

MESSENGER

**LEADERSHIP, LISTENING, AND THE
GIFTS WE BRING WITH US: MEETING
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THE VERY REV. JANETTAROSE GREENE**

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SUZANNE STROUP**

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**A LITTLE HISTORY FROM THE ARCHIVES
PAM FRICK**



ST. MARY'S
ARLINGTON

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THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

The Right Reverend E. Mark Stevenson
Bishop of Virginia

The Right Reverend Gayle Elizabeth Harris
Assistant Bishop of Virginia

The Right Reverend Mark Bourlakas
Assistant Bishop of Virginia

ST. MARY'S VESTRY

Suzanne Stroup (2027) *Sr. Warden*

Chris Jennings (2026) *Jr. Warden*

Melissa Wiley (2026) *Register*

Alec Hicks (2026)

Michael Devine (2027)

Campbell Hutton (2027)

Paul Douthit (2028)

Gordon Mantler (2028)

Jessica Whatley (2028)

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A MESSAGE FROM MOTHER MEG

Dear Friends in Christ,

The dawn of a New Year has come once more. But this year is different for St. Mary's. This year marks a time for looking forward to next things, for renewing and refreshing what has been, for remembering a history while at the same time creating a new one.

A large part of the excitement for 2026-2027 is the celebration of our 100th Anniversary. The committee has been working diligently to make this celebration a time to remember. We already have Pam Frick sharing our history in the *Messenger* each month. We are having art shows and potluck dinners with speakers and a special moment when we celebrate our Anglican heritage. All will be revealed, but I promise the vision of "100 Years of Love in Action" will come to bless us all as we look back over a century of service in this place. (See 100th Anniversary Prayer below for use at major events, and a truncated version to be used weekly, beginning in February 2026.)

Another part of the excitement is the opening of the door to the Discernment Committee, which will begin its work of seeking out a new rector to be called to serve the people of St. Mary's. In January, the Rev. Will Dickinson, Transition Minister for the Diocese, will retreat with the Vestry and provide an outline of the process. Nominations which have been submitted will be reviewed and prayed over, and members will be selected for the Discernment Committee. Those selected will be commissioned around the time of our Annual Meeting. In May, Will plans to meet with the newly constituted Discernment Committee to outline the process for their work together. We hope to be able to make a call sometime around the summer of 2027.

And there are things we hope to do in the new year to tighten up the service liturgically while keeping all the expected traditional elements. There will be some experimentation. One of the good things we are preparing for is the ability to intinct the sacrament (dipping the bread into the wine). The plan for after Epiphany is to have two intinction cups next to the two chalice stations so people may choose to drink or intinct. We also plan to continue to have the gluten-free station at the center front but also add an intinction cup for the gluten-free people. Sounds complex, but it should flow easily. We hope this is a gift for those who want to intinct but have been denied that privilege for so long. And we will, of course, continue to expand use of our prayer books and hymnals so that we can become accustomed to the depth and breadth of possibilities the Church has given us for our liturgy.

We also say goodbye to the Rev. Canon Victoria Heard as a member of the staff, though she will continue

with the Stephen Ministry course she started in the Fall. Janet Tasker has also finished her time on staff. Jackie Vigil will be having her baby boy sometime in early January, and will be taking maternity leave and returning this spring. We thank these colleagues who have been such wonderful companions in our service to Christ the Incarnate Lord.

The staff and I also want to thank you for your presence and presents during this holiday season. There is a spirit of blessing here that is loving and generous. May 2026 be a wonderful year of exploration and celebration, all for Christ's sake.

Blessings,



Mother Meg

100TH ANNIVERSARY PRAYER

Holy and gracious God,

With grateful hearts we joyfully celebrate your gift of one hundred years of Saint Mary's community of faith.

Remembering the past, we give thanks for our history. We honor the dedication and faithfulness of our forebears, those who built our community on the solid rock of faith in Jesus Christ. Help us to never forget the love on which they built this church.

We give thanks for your continual grace and we celebrate your ever-faithful presence among us. In Word, in Sacrament, and in Worship, you continue to strengthen us with daily gifts and blessings. Help us to acknowledge that every good thing comes from you. Help us to never take for granted all that we have received from you, so that we may always be filled with heartfelt gratitude and a sincere love.

Finally, through the intercession of Saint Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and our spiritual mother, we beg for the grace, courage, and wisdom needed to lead and become the next generation of faith. Good and Gracious God, may your goodness and love, which has guided us these one hundred years, continue to sustain us in the present and lead us into the future. We pray that through the guidance of your Holy Spirit our parish will continue to grow, flourish and be a spiritual home for all of us, both now and in the future.

We ask all of this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SHORTENED PRAYER FOR WEEKLY USE

We joyfully celebrate your gift of one hundred years of Saint Mary's community of faith. We give thanks for your continual grace and we celebrate your ever-faithful presence among us. Amen

LEADERSHIP, LISTENING, AND THE GIFTS WE BRING WITH US: MEETING ARCHBISHOP-ELECT SARAH MULLALLY

by The Very Rev. Janettarose L. Greene

London, October 2025

The Compass Rose Society dinner is the sort of event where liturgy and diplomacy meet over plates of roast and quiet conversation. I had come as a member of the Anglican family from the United States, little expecting that, by the benevolence of the Rt. Rev. Daniel Gutierrez, president of the Compass Rose Society, and his wife Suzanne, I would be seated at the table of the woman recently named Archbishop-elect of Canterbury, the Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dame Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London. It was one of those grace-filled moments of good fortune the Church occasionally provides; two priests from different sides of the Atlantic, sharing a meal and stories of ministry at a moment of transition for the Anglican Communion.

