	<p>3 Romans 8 Buy the next person in line coffee.</p>	<p>4 Ps 139:11-12 Choose 3 healthful habits to practice for this New Year.</p>	<p>January 5 - Epiphany Eve January 6 – Epiphany Luke 4:1-21 Move the Wise Men to the stable. Bless your house by chalking above the front door "20+C+M+B+24". This means the year (2024) with <i>Christus Mansionem Benedicat</i>, "Christ Bless this House," and the sign of the cross. CMB also stands for the three wise kings: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.</p>	

How we spend our days is how we spend our lives. Annie Dillard

Calendar created with joy by Susan Forshey at ContemplativeCottage.com. Please share freely.

[Click here to check out the Advent Toolkit Resources provided by VTS, courtesy of Janettarose](#)



AdventWord

DECEMBER 3-25 **2023**

3 WIND	15 HASTEN
4 HIDDEN	16 BEGIN
5 PRESENCE	17 SPIRIT
6 PEACE	18 REPAIR
7 GRACE	19 GIVE
8 WATCH	20 DREAM
9 AWAKE	21 LAUGHTER
10 GLORY	22 QUENCH
11 HERALD	23 PONDER
12 VALLEY	24 COVENANT
13 TRUTH	25 LIGHT
14 PATIENCE	

adventword.org

The Advent resource booklet *House of God* is available for pick up downstairs in the Merrow Fellowship Center.

Click on the image to find out more!

Both above advent resources provided by Family Formation Minister, Jackie Ly



Salisbury Cathedral Pilgrimage

Donate Now




Salisbury Cathedral Pilgrimage support goes into a scholarship fund for St. Mary's youth and adult choristers in need of international airfare and ground transportation, lodging and meals while on pilgrimage.

- Help create lifelong memories and build communities
- Expand a chorister's spiritual and cultural understanding
- Support the tradition of choral music
- Each certificate holder will receive invitations to attend pre-Pilgrimage live performances, video, audio and text updates of the choristers. Additionally, supporters will be invited to a fall 2024 High Tea. All supporters that opt in will be recognized in St. Mary's publications.
- Payment Options:
 - Checks made payable to St. Mary's Episcopal, add 'Salisbury 2024 Support' in the memo line.
 - Credit card or e-check donations can be made at <https://www.stmarysarlington.org/ways-to-give>

At checkout, select Music Fund from the drop-down menu and, in the note/memo field, put 'Choir Trip 2024.' Please consider covering transaction fees.

Choristers will perform on the following dates prior to embarking on their pilgrimage to Salisbury Cathedral. Each music offering is free to the public and all are welcome. All performances are at St. Mary's Arlington.

Sunday February 4, 5:00 pm
 Sunday March 3, 5:00 pm
 Sunday April 7, 5:00 pm
 Sunday May 5, 5:00 pm
 Sunday June 2, 5:00 pm

Contact Information
 St. Mary's Episcopal Church
 2609 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22207
703.527.6800/Music@StMarysArlington.org

One Share
 Each certificate holder will receive invitations to attend pre-Pilgrimage live performances, video, audio and text updates of the choristers. Additionally, supporters will be invited to a fall 2024 High Tea

One Share
\$ 25

Two Shares
 All of the above plus a lovely handpainted St. Mary's Christmas Ornament

Two Shares
\$ 50

Any Amount
 Is welcome to support scholarship for our choristers

Any Amount

Sue Cromer, Youth Minister bids us farewell at the end of 2023

December 2023



I report to you, sadly, that my time at St. Mary's is coming to an end at close of 2023.

I am very thankful for the opportunity to spend 11+ years with a wonderful, generous, faith filled congregation that, as I always remind our young people, is, has been, and will be church family!

I have had the privilege to befriend, mentor, and teach several generations of young people at St. Mary's. Their faith, humor, and love has enriched my life and leaves me a changed person.

I knew I was in for an adventure when, on my interview weekend with St. Mary's, the most important interview consisted of being closed in the Vestry room with room full of teenagers and a box of doughnuts and told "go!" Apparently I passed the test!

How do we measure our time together? Our lives have included countless chicken wings at Wing Night, more pizza than any human being should consume, time spent together at Shrine Mont in meaningful ways, time talking about the small things and the big things, goofy games that even included my favorite – pool noodles. Together, we survived a pandemic, spent many hours on Zoom, and prayed for one another. Together we confirmed over 200 youth and baptized 12 teenagers. I am not sure how to fully count the number of teenagers impacted by our ministry here. We shared Mission trips where our youth and adults were transformed to make a difference in our world. We supported local outreach efforts on a regular basis. There have been tough moments we have walked together, and many moments of laughter and joy!



