

# MESSENGER

**UNDERSTANDING THE LECTIONARY CYCLE  
AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RITE I AND  
RITE II IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
THE VERY REV. JANETTA ROSE GREENE

**A DAY IN NDEBWE**  
LESLIE ANN GERARDO

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& ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS**  
THE CREATION CARE COMMITTEE

**BEING CHURCH DURING WARTIME**  
THE VERY REV. JANETTA ROSE GREENE

**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)

## STAY CONNECTED



Cover: *Fiori di Como* (1998) by Dale Chihuly.  
(Photo by Derek Greten-Harrison)

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## A Message from Mother Meg

Sweet Friends in Christ,

November has been a miracle in motion. We watched as men spent hours negotiating how to get the HVAC equipment down the stairs and into its proper place. Thanks be to God for Lynn Fuechsel and Prosper, who guided their intent all the way until it was in and running. We collected bags of Thanksgiving groceries that exceeded our initial goal so that we could offer an additional 43 bags to Santa Maria for their outreach. Convention brought us conviction that we are to see past distortions of realities and live into the ideal of: Love Jesus; Embody Justice; Be Disciples. Meanwhile, two of our own were elected to office: Deb Gandy was elected to Standing Committee (the Ecclesiastical Authority in case of absence of a Diocesan Bishop), and Russ Randle was elected as one of four deputies to General Convention, the governing body of the Episcopal Church, which meets every three years.

We have had planning strategy sessions for the spring, training with the Altar Guild, listening sessions, inquirer and confirmation classes, a meeting of a new affinity group around retirement, all the while continuing to do all of our regular ministries of this place.

From a celebratory point of view, we have had five baptisms, a wonderful retirement party for Jane Shafran, a concert by the American Guild of Organists, a new art show and reception, a baby shower for Jackie Vigil and husband Adrian, a Friday potluck for us to hear from Dean Richard Sewell of St. George's College in Jerusalem, a chance for fellowship with our partner parish of Santa Maria as they hosted us for a Thanksgiving service (Victoria Heard+ presiding) with wonderful dinner afterwards, and a chance to make Advent wreaths and sign up for not one but two Christmas pageants! Again, Miracles in Motion in November.

If that is not enough, December has now dawned! Our theme for Advent season is *The Gifts We Bring*. Rosanna Esposito is doing a Book Study called *Invite, Welcome, Connect* at 7 pm on Wednesdays Dec. 3, 10, and 17. Nicole Lambelet+ is offering an Advent Retreat with lunch entitled *Advent Wisdom for Life's Transitions* from 9 am-1 pm on December 6. You may sign up for either or both online. Our Advent Mart is December 7, ending with a wonderful Lessons and Carols service and reception at 5 pm that evening. December 8 brings us a Parent Listening Session, the 13th St. Joseph's BIG ADVENT CLEAN UP DAY, and Pageant rehearsals as announced for the Advent IV Pageant at 5 pm and our Christmas Eve Pageant at 4 pm.

Here is a list of our Christmas offerings:

Christmas Eve	4 pm	Family Service with Christmas Pageant
	8 pm	Holy Eucharist with Choir
	10:30 pm	Festival Eucharist with Choir and Incense
Christmas Day	10 am	Holy Eucharist
Christmas I (Dec. 28 )	10 am only	Christmas Lessons & Carols with Baptism

The Office will be closed from Christmas through January 2; however, I will be available to you for pastoral care as needed. My cell is 352-406-9204.

May your Advent be one of Holy Preparation and your Christmas one of Celebration of Joy,

Blessings,



Mother Meg

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## CHRISTMAS FLOWER CONTRIBUTIONS

If you wish to make a contribution toward this year's Christmas flowers in honor or memory of a loved one, Christmas Flower envelopes are available in the pews throughout the season of Advent and there is a Christmas Flower drop-down option available on Tithe.ly as well. The last day to submit contributions will be Sunday, December 21st.





# ***UNDERSTANDING THE LECTIONARY CYCLE AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RITE I AND RITE II IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH***

by The Very Rev. Janettarose L. Greene

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The rhythm of worship in the Episcopal Church is shaped not only by our prayers but also by the scriptures we hear and the language we use when we gather. Two important elements of this rhythm are the Lectionary Cycle—which determines the passages read each Sunday—and the choice between Rite I and Rite II in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Understanding these helps deepen our appreciation of how Scripture and tradition guide our common life of faith.

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## **THE LECTIONARY CYCLE: WALKING THROUGH SCRIPTURE TOGETHER**

The Episcopal Church uses the **Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)**, a three-year cycle of readings shared by many Christian denominations. Each year—**Year A, B, or C**—centers primarily on one of the Synoptic Gospels:

**2026 Year A:** Matthew

**2027 Year B:** Mark

**2028 Year C:** Luke

The Gospel of John weaves through all three years, particularly during seasons of Lent and Easter, and on some Sundays in Year B, since Mark is shorter than the other gospels.

Each Sunday includes four readings:

**The Old Testament lesson**

**A Psalm**

**A New Testament Epistle**

**A Gospel reading**

This structure ensures that, over three years, we hear the breadth of Scripture, encountering stories of creation, prophecy, wisdom, discipleship, and the early church. The lectionary carries us through the liturgical seasons: Advent's hopeful expectation, Lent's penitential reflection, Easter's triumph, and the long green season after Pentecost, when we explore Jesus' teachings and the growth of the early church.