We enjoyed an evening of warmth, candor, and theological seriousness. It felt like a small, important window into the shape of Anglican leadership at a moment of change. What struck me most was not the historic nature of her appointment, though that matters deeply, but the way she spoke and listened. Bishop Sarah's path to ordained ministry ran first through nursing and senior public health leadership. Before I was ordained, I served as a civil servant in the federal government. Our past experiences shaped our conversation in ways I did not expect.

Both nursing and public service teach you to listen before you act. You quickly learn that authority without attentiveness can be harmful, and that good decisions are rarely made in isolation. In hospitals and government agencies alike, leadership is less about commanding and more about convening: gathering people with different perspectives, hearing hard truths, and choosing the least harmful path forward. Those instincts, we agreed, do not disappear at ordination. They deepen.

If you picture the Archbishop-elect purely as a public figure, you'll miss what struck me at dinner, as she is a mixture of professional steadiness, pastoral attentiveness, and plain-spoken wit. The conversation across the evening ranged from the ordinary rhythms of parish life to the particular challenges facing the global Communion. She listened as much as she spoke, asking about my parish in Arlington, Virginia, my congregation's ministries, and what things American Episcopalians are carrying into the next liturgical year. That posture, curious, respectful, and undramatic, felt like leadership in its most Anglican form.

As we talked about parish life, global Anglican tensions, and the ordinary weight clergy carry, it became clear that secular vocations can be gifts to the Church rather than distractions from it. Nursing teaches pastoral presence, triage, and compassion under pressure. Civil service teaches patience, accountability, and the slow work of building trust across differences. Both cultivate humility and the awareness that no single leader sees the whole picture.

The Compass Rose Society gathering itself was a timely place for such exchanges. The society, which brings together donors and friends of the Anglican Communion to support mission and formation, makes space at its Annual Meeting for both celebration and sober conversation about the Communion's future.

The 2025 meeting in London brought together a range of primates and church leaders. It provided a backdrop for addressing the realities of ecclesial life, theological disagreement, mission priorities, and pastoral care.

Two themes threaded through our talk that evening: unity and change. The Archbishop-elect said repeatedly that she sees her role as one of convening and listening as much as of speaking with authority. Given the deep fractures across the Communion, especially over human sexuality, ecclesiology, and the distribution of power, this emphasis on listening is not naïve; it is tactical and pastoral. In public statements since her nomination, she has signaled a desire to “decenter” the office’s authority, which may open space for reconciliation and clearer, mutual decision-making among provinces. Supporters and critics alike have already begun to weigh what that might mean.

In a time when church leadership is often evaluated by how forcefully one speaks, it was refreshing to be reminded that listening is itself a form of leadership. The Church does not need fewer voices, but better hearing; bishops who listen to parishes, clergy who listen to congregations, and all of us who listen for the Spirit speaking through unexpected people.

For those of us from the Episcopal tradition, what happens in Canterbury matters in multiple ways. The Archbishop-elect will serve as a symbolic and sacramental focus of Anglican identity even as provinces negotiate fresh understandings of authority and autonomy. My evening with her felt like being invited into the living conversation of that global family, imperfect, committed, and sustained by ordinary people doing faithful work.

Whether you greet Sarah’s appointment with gratitude, caution, or both, the work before her and before us is unmistakable: to hold the tensions of truth and love, to repair what is broken, and to foster practices that make faithful life possible. If the dinner was any indication, she intends to do that work with a listening ear, pastoral seriousness, and an eye toward practical reform.

I left that dinner grateful for the varied paths that lead us to the altar. God wastes nothing, not years in hospitals or government offices, not skills learned outside church walls. Instead, God gathers those experiences and weaves them into ministry shaped by compassion, discernment, and care.

May we give thanks for leaders who listen, for vocations that prepare us in surprising ways, and for a Church willing to be shaped by the whole lives its ministers bring with them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Tanner".

IN CELEBRATION OF VESTRY MEMBER ALEC HICKS

by Suzanne Stroup

For the first time in five years, Yorktown's Varsity Football team won the Liberty District Championship and made it to the first round of the Northern Virginia Regional Tournament. Under Coach Alec Hicks' leadership, Yorktown balanced offensive firepower with defensive grit and competed at a high level throughout the season, delivering one of the most exciting football years for the Patriots in recent memory.



Alec Hicks has been a member of the Yorktown coaching staff for twenty years, but just this past year, he was selected from a competitive field of candidates to lead the team as head coach. He fostered loyalty and ownership from all levels by relying on and trusting his assistant coaches, six of whom are alumni coaches themselves.

Coach Hicks installed a whole new system, asking his team to trust and grow with this new process. The team started the season 1-2, fully adopting the new system and working hard to perfect it. By the end of the season, Yorktown ended with a winning record of 7-3.