I have also had the gift of engaging in ministry with many faithful people at St. Mary's in countless ways that go far beyond the formation of young people, allowing us to walk in faith together.

I have enjoyed the gift that St. Mary's is to me and the community! The commitment to Outreach and support of others here is unrivaled. The generosity of our people never fails to astound me.



The ministries at St. Mary's serve to enhance our experience of worship, faith formation, and community in countless ways. I stand in awe of the work of our Flower Guild, helping us experience worship with more of our senses. Our many behind the scenes ministries make it all possible! I have had the gift of spending time in our beautiful and well-tended gardens and grounds. The photos I have taken of the flowers, building, gardens, grounds, and of course the people, can't come close to capturing the beauty inside and outside the walls of this special place.

As you know, it takes a village, and it takes an entire congregation to raise faithful Christian disciples. You all understand that better than most places I know! Thank you to so many of you for serving as Youth leaders, Youth Forum teachers, mentors, Mission Trip leaders, volunteers, chaperones, drivers, and friends to our young people. Together, we have formed many young leaders and disciples. These young people have always been in good hands at St. Mary's, and St. Mary's is in the good hands of our young people!

I have been transformed by my time with you all! Thank you to many wonderful colleagues who have supported me and make ministry possible! Thank you all for your generosity and faithful leadership, and most especially for your friendship!

Blessings to you all in 2024!
Sue



Sue Cromer will be leaving St. Mary's at the end of December and will begin as Interim Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministry at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Arlington, Va.

A farewell reception and celebration of her ministry will be held Sunday, December 17th at the coffee hour. A purse will be collected.

We THANK YOU Sue, for making a difference in the lives of the Youth at St. Mary's the past eleven years. God Bless YOU!

After Jan. 1, Sue may be contacted at her personal email: suecromer1@gmail.com or cell: 312-399-8112

**FRIENDS ARE FRIENDS FOREVER. IF THE LORD'S
THE LORD OF THEM, A FRIEND WILL NOT SAY
NEVER 'CAUSE THE WELCOME WILL NOT END.
ALTHOUGH IT'S HARD TO LET YOU GO, IN THE
FATHER'S HANDS WE KNOW, A LIFETIME'S NOT
TOO LONG TO LIVE AS FRIENDS.**

- MICHAEL W. SMITH -

Baptism at St. Mary's

by Mother Sara Palmer

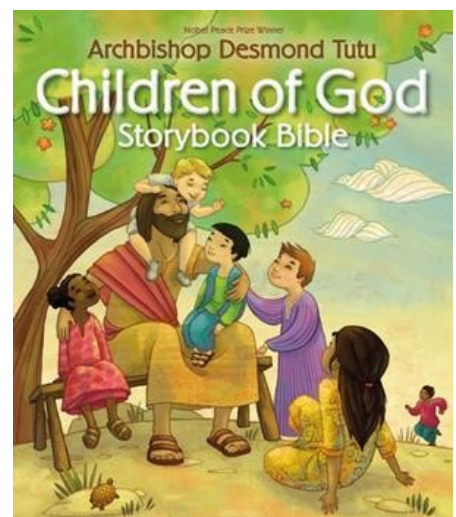
What a joy for me to baptize baby Charles "Chip" Carroll Junior at St Mary's on Sunday November 19th at the 10 am service. Forty family members and friends came to share in this wonderful celebration of Chip entering God's family, marked as Christ's own by the Holy Spirit FOREVER. It was lovely to meet with the parents and godparents for the hour long pre-baptismal class, and to be able to deepen our understanding about the meaning of baptism. How can we as parents and godparents serve as role models so that Chip can see the love of God in a way that he as a baby and child can understand?

"HOLY BAPTISM IS FULL INITIATION BY WATER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT INTO CHRIST'S BODY, THE CHURCH."

The Book of Common Prayer



I recommended Archbishop Tutu's *Children of God Storybook Bible* (about \$13 from Amazon) for children ages 2-6 years old. If you have never read the Bible before or a Gospel in its entirety, I recommend starting with Matthew's Gospel, one chapter a day. If you don't have a Bible in a version you understand, I recommend The New Oxford Annotated Bible (red hardback version) in the New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha- costs about \$38 from Amazon. As we get to know Jesus, God's only Son in the Gospels, we can understand in a deeper way what the invisible God is like: God's values, hopes and dreams for God's world.