The beauty of the lectionary is its communal nature; congregations across the world hear the same readings each week. It binds us to the larger church and invites us into a shared journey through God's story.

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## **RITE I AND RITE II: TWO VOICES OF ANGLICAN PRAYER**

While the lectionary shapes *what* we hear in worship, the *Book of Common Prayer* shapes *how* we pray. The 1979 Prayer Book provides two main styles of Eucharistic and Daily Office liturgy: **Rite I** and **Rite II**.

### **Rite I: Reverence in Traditional Language**

Rite I preserves the Elizabethan English characteristic of the 16th- and 17th-century prayer books. Its language ("thee," "thou," "beseech," "vouchsafe") reflects the cadence and devotional sensibilities of earlier Anglican worship. Rite I is often described as:

- More penitential in tone
- Formally structured
- Rich in poetic, archaic phrasing
- Centered on a profound sense of the holiness and majesty of God

For many, Rite I evokes a sense of continuity with centuries of Anglican tradition. It is commonly used during seasons of reflection, such as Advent and Lent, or by congregations that appreciate a classical liturgical voice. During the first few weeks of Advent, we will again be using Rite I liturgy.

## **Rite II: Reverence in Contemporary Language**

Rite II uses modern, accessible English. Its tone is:

- More expansive and less penitential
- Accessible to newcomers
- Rooted in the same theology as Rite I but expressed in contemporary language

This rite reflects the liturgical renewal movements of the 20th century, emphasizing clarity, participation, and connection to the language people use in everyday life. Many Episcopal congregations use Rite II for their Sunday Eucharist services.

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## **TWO RITES, ONE FAITH**

Even with differences in language and tone, Rite I and Rite II share the same core structure: proclamation of Scripture, confession, prayers, the Eucharistic feast, and the sending forth of God's people into the world. Both are expressions of the same Anglican theology and sacramental life.

The availability of two rites is a gift. It allows congregations to choose the language that best expresses their prayerful identity, whether rooted in historic tradition, contemporary expression, or a blend of both across the seasons of the church year.

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## **WALKING TOGETHER THROUGH SACRED TIME**

The Lectionary Cycle and the two rites of the *Book of Common Prayer* offer us multiple pathways into worship. Through the lectionary, we walk through the story of salvation year after year. Through our choice of rite, we find the language that helps us pray with sincerity and depth.

Both practices remind us that Episcopal worship is formed by ancient rhythms yet open to the evolving life of the Church. Whether in the solemn beauty of Rite I or the fresh clarity of Rite II, we continue to proclaim the same Gospel and gather at the same table, seeking to love God and serve the world in the way of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God!



### **References**

- Black, Vicki K. *Welcome to the Book of Common Prayer*. Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2005.
- Dator, James and Jan Nunley. *Many Parts One Body: How the Episcopal Church Works*. New York: Church Publishing, 2010.
- Pitts, David R. *Lift Up Your Hearts: Liturgies and Ceremonies of the Episcopal Church*. Kentucky: Crown Publishing, 2025.
- The Episcopal Handbook*. New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2015.



# ADVENT

Dec. 6, 9:30 am - 1 pm

## WISDOM

## FOR LIFE TRANSITIONS



Join St. Mary's clergy and parishioners for prayer, discussion, and quiet reflection.

...

We'll explore the nature of God's abiding presence with us through themes of letting go, waiting, and hope.



Advent Quiet Day 2025 will begin in the chapel and finish with lunch in Paca Hall. Use the QR Code to RSVP or Email: [Nicole@stmarysarlington.org](mailto:Nicole@stmarysarlington.org)

### ST MARY'S FAMILIES

## LET'S LISTEN TOGETHER

### CIRCLE #1

11.16. 25  
9:00 AM



VESTRY ROOM

JOIN US FOR A TIME OF REFLECTION AND VISIONING ON PARENTHOOD, CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND MUSIC MINISTRY

### CIRCLE #3

01.31.26  
9:30 AM



PACA HALL

### CIRCLE #2

12.8.25  
7:00 PM



VESTRY ROOM

CHILD CARE OFFERED ON 11.16 AND ON 1.31 UPON REQUEST

**WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

**WHAT KIND OF CHURCH FAMILY DO OUR CHILDREN NEED US TO BE?**

EMAIL [NICOLE@STMARYSARLINGTON.ORG](mailto:NICOLE@STMARYSARLINGTON.ORG) FOR MORE INFO

# ADVENT LESSONS & CAROLS

Sunday, December 7 at 5:00 pm

*St. Mary's Choirs herald the season of our Lord's Coming.*

*A festive reception follows in Paca Hall.*

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

# A DAY IN NDEBWE

by Leslie Ann Gerardo

It takes 90 minutes to make the journey from Dodoma to Ndebwe, and along the way, everything we saw was brown. Dust billowed around our car tires and left a film in our mouths and on our clothes. As we drove through one of the villages that lie along the way, I saw a woman sweeping her front yard in a vain attempt to somehow contain the dust and make it less of a nuisance.

Rural villages like Ndebwe have little infrastructure. Electric lines provide power to a few buildings (a recent innovation), but homes lack modern appliances or electronics, so the electricity is of limited use. There is also no indoor plumbing. Villagers (usually women) walk great distances to collect water, and “washrooms” consist of huts with open holes surrounded by concrete footholds.

Notwithstanding the parched earth and the challenging physical circumstances, there is a brightness in Ndebwe. Some of the brightness is physical: schoolchildren wear uniforms in deep jewel tones, and women wear beautiful printed fabrics in vibrant colors. But most of the brightness is spiritual.