Coach Hicks gives much credit for the team's success to the players themselves. He saw the leadership from the seniors as incredibly impactful to the rest of the team. He also saw how important it was and is to foster a culture where each player was accountable to one another, and how each one could rely on and believe in the other. For his part,

Coach Hicks made sure to focus on positive energy at all times. He let everyone know they had a role to play. He stressed the importance of always being a good teammate. At the end of the day, this approach allowed everyone to stay interested, compete at a high level and, most importantly, have fun.

"That's point of playing sports," said Coach Hicks. "And thinking about faith — it truly is believing in others and trusting God to believe in yourself."

YOUTH MISSION TRIP NEW BERN, NC JUNE 21-27, 2026

What do we do?

We repair homes damaged by Hurricane Florence (2018) with the Coastal Carolina Disaster Resiliency Agency (CCDRA), putting our faith into action as Christ's disciples in the world!

Students work together with adult chaperones preparing meals for one another, worshipping, connecting and making a huge difference for a community that feels forgotten after all these years.

To prepare we have several training meetings in the spring and hope youth will be regulars at Youth/St. Mary's events.

Cost

\$450 Tuition per student

Adult Chaperones are FREE

**Jan. 30: Registration and
\$100 Deposit due!**



**Adults and Youth
register on the
parish hub**

Questions? Contact Jackie
Vigil or Rev. Nicole Lambelet

Who should go?

- Current 8th-12th Graders who are excited to spend a week working hard and giving back
- Adults with a passion for service to our youth (construction skills a plus but not required; must be 25 or older to drive rental vehicles and complete Safe Church Training)

Important Dates

Feb. 8: 11:30am: Chili Fundraiser with the Bishop

March 8: 12-2pm: Tools Training

April 25: 8am-4pm Rebuilding Together (2 hour shift)

June 14: 11:30am-1pm Final Meeting with parents and participants



ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ARLINGTON

EVE OF CANDLEMAS CHORAL EUCHARIST

Sunday, February 1, 5:00 pm



THANKSGIVING FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP

With grateful hearts, we give thanks to God for the faithful service of the St. Mary's Outreach Committee and for those who have led it with wisdom and humility. We offer particular gratitude to Marjorie Barclay, who served as Chair, Susan Cunningham, who served as Vice-Chair, and David Palmer, a devoted member of the committee.

Guided by prayer and discernment, their work has embodied Christ's call to love our neighbors and to serve "the least of these." Through their stewardship of resources and partnerships within the community, the Outreach Committee has helped make God's compassion and mercy visible among the most vulnerable.

May their service inspire us all to continue faithfulness in the work God has entrusted to this parish, and may God bless and sustain them in all that lies ahead.

Yours in Christ,



The Very Rev. Janettarose L. Greene
Outreach Committee Clergy Lead

JANUARY MUSIC OFFERINGS

AN EPIPHANY PROCESSION

Tuesday, January 6, 7:00 pm

St. Mary's Youth and St. Mary's Choir will lead this joyful conclusion to the Christmas season. The drama of the Epiphany will be re-enacted through readings and the procession of incense, water and wine, as well as carols and the colorful costuming of the Three Kings in procession.

EVE OF CANDLEMAS CHORAL EUCHARIST

Sunday, February 1, 5:00 pm

Candlemas is a Christian feast day that celebrates the presentation of Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem. It is celebrated on February 2, 40 days after Christmas, and is also known as a festival of light with the blessing of candles. The *Nunc Dimittis* (the canticle sung at Choral Evensong), comes from when Simeon's wish was fulfilled when he met the Messiah in the temple (Luke 2:25-38). At this special service we will also honor the work of our Altar Guild.

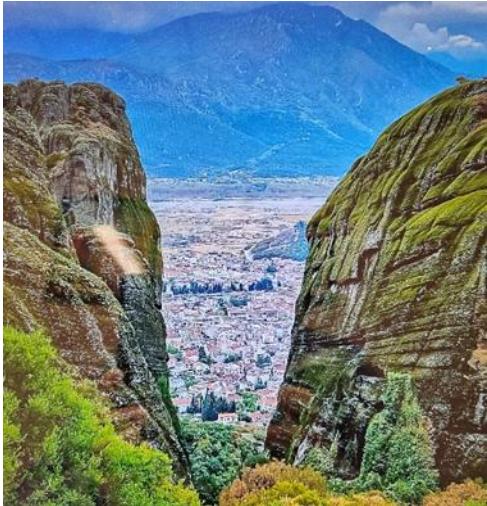
2026

We're excited to share that, starting February 1st, we will be moving our online giving platform from Tithe.ly to Aplos. What does this mean for you?

- ★ Aplos offers a smooth, secure giving experience
- ★ Recurring payments are available, making generosity easy and automatic
- ★ ACH (bank transfer) payments are supported, helping reduce processing fees

If you currently have a recurring gift set up through Tithe.ly, you'll want to take a moment to set it up again in Aplos once we make the switch. More information—including step-by-step instructions on how to set up your giving—will be sent out soon. Kelly will be happy to help if you have any questions along the way!

Thank you for your continued generosity and support—we're grateful for you and excited about this next step.