Advent

Sunday, Dec. 3—Advent Lessons & Carols

St. Mary's Choirs heralded the coming of our Lord through carols, anthems and hymns. Advent Wreath Making and Chili Cook Off followed the service.

Wednesday, Dec. 6—Advent Class

7-8:30 pm, on zoom with Clergy

Saturday, Dec. 9—Advent Clean Up Day

9 am—Noon

Sunday, Dec. 10, Advent II—Advent Mart

11:15 am—1pm after Worship

Upstairs in Paca Hall and Downstairs in MFC

Christmas Caroling in Arlington, 3-4:30pm

Wednesday, Dec. 13—Advent Class

7-8 pm, on zoom with Clergy

Sunday, Dec. 17, Advent III (No Wilderness)

Worship at 8 am, 10 am, 5 pm

Reception at 11 am for Sue and Mother Sara

Wednesday, Dec. 20—Advent Class

7-8:30 pm, on zoom with Clergy

Sunday, Dec. 24, Advent IV

8 am service to celebrate Advent IV

Christmas

Dedicate Christmas Flowers

Christmas flower envelopes are in the pews and donations can also be made online -choose "altar flower donation" and include your dedication in memory of loved ones in the note section.

Christmas Eve Service times with Eucharist

8 am, celebrating Advent IV

(No Faith Formation)

4 pm with Children's pageant

8 pm

10:30 pm Choral Music | 11 pm service

December 25, Christmas Day

10:30 am (No Faith Formation)

December 26, Feast of St. Stephen

Noon in Chapel

December 27, Feast of St. John

7 am in Nave

December 28, Holy Innocents

11 am in Chapel

December 31, Christmas I

8 am, 10 am, 5 pm

10 am Christmas Lessons & Carols

January 1, Holy Name Day

10:30 am

Saturday, January 6, Epiphany

5 pm - *This service is led St. Mary's Choir together with St. Mary's Youth in celebration of Christ's light in the world.*

Updates

Music Fund: Thanks to all who have contributed to St. Mary's Music Fund so far this year. Your gifts are greatly appreciated and will help fund musical offerings such as Candlelight Concerts, Requiem and Easter instrumentalists. If you have not yet given to the fund, please consider it as a part of your year's end charitable contributions.

The Good News Jail & Prison Ministry program is looking for volunteers. Please contact The Reverend Janettarose at janettarose@stmarysarlington.org, if you are interested in volunteer training. Training is scheduled to begin in February 2024.

Please contribute to the purses set up for Mother Sara and Sue Cromer in thanksgiving for their work of ministry at St. Mary's. We will share them at the reception following the 10 am service on Sunday, December 17th as we wish them both God Speed!

In this season of Advent, as we prepare for Christmas and the New Year, we ask you to go into your Realm account to verify and/or update your information. This will ensure that you get credit for all contributions and donations that you provide to St. Mary's. We appreciate your time, pledges and donations, as every amount helps support our many ministries and the work of St. Mary's.



St. Mary's Arlington

Worship · Outreach · Family · Care

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Website: stmarysarlington.org

Social Media: [@stmarysarlington](https://www.instagram.com/stmarysarlington)



Make your commitment online:
www.stmarysarlington.org/pledge

BISHOPS OF THE DIOCESE OF VA

The Right Reverend E. Mark Stevenson, Bishop

The Right Reverend Gayle Elizabeth Harris, Assistant Bishop

ST. MARY'S CLERGY

The Rev. Andrew T.P. Merrow, Rector (ext. 306)

The Rev. Sara Palmer, Senior Associate to the Rector (ext. 305)

The Rev. Janettarose Greene, Associate to the Rector (ext. 316)

The Rev. Kate Sonderegger, Priest Associate

ST. MARY'S STAFF

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[Jackie Ly](#) (ext. 319)

Finance Manager
[Holly Zarazinski](#) (ext. 307)

Outreach Coordinator
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Volunteer Associate Organist
Matt Gabay

Assistant Facilities Manager
[Prosper Daziorlor](#) (ext. 322)

Seminarian
Gregory Williams

Youth Minister
[Sue Cromer](#) (ext. 302)

Seminarian
Jared Moore

VESTRY

Gordon Thomas (2024) Senior Warden

Gretel Lynch (2024) Junior Warden

Colleen Mason (2025) Register

Jim Bicksel (2025)

Dennis Carter-Chand (2024)

Alec Hicks (2026)

Chris Jennings (2026)

David Smith (2025)

Melissa Wiley (2026)

DIOCESAN CONVENTION & LAY DELEGATES

Dennis Carter-Chand, Kathryn McManus, Michelle Neblett, and
Russ Randle.