The people we met in Ndebwe seemed to glow with joy. There was a lightness to them, a look of calmness and serenity that emanated from within. They do not seem bothered by what they lack in

material wealth; instead, they focus on what they have, which is a profoundly deep faith and an awareness of their identity as a community.



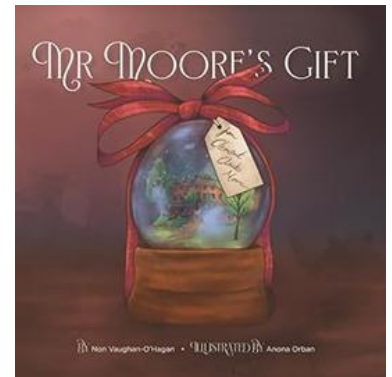
That joy was evident in the way in which they welcomed us to the village. As we entered Ndebwe, a band of people surrounded our vehicle, singing, dancing, and drumming. They escorted us to St. Andrew's church, where a large group had gathered to greet us, welcoming us in Swahili with outstretched hands and broad smiles. During the church service that followed, the intensity of the celebration increased. Sixteen different choirs representing each of Ndebwe parish's four churches sang and danced for us, with lyrics that expressed their happiness at our arrival in Ndebwe. At the community lunch that followed, the best of what they had was spread before us: rice, chicken, and meat. We were overwhelmed by their warmth and hospitality. Our ability to communicate directly was limited by language, but that did not preclude friendships from beginning to form. I felt at home in the village in a way I had not anticipated.

Heading back to Dodoma after our first day in Ndebwe, I felt like I could not contain my own feeling of well-being. It's as if joy is a contagion, and had spread from heart to heart through each interaction we had that day. That feeling grew more intense each time we returned to the village





to continue our relationship-building mission. Even now, several months after returning home to Virginia, the memory of our time in Ndebwe fills my soul, and I hunger to experience it again.



## ***A CHRISTMAS POEM***

by The Very Rev. Janettarose L. Greene

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Clement Clarke Moore (1779-1863) was an American writer, scholar, and real estate developer. He is perhaps best known as the author of the Christmas poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas,” written in 1822, which later became known by its opening line, *’Twas the Night Before Christmas* in 1844. Moore was the only child of Benjamin Moore, an Episcopal minister and rector of Trinity Church in New York City. The elder Moore would go on to become the Bishop of New York and president of Columbia College. Clement inherited farmland from his mother Charity Clarke Moore’s side of the family, which would during his lifetime become known as New York’s Chelsea district. It was there in 1818 that Clement Moore donated a large tract of land for the reestablishment of General Theological Seminary, where he would serve as a professor of Oriental and Greek literature from 1821 to 1850.

I hope you enjoy the short film about how Clement Clarke Moore came to write his famous poem, which was first published anonymously in the Troy Sentinel newspaper on December 23, 1823. The storyline is that it is almost Christmas in modern-day New York City, and Maggie, played by Skye Sconiers, wants to hear her favorite poem, *’Twas the Night Before Christmas*.

The award-winning short film titled *Mr. Moore’s Gift* can be found here: <https://www.gts.edu/mrmooresgift>, courtesy of General Theological Seminary. It is also available in paperback.

# ***TEN WAYS TO PROMOTE A MORE SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS***

by the Creation Care Ministry

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- 1. Reason for the Season.** Remember the true meaning of Christmas: to celebrate Jesus's birth; to share good times with family and friends; to connect with nature; to spread good cheer among everyone; to act counter to the excess, extravagance, and commercialism often associated with this season. Go to church all four Sundays in Advent to prepare for Christmas.
- 2. Lights.** Lower the impact of your holiday lighting: switch to LED lights; use smart meters or put lights on timers; switch to solar-powered lights outside.
- 3. Decorations/home.** Look for ways to reuse items: decorate annually with a reusable Advent calendar and door wreath; buy a live [tree](#) to plant, or compost your cut tree; hang a fresh wreath with natural decorations (not plastic) or use a cloth wreath; use natural materials (not plastic), such as heirloom ornaments, soy or beeswax candles; lower your thermostat and put on those fabulous Christmas sweaters and PJs!
- 4. Cards.** Look for ways to avoid waste: Make homemade cards; consider sending postcards instead of cards that require an envelope (less paper); use last year's cards to make this year's gift tags; recycle paper cards.
- 5. Gifts.** Consider gift decisions and how to deliver them: buy local and support the St. Mary's Outreach partners; give an experience (movie, dinner, travel), or a gift card (e-version if it works), or a hand-written book of coupons – instead of more stuff; give planted trees in someone's name (such as [onetreeplanted.org](http://onetreeplanted.org)) or support a charity; buy food for Santa Maria parishioners; buy new mittens for the Mitten Tree; donate a used coat to the rack; buy plastic-free gifts; share your time and talents as well as your treasure; wrap gifts with recycled paper, fabric, children's artwork, maps, or the comics; pick up something in-store while doing other errands instead of having it delivered; find alternatives to wrapping paper (<https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/gift-wrapping-alternatives/>).
- 6. Food.** Make conscious choices about food: buy your food from local farmers markets; purchase items with less packaging; reduce your food waste (eat up leftovers and compost more); avoid one-time-use plastic glasses and instead rent or buy reusable glasses like aluminum (or sponsor a BYOG party).
- 7. Clothes.** Think about your outfit: wear something you already own; rent, or buy from consignment/thrift stores like [The Thrifty Church Mouse at The Falls Church Episcopal](#) or [Northern Virginia Family Services thrift shop](#); consider where and how clothes are made (sequins come from PVC).
- 8. Travel.** Make smart travel choices: consider not just monetary cost but environmental cost; buy carbon offsets for your travel; take a more fuel-efficient car on longer trips; only bring what you need; be eco-smart when staying at hotels (e.g., use the bath towels more than once); take public transportation, where possible; walk!
- 9. Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle.** Be intentional in your choices: buy less (reuse bubble wrap and sealed air or drop it off at the Parcel Plus store at Lee/Langston-Harrison Center to be used again); reuse everything possible, think before putting it in the rubbish. Practice visible mending.
- 10. Caring for Creation is Celebrating God.** Consider that every time you stop and think about caring for creation, you are really saying a prayer of thanks and hope for the future.