A peek into Meteora, Greece, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its towering sandstone pillars topped with six historic Eastern Orthodox monasteries. Its name literally means, “suspended in air.” The unique 11th century monastic architecture was built as a refuge and is accessible via paths and stairs for visitors.

DISCOVER GREECE: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PAUL THE APOSTLE OCTOBER 13-23, 2026

Through the agency of Collette, I will be leading a pilgrimage to Greece and Turkey in the fall of 2026. We will be tracing the footsteps of Paul, the prolific writer and missionary of first century Christianity.

We will begin our journey in Corinth and Athens. In Corinth we will visit the Agora where Paul's trial took place, and the Bema where Paul came before the tribunal. In Athens we will see Mars Hill where Paul gave his “Men of Athens” speech, and we will visit the Acropolis and Plaka.

We will embark on a three-night cruise to Mykonos on our way to Turkey and will visit Ephesus (another UNESCO site) where Paul spent three years of his ministry. We'll see the library, the agora, the theatre, and stadium, and the House of Mary, mother of Jesus. From there we cruise to the island of Patmos where John wrote his book of Revelation. We will have the opportunity to visit Santorini and Heraklion in Crete before disembarking at Piraeus, traveling to Thermopylae, and later visiting an icon-writing workshop at Kalambaka. From there we proceed to the monasteries at Meteora and visit Thessaloniki, an early center for Christianity.

We will visit the coastal town of Kavala where Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy first set foot on European soil, where Paul preached his first sermon in Europe and met and baptized Lydia (often called the first bishop of Europe), and where Paul was held prisoner.

For more information on this trip, please visit: <http://www.gateway.gocollette.com/link/1365110>

I hope you will consider coming on the pilgrimage with me, Mother Meg

A MESSAGE FROM JACKIE VIGIL

Hello St. Mary's Family!

Let me first express my gratitude to you for showing my family so much love and support this year. We are particularly grateful for the lovely baby shower in November, your kind affirmations, and for the books and other supplies that will help us adjust to life with a newborn in 2026. I've been blessed by this opportunity to experience Advent as a true season of expectant waiting and appreciate you all journeying with me! God-willing I will take my parental leave from early January through March, returning to celebrate our risen Lord on Easter.

In my absence, you can expect that many of our existing programs for children, youth, and families will continue under the Rev. Nicole, Seminarian Zach, and our amazing team of volunteers. Sunday School and Youth Forums will resume on January 4 and continue weekly at 9 am until May 17. Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group will continue meeting on select Sundays at 6 pm, resuming Jan. 11 with dinner and a mix of fellowship, community service projects, discipleship, and fun. The Youth Mission Trip is back in New Bern, NC, June 21-27! Students 8th and older should register before the Jan. 30 deadline to secure a spot. We've really enjoyed connecting with families every other month at our fellowship events at parishioners' homes. If you would like to host our next gathering, let us know!



You can also expect a few changes or additions to the calendar this year:

- Our Bishop's visit to confirm 11 young people on February 8 is already going to be an amazing day—please come to support our youth! The visit will conclude with a celebratory reception-turned-Chili Cook-off fundraiser where ANYONE can enter a pot of chili in the competition and donations to taste and vote benefit the Youth Mission Trip.
- We are excited to introduce **new Family Formation programming** on Saturday mornings **9:30–11 am** on **February 21, March 14, and April 25**. These gatherings are designed to engage children and youth at every developmental stage, while adults take part in offerings focused on parenting, faith formation, and related topics. Children and youth can look forward to baking bread for Sunday's Eucharist, singing with Dr. H., and enjoying seasonally appropriate arts and crafts—all in a fun, faith-filled environment.



- We've been working closely with other churches in the Diocese of Virginia to re-launch a Middle School Retreat and High School Leadership Summit at Shrine Mont, taking place April 17-19. Registration details should be released soon but we really hope a big group from St. Mary's can attend!
- The next youth confirmation program will launch for rising 9th grade and older students with a retreat on August 21-22, followed by

weekly classes on Sunday mornings through December to be ready for our next Bishop's visit in winter 2027. Enrollment will take place later this spring, but if you have questions or concerns please reach out.

Thank you all for holding down the fort in my absence. We look forward to a meaningful year as we mark our church's 100th anniversary and model for our young people what it means to claim St. Mary's as your church home. I'm excited to see the great things you can do with God's amazing grace and love!



FAMILY FORMATION

Monthly Saturday morning gatherings for the whole family



9:30 am - 11:00 am in Paca Hall

- ✓ **February 21:** Join Rachel A. Oakes, Ph.D for a timely conversation about teen mental health and wellness. Oakes is a clinical psychologist at Virginia Therapy and Wellness in Fairfax, VA. She will give a presentation for parents invested in deepening their support of the tweens and teens in their care.
- ✓ **March 15:** Rev. Nicole will offer a special workshop for families on the theology and practice of the Eucharist. This workshop is particularly designed for children and families. We especially welcome all children who would like to participate in communion for the first time at our Easter celebration in 2026.
- ✓ **April 25:** St. Mary's families with children who are too young to participate in our annual Rebuilding Together event are invited to St. Mary's to support this ministry and help prepare lunch for the Rebuilding Together volunteers.

*Children and youth attending the events will rotate through a variety of fun activities such as arts/crafts, music with Dr. H., and bread making!

Questions? Email: Nicole@stmarysarlington.org



FROM THE VESTRY

Suzanne Stroup, Senior Warden

On behalf of your Vestry, Happy New Year! In the midst of this Christmas season, I wish for us all a peaceful 2026, a year full of possibility and celebration at St. Mary's. As you know, Mother Meg, our Interim Rector, has already spent the last six months meeting and getting to know so many within our parish. We continue to be grateful for her steadfast leadership and guidance as we worship, welcome our neighbors, and prepare for the months ahead. This time of transition has moved quickly, but St. Mary's has stayed on track with the tasks at hand. For these next steps, Vestry would like to ask each St. Mary's parishioner for your help:

Parishioner Feedback

Over the next several weeks, please look for a white board next to the information table in Paca Hall. There, on display, will be an open-ended question soliciting feedback and insights about our church community and its future. Each week the question will be different. Please take a moment to seek out these questions, consider what reactions they elicit, and write down your responses. All answers are welcome! Vestry will use your responses as we begin our visioning process to ensure our Mission Statement clearly and accurately describes what it means to be a parishioner here at St. Mary's today.

Discernment Committee Nominations:

As you may have heard recently, we are seeking nominations for the Discernment Committee.

This committee will work over the next 18 months to discern the qualities St. Mary's needs in our new permanent rector, work with the Diocese to begin the search process, interview candidates, and make recommendations to the Vestry. This work is critical to the future of St. Mary's.

We kindly ask you to take some time to consider potential excellent candidates for the Discernment Committee and submit your nominations to us. Who do you know who is curious, adaptable, a quiet leader, and, most importantly, a good listener? Who are good examples of parishioners that represent the breadth of this large and diverse parish? If you know a strong candidate (or if you yourself are that candidate), please email the name(s) and brief explanations of why you are recommending them to office@stmarysarlington.org by January 20, 2026.

The Vestry thanks each and every parishioner for your dedication and presence in the life of our church. Because of your involvement, St. Mary's continues to grow, be faithful, and walk towards the work God is calling us to do. Thank you for being an active participant in our transition work. We are so grateful and can't wait to see where God's spirit will lead us.

Faithfully,

JOIN US AT 9 AM ON JANUARY 18 FOR MLK SUNDAY



Celebrant and Homilist **The Rev. Dr. Joseph Downing Thompson, Jr.** serves Virginia Theological Seminary as the Seminary Librarian and as a member of the faculty in the area of Practical Theology. His courses help to ensure that seminarians engage with issues of race, justice, and intercultural awareness as part of their theological education. He was also responsible for designing and implementing the seminary's reparations program for the descendants of those who were enslaved at VTS or worked there during the exploitative era of legal segregation. His teaching and research interests include the theological and spiritual dimensions of racial ideology in the USA, as well as the moral and ethical implications of the reparations movement. Dr. Thompson holds a Ph.D. in African American Studies and English from Yale University.



Forum Speaker **Ebonee Davis-Hayes** is the Director of Reparations at Virginia Theological Seminary. She holds an MA in Museum Studies & Historical Preservation from Morgan State University and is an African Diaspora History Ph.D. candidate at Howard University. For over 15 years, Davis-Hayes has operated within the field of public history; working for local, state, and national institutions in the U.S. and Africa. As the Director of Reparations, Eboneye manages all aspects of the Program's research, implementation, and programming, in order to progress the goal of fostering relationships and building trust with the Program's shareholders and overall network of descendant families.

JANUARY CALENDAR

OUR SERVICES

SUNDAY

8 am, The Holy Eucharist

8:30-11:30 am, Nursery (3 months-3 years)

9 am, Sunday School & Youth Forum
(PreK-12)

10 am, The Holy Eucharist, with music
Children's Chapel
(Fellowship following | [Livestream](#))

5 pm, The Holy Eucharist

*10:15 am, Wilderness Church
1st & 3rd Sundays in Zachary Taylor Park

TUESDAY

12 pm, Noonday Prayer
7:30 pm, Centering Prayer
(Hybrid in-person and Zoom)

WEDNESDAY

7 am, The Holy Eucharist

THURSDAY

11 am, Healing & The Holy Eucharist

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

MONDAY

Please note: *The Story* with Mother Meg is on break until Feb 1.