# 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**

Questions? Contact Jackie Vigil or Rev. Nicole Lambelet

Registration forms available online soon!



## Who should go?

- Current 8th-12<sup>th</sup> 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

**DEC. 14 @ 11:30am:**  
Interest Meeting

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

**FEB. 8 @ 11:30am:** Chili  
Fundraiser with the Bishop

**March:** Tools Training TBD





# FROM THE VESTRY

Suzanne Stroup, Senior Warden

As the Thanksgiving weekend wraps up, St. Mary's Vestry would like to extend our gratitude for our parishioners, ministries, outreach partners, clergy and staff. Looking back on November alone, it's amazing to realize all the good work done. We want to especially thank all of you who have pledged your gifts of time, talent, and treasure for the year ahead during our "Love in Action" stewardship campaign. With the financial pledges received so far and those to follow\*, we will begin work on an impactful 2026 budget—one that hopefully will provide opportunities to deepen our faith, create fellowship opportunities with one another, and reach beyond our red doors to love and serve our neighbors.

With the coming of Advent, we also welcome a new church year. For St. Mary's, this year will be significant, as we begin to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our parish and take the next steps in our rector transition. As you have learned throughout the Fall, your clergy and vestry have engaged with the parish to dive deep into what it means to be a church in transition. Behind the scenes, St. Mary's staff has been working to organize and streamline our operations. Much work is being done now to prepare for our exciting future ahead.

So what's next? During this season of Advent, in the spirit of celebrating the many gifts we all bring to St. Mary's, we would like each parishioner to consider the importance of our Discernment Committee: this is the group of parishioners who will help us select our next Rector. As of now, the

Vestry, Mother Meg, and the Diocese of Virginia are working out the specifics of the actual committee makeup and requirements, but we will need insights and help from all of you to identify those individuals who can lead us in this next phase. The Discernment Committee work will not begin until May, but your Vestry will be working between now and then to select a committee that best represents the many parts that make up the whole church that is St. Mary's.

How can you help? The Vestry asks you to prayerfully discern who might be a good candidate for this role. Look around in the pews while you are worshipping, see those parishioners who are with you during fellowship and ministry work, and consider who might be able to lead us in this way. What qualities would make a good candidate? Think of that person who is a **good listener**, one who has a **curious mind and heart**, and one who can hear **others' perspectives, interpret, and adapt**. Vestry will be looking for people who have these skills and represent the diversity and breadth of our parish. This is a special role for a most important committee. If you know of someone you'd like to nominate (or if you yourself would like to be considered), please email the nomination to the office ([office@stmarysarlington.org](mailto:office@stmarysarlington.org)) with the name of your nominee and your brief thoughts on why you think this candidate would be an excellent choice. All nominations must be received by January 15, 2026, as Vestry will begin deliberations early next year to choose this Discernment Committee with the intent of announcing its membership at the annual meeting in early May 2026.

Additionally, St. Mary's wants to hear from each of you as we look to our parish's future. To that end,



during the season of Advent, you will find a new question posted each Sunday on a large **white board in Paca Hall** asking for your thoughts. Write your answers directly on the board. Don't be shy! We need to hear from as many parishioners as possible. The Vestry will use this invaluable information at our upcoming retreat as we envision, revise, and affirm our mission statement for the years ahead.

St. Mary's is so blessed with the incredible gifts God has bestowed upon us, and we are grateful to be in communion with one another during this special season of light and hope as we await the birth of Jesus Christ. Thank you for walking this journey with us, and for being a part of this amazing community.

*\*If you have not yet made a financial pledge yet for 2026, there is certainly still time and we truly need your pledge! Simply use the QR code below to let us know what financial gifts you can share with God and St. Mary's for the year ahead. Your contributions will go a long way toward helping our neighbors in need, and supporting the staff, clergy and church. Thank you!*



## DECEMBER CALENDAR

### OUR SERVICES

#### SUNDAY

8 am, The Holy Eucharist  
(Fellowship following)

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

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

7 pm *The Story* with Mother Meg

#### THURSDAY

6:30 pm Youth Choir (Choir Room)

7:30 pm Adult Choir (Choir Room)

#### SUNDAY

6 pm Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group  
1st & 2nd Sundays\*

(\*December only; in other months, meetings on 1st & 3rd Sundays)