THURSDAY

6:30 pm Youth Choir (Choir Room)
7:30 pm Adult Choir (Choir Room)

SUNDAY

6 pm Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group (select Sundays)

DATES TO NOTE

Tue., Jan. 6, 7 pm

An Epiphany Procession

Sun., Jan. 18

MLK Sunday

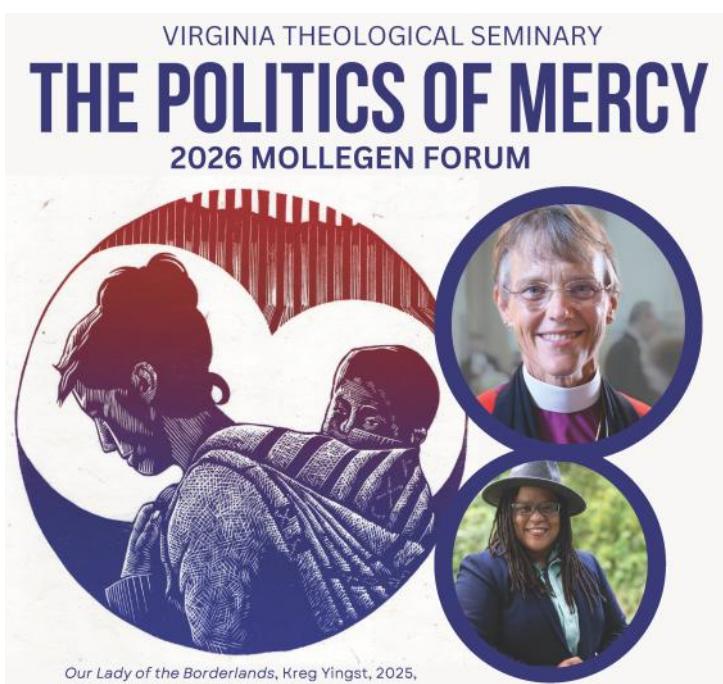
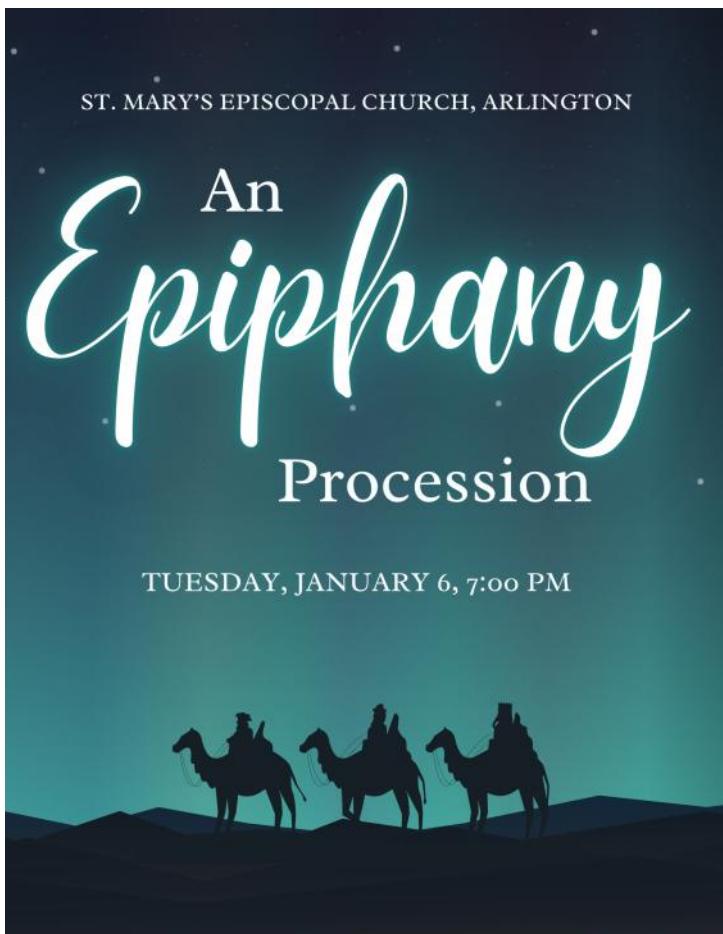
Fri. Jan. 30

Mission Trip Registration Deadline

Sat., Jan. 31, 9:30 am

Children & Youth Listening Circle





Join the Saint Nicholas Center for Faith and Justice for a timely conversation with Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde and Georgia State Senator Rev. Kimberly Jackson.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026
@ 7:00PM

VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LETTIE PATE EVANS ROOM
3630 Bishop Walker Circle, Alexandria, VA 22304



REGISTER TODAY!



CHURCH CLEAN-UP IS STEWARDSHIP

by The Very Rev. Janettarose L. Greene and Prosper Daziorlor



Church Clean-Up Day is about far more than rakes, mops, and trash bags. It is a visible expression of our shared stewardship, our care for one another, and our commitment to the place where we gather to worship God and serve the wider community.



A clean and well-kept church is an act of hospitality. Every Sunday, newcomers, longtime members, and visitors step onto our grounds and into our buildings. When those spaces are cared for, they quietly say, "You are welcome here." Clean windows, tidy classrooms, and well-kept grounds communicate respect for our guests, for one another, and for the sacred work that happens within these walls.

Clean-Up Day is also an act of stewardship. Our church buildings and grounds are gifts entrusted to us, built and maintained through the faith and sacrifice of generations before us. By caring for them together, we honor that legacy and help ensure that the church remains a place of prayer, learning, and service for generations to come.



Equally important is what happens amongst us during a day of shared work. Side by side, conversations unfold that might never happen during coffee hour. Laughter breaks out over stubborn weeds or dust-covered hymnals. People of different ages and backgrounds work together with a common purpose. In these simple acts, our community is strengthened, and St. Mary's becomes not just a place we attend, but a place we belong.