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Sat., Dec. 6	(9:30 am-1 pm)	<b>Advent Quiet Day</b>
Sun. Dec. 7	(9 am & 11 am)	<b>Advent Mart</b>
	(12 pm)	<b>20s &amp; 30s Group Lunch</b>
Sat., Dec. 13	(9 am-12 pm)	<b>Advent Clean-Up Day</b>
Sun. Dec. 21	(5 pm)	<b>Christmas Pageant</b>
Wed. Dec. 24	(4 pm)	<b>Family Service w/ Christmas Pageant</b>
	(8 pm)	<b>Holy Eucharist w/Choir</b>
	(10:30 pm)	<b>Festival Eucharist w/Choir</b>
Thurs. Dec. 25	(10 am)	<b>Holy Eucharist</b>
Sun., Dec. 28	(10 am only)	<b>Christmas Lessons &amp; Carols</b>

# St. Mary's Coat & Mitten Drive

NOVEMBER 30TH-DECEMBER 14TH 2025  
2609 N GLEBE RD, ARLINGTON, VA 22207

Please donate gloves and mittens, preferably water resistant!, and new to gently used coat!



**PathForward**  
Together, we end homelessness.

**DOORWAYS**



ST. MARY'S CHILDREN, YOUTH AND  
PARENTS ARE INVITED FOR OUR  
NEXT FAMILY FELLOWSHIP EVENT!

**DINNER, FUN AND  
CHRISTMAS  
COOKIE EXCHANGE**

**DEC 12 6-8PM**

RSVP FOR THIS EVENT AT THE  
ERVIN'S HOME AND BRING YOUR  
FAVORITE COOKIES TO SHARE!



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

# DECEMBER 2025

**SUN**

**MON**

**TUE**

**WED**

**THU**

**FRI**

**SAT**

30 Advent Wreath Making at 9am and 11:15am; Sunday School, 9am; Pageant Children's Chapel at 10am	1 *Collect new or gently used coats, mittens and gloves and bring by 12/14	2 Youth Confirmation Class	3	4	5	6 Advent Quiet Day for Adults, 9:30-1pm *Childcare available upon request
7 Sunday School, Youth Forum, 9am; Advent Mart, 9am-Noon; Pageant Children's Chapel, 10am Advent Lessons and Carols, 5pm followed by Youth Group Dinner and Ornaments 6-7:30pm	8 Parent Listening Session with Rev. Nicole, 7-8pm	9 Youth Confirmation Class	10	11	12 Family Fellowship Event and Cookie Exchange at the Ervins, 6-8pm	13 Advent Clean Up Day 9am-noon, great service project for youth and families!
14 Sunday School, Youth, Adult Forums, 9am Pageant Children's Chapel, 10am Mission Trip Interest Meeting, 11:30am Youth White Elephant Party 6-7:30pm *Final Day to bring in Coats and Mittens!	15	16	17	18	19	20 Pageant Rehearsal for 12/21 cast, 9-10:30am; Pageant Rehearsal for 12/24 cast, 10:30-noon
21 Sunday School, Youth, Adult Forums, 9am Pageant Children's Chapel, 10am Christmas Pageant, 5pm (Nursery Available) followed by Cookies and Cocoa!	22	23	24 Christmas Pageant 4pm (doors open at 3pm, Nursery available 3-6pm) Holy Eucharist 8pm Holy Eucharist 10:30pm	25 Holy Eucharist 10am	26	27
28 Christmas Lessons and Carols and Baptism, 10am (only service of the day)	29	30	31	1	2	





# A HEARTFELT THANK-YOU TO OUR LOGO COMMITTEE!

We want to express our sincere gratitude to Maria DiPasquantonio, Derek Greten-Harrison, and the Very Rev. Janettarose Greene for their exceptional collaboration in bringing our new church logo and 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo to life. Their dedication and creativity have ensured that we have a viable, vibrant, and enduring logo to represent our church as we celebrate this significant milestone.

Through their generous contributions of time, talent, and other resources, they have created a multi-use logo that will guide us into years filled with excitement, reflection, and high expectations.

Thank you for your hard work and vision! We are truly blessed to have such a dynamic and creative trio within our St. Mary's community. Here's to a wonderful year ahead!

Logo I: 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Logo II: St. Mary's Episcopal Church Logo



## UPCOMING MUSICAL OFFERINGS

### *Advent Lessons & Carols*

Sunday, December 7, 5:00 pm

This traditional service of Lessons & Carols will be led by St. Mary's Choirs, clergy, and readers. Musical offerings include carols composed by Richard Webster, Fred Ferko, Peter Hallock, and William Harris. Adult, teen, and youth singers will participate. A reception follows the service in Paca Hall.

### *An Epiphany Procession*

Tuesday, January 6, 7:00 pm

This service is led by St. Mary's Choir together with St. Mary's Youth in celebration of Christ's light in the world. This new offering at St. Mary's for Epiphany includes the procession of incense, water, and wine, the annual procession of the Three Kings, and ends as the congregation shares that light with the world with an outdoor procession.

## CHOIRS FOR YOUTH & ADULTS

Anytime is a great time to join a choir at St. Mary's, but perhaps schedule changes in the new year will make your participation possible. Please contact Dr. Hooker ([gregory@stmarysarlington.org](mailto:gregory@stmarysarlington.org)) to learn more about our choirs for young people and adults. Anyone who has a love of singing, regardless of experience level, is encouraged to come check out all that the community of singers, making music together and contributing to the life of St. Mary's, is all about.

## MUSIC FUND

Thanks to all who have contributed to St. Mary's Music Fund so far this year! Your gifts are greatly appreciated and help fund musical offerings such as Choir Camps for youth choristers, All Saints' Requiem, and Easter instrumentalists. If you have not yet given to the Fund, please consider it as a part of your year-end charitable contributions.



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## *HOW WE SPEND OUR DAYS IS HOW WE SPEND OUR LIVES (PART I)*

by The Very Rev. Janettarose L. Greene

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As the holiday season approaches, it's easy to get swept away in the flurry of events and activities. This year, let's take a moment to slow down and truly savor each day of our Christmas preparations. Mother Susan Forshey (from the Contemplative Cottage) has created a calendar that goes from November 15 through Epiphany on January 6. This calendar offers simple daily practices to cultivate joy and gratitude, drawing inspiration from the 6th century Celtic Christian tradition, where we celebrate Advent over 40 days, beginning earlier to include Thanksgiving and allowing for a more intentional preparation for Christ's coming amidst the hustle and bustle of modern life.



## Ideas for Living Joyfully: Forty Days of Celtic Advent and the Twelve Days of Christmas 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Practice Grace. No need to do them all or every day.</b>  <b>Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart!</b></p> <p>Nativity journey – Place Mary and Joseph in one corner of the room; the wise men in another; the shepherds, another. Keep Jesus hidden. Set up the stable with animals and enjoy helping each figure journey to Bethlehem.</p>						<p><b>November 15</b>  <b>Celtic Advent Begins</b>  Visit a beautiful spot in or near your home. Breathe and listen. How is God preparing you for Christ's birth?</p>
<p><b>16</b>  Spend time with a favourite image of art.</p>	<p><b>17</b>  Enjoy grilled cheese &amp; tomato soup or another comfort dish.</p>	<p><b>18</b>  Give thanks for one thing you enjoy in your work.</p>	<p><b>19</b>  Look at your favourite photos, share them and tell stories.</p>	<p><b>20</b>  Say Hi to a person standing on the fringes.</p>	<p><b>21</b>  Take a loved one on a walk, outside or down memory lane or both.</p>	<p><b>22</b>  <b>CS Lewis Day</b>  Go on a nature walk and look for God's creatures.  <b>Aslan Lives!!</b></p>
<p><b>23</b>  Smile at a stranger and enjoy their smile!  <i>Move Mary &amp; Joseph closer.</i></p>	<p><b>24</b>  Make a meal for someone in need or visit someone who is lonely</p>	<p><b>25</b>  List what you are thankful for, tell God, tell each other.</p>	<p><b>26</b>  Give someone you love a long hug.</p>	<p><b>27</b>  Write a gratitude note to a family member or friend, hide it in their pocket or lunch.</p>	<p><b>28</b>  Notice the really small things in life, like bugs or dust bunnies (resist the urge to sweep them away!)</p>	<p><b>29</b>  Take a friend to tea. Leave the smartphone in your bag.</p>
<p><b>30</b>  <b>Liturgical Advent Begins</b>  Welcome a new person at church.</p>	<p><b>December 1</b>  Read or Tell stories to loved ones.  <i>Move the Wise Men closer.</i></p>	<p><b>2</b>  Sing some favorite songs--with others, if you can.</p>	<p><b>3</b>  Take a walk and enjoy the Christmas lights.</p>	<p><b>4</b>  Call a friend &amp; tell them one thing you appreciate about them.</p>	<p><b>5</b>  Play a game from childhood or with a little person in your life.</p>	<p><b>6</b>  Bake or make something that smells delicious, and give it away.</p>
<p><b>7</b>  Kneel down when you greet &amp; talk to a child.</p>	<p><b>8</b>  Look out the window for 5 minutes &amp; notice life.</p>	<p><b>9</b>  Write a love note or color a picture for a child in your life.</p>	<p><b>10</b>  Send a loved one on a treasure hunt today. Give them clues &amp; giggle a lot.</p>	<p><b>11</b>  Say Hi to people behind the shop counters. Wish them a good day.</p>	<p><b>12</b>  Notice the eye- color of people close to you and <i>marvel at beauty.</i></p>	<p><b>13</b>  Light candles for whatever place or situation breaks your heart and pray for God's joy there.</p>
<p><b>14</b>  <b>Gaudete Sunday</b>  Read Mary's Song: Luke 1:46-55   Light a pink candle for JOY  <i>Move Mary &amp; Joseph closer.</i></p>	<p><b>15</b>  Read a story out loud, read a story to your friend, child, parent, or spouse.</p>	<p><b>16</b>  Listen to and share some favourite music that makes you smile.</p>	<p><b>17</b>  <b>The "O" Antiphons: Wisdom</b>  (Isa. 11:2-3)  Who in your life offers wise counsel? Thank them.  <i>Move the Wise Men closer.</i></p>	<p><b>18</b>  <b>Lord</b>  (Isa 33:22)  Ask God how he wants to be the Lord of your life. Listen.</p>	<p><b>19</b>  <b>Root of Jesse</b>  (Isa 11:10)  A Jesse Tree remembers God's faithfulness. Write memories of God's faithfulness on paper ornaments &amp; hang them on the tree.</p>	<p><b>20</b>  <b>Key of David</b>  (Rev. 3:7)  What door of your life do you need God to open &amp; bring grace? God has the key to every door.</p>
<p><b>21</b>  <b>Morning Star</b>  (Isa 9:2)  Pray for God's light to shine in a place or situation that is breaking your heart.</p>	<p><b>22</b>  <b>King of Nations</b>  (Isa 9:6)  Listen to Handel's Messiah: "For Unto us a Child is Born" What does it mean to you for Christ to be born?</p>	<p><b>23</b>  <b>Emmanuel</b>  (Isa 7:14)  How is God with you? How are you God's presence to others?  Sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"</p>	<p><b>24</b>  <b>Christmas Eve</b>  Where have you experienced God's Joy this Advent?  <i>Mary &amp; Joseph enter the stable</i></p>	<p><b>25</b>  <b>The Birth of Jesus Christ</b>  Make a joy list.  <i>Put Jesus in the Nativity; add the Shepherds, too.</i>   <b>The 12 Days Begin!</b></p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>St. Stephen's Day</b>  <b>The First Martyr</b>   John 1:1-5  Genesis 1:3</p>	<p><b>27</b>  <b>St. John the Evangelist</b>  Psalm 139:11-12  <b>The Wise Men journey closer each day...</b></p>
<p><b>28</b>  <b>The Holy Innocents</b>  Pray for children around the world  Matt. 19:14</p>	<p><b>29</b>  Isaiah 58:10  Bring flowers to someone who needs their day brightened.</p>	<p><b>30</b>  Isa 60:19  Notice the really small things in life.</p>	<p><b>31</b>  Ps 43:3  Write a list of who and what you are thankful for from 2025.</p>	<p><b>January 1</b>  Matt 5:14-16  Take a moment to be kind to yourself: plan a day of joy.</p>	<p><b>2</b>  John 8:12  What are your hopes for 2026? Pray for God's wisdom.</p>	<p><b>3</b>  1 Peter 2:9  Write a thank you note and mail it.</p>
<p><b>4</b>  <b>Romans 8</b>  Choose 3 healthful habits to practice for this New Year</p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>Twelfth Night, Epiphany Eve</b>  Luke 4:1-21  <i>Move the Wise Men to the stable</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>January 6 – February 1: Epiphany and Epiphanytide</b>  On Epiphany, January 6, chalk your lintels (doorframe) and the lintels of friends' houses with the Epiphany blessing 20+C+M+B+26. The numbers represent the year. CMB represents the names of the three wise men (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar), and also the Latin phrase, <i>Christus Mansionem Benedicat</i> – Christ Bless this House!</p>				