Finally, Church Clean-Up Day reminds us that ministry takes many forms. Some preach, some teach, some visit the sick, and some sweep floors, trim hedges, and carry boxes. All of it matters. All of it is holy when done with care and love.



When we show up with willing hands and generous hearts, Church Clean-Up Day becomes a quiet but powerful witness: that caring for God's house is one way we live out our faith together.

Thank you to all the volunteers who participated in our fall clean-up Day. We look forward to working with you again in the spring.

WHAT IS EPIPHANY—AND WHY DOES IT MATTER TODAY? (PART II)

by The Very Rev. Janettarose L. Greene

The Lord has Shown Forth His Glory: Come Let Us Adore Him

Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning “manifestation” or “appearance.” In the life of the Church, Epiphany celebrates God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ most vividly shown in the visit of the Magi, who follow a star to find the Christ child. In that moment, Jesus is revealed not only to Israel but to the wider world.

Traditionally observed on January 6, Epiphany proclaims a radical truth: *God’s love is not limited by borders, culture, or status*. The Magi are foreigners, scholars, and outsiders, yet they are among the first to recognize who Jesus is. Their presence at the manger signals that Christ has come for all people.

Epiphany also gathers together several moments of revelation in Jesus’ life. In addition to the visit of the Magi, the season points to Jesus’ baptism, when a voice from heaven declares him God’s beloved Son, and to his first miracle at Cana, where he turns water into wine. Each moment pulls back the curtain just a little more, showing us who Jesus is and what God is doing in the world through him.

The Season of Epiphany

The season of Epiphany can last from four to nine weeks, from the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6th) through the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The length of the season varies according to the date of Easter. The gospel stories of this season describe various events that manifest Jesus’ divinity. The Last Sunday after the Epiphany is always devoted to the Transfiguration, in which Jesus’ identity as the Son of God is dramatically revealed to Peter, James, and John in the Transfiguration gospel.

Why does Epiphany matter today?

Epiphany challenges the Church to look beyond what is familiar or comfortable. If God chose to reveal Christ to outsiders first, then the Church is called to notice where God may be at work beyond its usual boundaries, among those who are different, marginalized, or overlooked.

Epiphany reminds us that faith is often a journey. The Magi do not arrive at understanding all at once; they follow clues, ask questions, take risks, and change course when warned in a dream. In a time when many are searching for meaning, Epiphany affirms that seeking, wondering, and moving toward the light of Christ are faithful responses.

Epiphany calls us to *bear light*. Having seen the revelation of God in Christ, we are sent into the world to reflect that light through social justice, compassion, hospitality, and truth. The star over Bethlehem does not end the story; it begins a mission.

In a world marked by division and uncertainty, Epiphany matters because it proclaims that God is still being revealed and that the light of Christ is meant for everyone, everywhere.

Finally, your clergy team is available to bless your home during the week following Epiphany (January 7–January 15). If you would like your house blessed, please sign up via the [Parish Hub](#).

LOCAL PARTNERS IN MINISTRY: THANK YOU

Advent Lessons and Carols comes but once a year and is led by our marvelous choir under the direction of Dr. Gregory Hooker. As in years past, we also used this occasion to introduce and thank some of our local ministry partners. For those of you who missed the event, the following of our many partners participated in the service:



The Rev. Lauren Banks is the Executive Director of the National HIV/AIDS Housing Coalition which is the national leader in education and advocacy to fight for housing for PWH (persons with HIV). It promotes housing, policies, and resources to improve the health of PWH. They are working relentlessly to protect safety net programs for people living with HIV, including HOPWA and Medicaid.

Joyce Lombardo is the Director of Operations of Arlington Thrive. Their mission is to provide timely, dignified, and equitable financial assistance to neighbors in crisis, ensuring they maintain stability and hope during difficult times. They assist Arlington residents with urgent needs, such as housing, utilities, medical expenses, and child-care, serving as a critical safety net for families and individuals living at or below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI).



Belinda Passafaro is a Senior Consultant at The Dream Project. The group empowers students whose immigration status creates barriers to education, through college scholarships, mentoring, alums, and family support. They served over 300 students in 2024. St. Mary's has supported two students for the last 3 years of their college years.

The Rev. Scott Seaton is the Executive Director of Arlington Bridge Builders, an interdenominational network of churches that work with each other, individuals, non-profits, businesses and civic agencies for the flourishing of Arlington. ABB serves South Arlington (22204), one of the most economically disadvantaged areas in the county. Their ministries include a food pantry feeding over 1,000 people each week, an after-school program for at-risk kids, and English classes and citizenship classes for the richly diverse immigrant community of Arlington.



A LITTLE HISTORY FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Pam Frick

Epiphany heralds the final celebration of the twelve days of Christmas. It celebrates the light of the Christ child going out into the world with the coming of the Wise Men. It is often observed with the liturgy of the Feast of Lights. I thought it would be fun to share three ways this feast day has been observed by St. Mary's.