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

Calendar created by Mother Susan Forshey, SCP. Find me at [ContemplativeCottage.com](http://ContemplativeCottage.com) and [mothersusanforshey.substack.com](mailto:mothersusanforshey.substack.com).

Please share freely!



# A LITTLE HISTORY FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Pam Frick

*"Such a complete life is pictured in the Church's year. It has its Advent, Nativity, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday. It fills the year with its increasing, slowly maturing beauty. This is the true meaning of the year, with all its sacred seasons. Let us be true Churchmen, and give it all its richness."* — Phillips Brooks, Bishop of Massachusetts

I have always found the liturgical year to be a gift and Advent is my favorite season. It allows a reboot, an opportunity to start anew. It is a season offering hope and expectation. We not only await the birth of our Savior; we are offered the hope of the Christ's Second Coming when all will be made new.

It is the beginning of a new year—not setting goals like losing ten pounds or reading more books or taking that trip to Malta. Rather, it is a period when we can prayerfully evaluate the differences we need to make in our day-to-day actions, to optimize how we live out our faith in this challenging world. The annual liturgical cycle of experiencing the birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus offers us a template to follow as servants of God on earth.

I also love Advent because it offers time to wait, slow down, and prepare for the coming season. It reminds us that "waiting" is not passive. That is a difficult concept in our current culture. Our 'let's not waste a second,' juggle-your-calendar desire for instant gratification is a rampant reminder of how counter-cultural the Church is called to be.



Even St. Mary's has struggled to maintain a sedentary pace in the midst of Christmas arrangements and shopping frenzy. The traditions we have practiced over the years are two-fold. We try to offer liturgical and formational support; and, we offer "shopping" opportunities to support our neighbors in need.

**Our seasonal outreach programs** have varied over the years. Some are long-established traditions. **The Mitten Tree** has been an Advent staple since 1985. Sunday School Superintendent Claudia Boswell launched the tradition of collecting mittens for distribution by

Bread for the City to youngsters who needed them. Some years scarves were added or work gloves; and the distributing non-profit has varied. Still, the Mitten Tree is a visible reminder of how a little can go a long way to offer comfort. This early view of the Mitten Tree (*above left*) behind the pews shows the back of the Nave before the 1997-98 renovation. The doorway in the rear is where the Vigil Light chapel is now. The library (books in back alcove) moved downstairs to the Vestry Room.



From the late 1980s through the early 2000s, we participated in a **Samaritan Ministry Christmas Party** at a D.C. church. Gifts were gathered and then low-income parents could come and shop for their children while the children visited Santa or did craft projects overseen by volunteers. A meal was often provided. Parishioners provided the presents and presence. (*Left*: 1997 party with youth Mary Beth Rowell & Margaret Parker (kneeling). *Right*: in 2004, youth help at one of the gift tables.)





A little later, our Outreach program moved to **Adopt-a-Family**, where an Arlington non-profit provided us with the names and ages of children for 10+ families and parishioners would sign up for specific children's needs/wishes. Gifts would be wrapped, collected and then delivered to the agency for the families.