After a long and varied career in the Episcopal Church, Fr. Edmund Stevens served as an assistant at St. Mary's from 1961-1971. He began as an organist, choirmaster, and later Assistant Rector of St. Stephen's Church in Washington D.C. In the 1920's he helped found the Church of Our Savior in D.C. and was rector for 10 years. He then became Rector of St. Timothy's in Herndon for 15 years before retiring. Fr. Stevens "was active in the Arlington Players and wrote several plays and musicals." (*The Evening Star, Washington D.C. 3/27/1971*)

Fr. Stevens' interest in music and the arts inspired him to write an Epiphany pageant, titled "How the Good News Came to Be." Using the concept of the Feast of Lights and an adapted format of Choral Evensong, he presented the story of how the light of Christ's gospel spread from the visit of the Wise Men throughout history to modern day.

A Narrator explained the format and then announced, "The acolytes will now put out all the Altar candles to symbolize the great darkness that covered the world when Christ was born. Then they will light one great candle to stand for Christ, our Lord and Savior, the one True Light of the world."

Instead of seven lessons from Scripture, the play presented seven sets of three people who played a part spreading the good news. Each section was prefaced by a hymn.



The first were Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar.

Each Wise Man spoke of his vision of the mission to carry the news beyond Bethlehem. They then lit candles and sat down. Every group, in turn, shared their part as missionaries for the sake of the good news, lighting their candles and retiring to their seats. There followed:

The Apostles: represented by St. James, St. John, and St. Paul

Missionaries to Wales, Ireland & England: St. Joseph of Arimathea, St. Patrick, and St. David

Early English Martyrs: Archbishop Thomas à Becket, Archbishop Cranmer, Archbishop Laud

Early church in Colonies: Chaplain Robert Hunt, Bishop Seabury, Bishop William White

Evangelism going West: Bishop James Lloyd Breck, Bishop Whipple, Bishop Roe

Current Day Virginia (1971): Bishop Goodwin, Bishop Gibson, Suffragan Bishop Mason

Once the final group lit their candles and sat, the acolytes, from the flame of the Christ candle, lit the altar candles and the candles held by the clergy. The service then ended with prayers and the recessional hymn.

This was Fr. Stevens' final artistic endeavor. He died two months later on March 26, 1971, at the age of 93. He left behind his wife, two daughters, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren, as well as a life of devoted service to the church.

Skipping ahead to the 1980's with the arrival of Fr. Merrow, Epiphany was celebrated with a Eucharist. The congregation then processed with candles outdoors, symbolizing bearing the light of Christ into the world. Folks would gather around a designated area and watch the burning of the Christmas greens. (Pictured below is 1990's service.)



Everyone was then invited to an Epiphany party to celebrate the end of the season. For a number of years the party was held at the home of the Rector's or a parishioner's. As the congregation grew, it was moved into the parish hall. In 1990, the party was held at the Bevis' home. (Right) Steve Bevis was Sr. Warden at the time. Pictured are Ken Kimmel (Volunteer Treasurer) and Lois Kirchner, who oversaw Sunday coffee hours.

The last Epiphany with the burning of the greens was in 2005. And over the years, if Epiphany fell on a weeknight, generally no reception followed.



In 2006, we began celebrating the Feast of Lights, a lessons and carols service with no Eucharist. The service began in darkness with only the Paschal Candle lit. As the various lessons of the prophets were read, acolytes, lighting their torches from the Paschal Candle, would light additional candles.



The Three Kings would make an appearance at the offertory. Before the final lesson from John's gospel, the ambient lights in the sanctuary were extinguished. As the Officiant read "In the beginning was the Word..." the Acolytes proceeded down the center aisle, offering their torches to the congregation for the lighting of their candles. Everyone then processed to Paca Hall for the final collect, blessing, and dismissal.

By 2008, the youth, under the guidance of their Youth Minister, figured prominently in the service as readers, acolytes, and kings. Under Gregory Hooker's direction, the Boys & Girls choir is also featured. Some of the candle logistics have been simplified. The Three Kings still provide a favorite moment in the liturgy.



THANK YOU AND FAREWELL, VICTORIA



The Rev. Canon Victoria Heard came on board at St. Mary's during a time of change just as the Rev. Andrew Merrow was saying good-bye. I had yet to come on board, and the Rev. Nicole was still a few months away from joining the team. We give thanks that Victoria+ was able to assist Janettarose+ to make the transition as seamless as possible.

When I joined St. Mary's in June, Victoria+ graciously accepted an extension of her letter of agreement to the end of 2025. She has made the most of her time with us: teaching, preaching, celebrating, weighing in on planning strategies. She has been a real gift.

But now it is time for us to say goodbye as Victoria's+ time as a staff member is coming to an end. We hope that she will always be a friend of St. Mary's. Luckily, we get to have her with us through Christmas, and she has promised to finish out her work with the Stephen Ministry, another gracious gift to the parish.

We had wanted to plan a goodbye to Victoria+ at the fellowship hour on January 4, her last day to preach at St. Mary's. However, she would rather say goodbye to us from the back of the church—and asks that any gift we wish to contribute go either to Samaritan Ministry or Capital Food Bank in her name.

St. Mary's has been honored by her presence for well over a year. She has been a loving and consistent priest walking with us and among us. Be sure to let her know how you will miss her. I pray that she will join us on special days as we celebrate our 100th Anniversary in 2026.

Go in peace, dear friend,
Go with our thanks and love,

Mother Meg, on behalf of the People of St. Mary's