**The Alternative Gift Mart** has become a staple event. In 2007, Outreach introduced the event's offerings stating: "A gift that keeps on giving will mean so much more this Christmas. Your donations and purchases will help underwrite services and programs offered through these local, regional, and global ministries." Support was raised for groups as diverse as AFAC, The LaSalle School Birthday Book Program, Rebuilding St. Patrick's & Katrina Relief, and Holy Trinity School of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It has taken different forms (and names) over the years, but the intent is the same. The gifts you purchase all aid the mission of non-profits, many of whom our Outreach has supported. We even had a few years where Sunday School classes adopted charities and made "gifts" for purchase. The proceeds then went to support each class's non-profit. (This year our Mart will be Sunday, Dec. 7, so bring cash or your checkbook!)

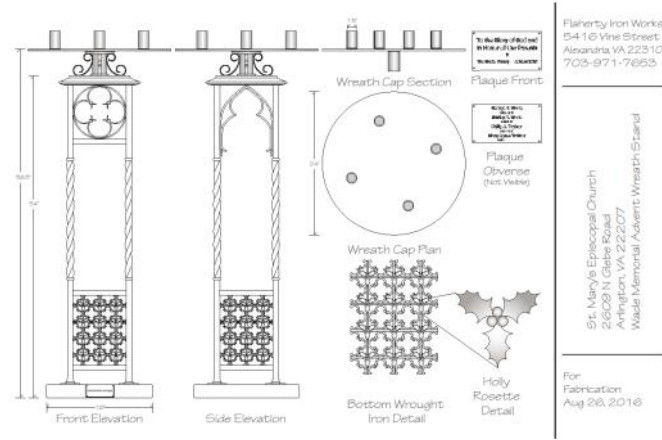
Sometimes we had a surprise request. One of my favorites came from parishioner Lynda Roades, who was working in Iraq. She asked if we could possibly send teddy bears for the children in hospitals there. We had so many, she was able to send bears to hospitals in Afghanistan as well! Whatever the program, be it coat drive or bears, we have reminded ourselves that in this season of commercial excess, there is a better way to celebrate the "Reason for the Season."



**Our liturgical traditions** for the season are staples to keep us connected to the season. We begin on the First Sunday of Advent with **Advent Wreath making**. This practice has shifted back and forth between forum time and the 5:00 pm service with a potluck dinner following. We also light the **Advent Wreath in the Nave** (and chapel), adding a candle each week as we progress through the Scriptural story of the season. A few years ago, we decided to have a family at each service light the candle(s) and offer a prayer. In 2016, parishioners Kevin & Andrea Wade donated a new Advent Wreath stand. Below is Kevin's description of what inspired them and how it was designed:

*"Each Advent season I sat in the front left of the nave and looked at the previous wooden stand that was painted gold. Although it was no doubt the product of some woodworker's talents, it had certainly seen better days and did not really fit in with the design elements of the altar. Following the deaths of Andrea's father and my parents, we thought it an opportunity to*

*donate a new advent wreath stand in their honor. Drawing off the Paschal Candle stand, we designed the Advent Wreath stand with a similar structure and elements. To make the stand more fitting to the Advent season, I incorporated a quatrefoil pattern on the base panels with holly leaves and berries superimposed at the intersections of the quatrefoils (above right). As you know, holly represents the crown of thorns with the blood of Christ. It is used in the Advent and Christmas seasons as it is an evergreen – representing eternal life through*





*Christ Flaberty's Ironworks of Alexandria (who did most of our ironwork) fabricated and finished most of the stand, except for the quatrefoil panels. They were made from 1/4"-inch steel plate waterjet cut by a specialty workshop in Wyoming. The project commenced in July of 2016 and was completed and installed in time for the 2016 Advent season."*



**Advent Lessons and Carols** at the 5:00 pm service is another St. Mary's tradition. The choirs present music of the season to accompany Scripture readings that tell the story of Advent from prophecy to nativity. This year the service will be held December 7.

Of course, Advent is also the time the children prepare for the **Christmas Pageant(s)** organized by the patient support of directors, costumers, and both sheep and angel wranglers. This year we will have two pageants: on December 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.



**Formation offerings** provided spiritual sustenance as well. In 2015, the four services of Advent incorporated an Instructed Eucharist, exploring a specific portion of the liturgy each week and then creating a booklet at the end for further reference.



Over the years, different resources have been created to parishioners and their families for use with their wreaths at home. Some were printed materials with a collect and reading; some were bulletin inserts or mediation booklets written by clergy or a staff member.

Sunday forums gave insights into the blessings (and challenges) of the season. Samples include a series on our perception and use of Time: Kronos (chronological time) versus Kairos (God's time), and how we interact with each (2012); the study of W.H. Auden's poem "Christmas Oratorio" on the Incarnation (2011); three-part Advent series by the Rev. Kathy Grieb on Repentance, Trust & Faith, and Hope (2003); and even a psychologist talking about the challenges of family relationships during the holidays.

The chance to slow down and breathe is offered with an **Advent Quiet Morning** when a theme or topic is shared and the opportunity to sit for intervals in silence is given. Our Quiet Morning this year will be Saturday, Dec. 6.

I close with one of my favorite seasonal poems, "After Annunciation" by Madeleine L'Engle:

*This is the irrational season  
when love blooms bright and wild.  
Had Mary been filled with reason  
There'd have been no room for the child.*

As our rational minds make "to do" lists and stress about deadlines, let your heart rule and choose at least one Advent offering that helps you to breathe and slow down as we await the greatest gift we will ever receive.



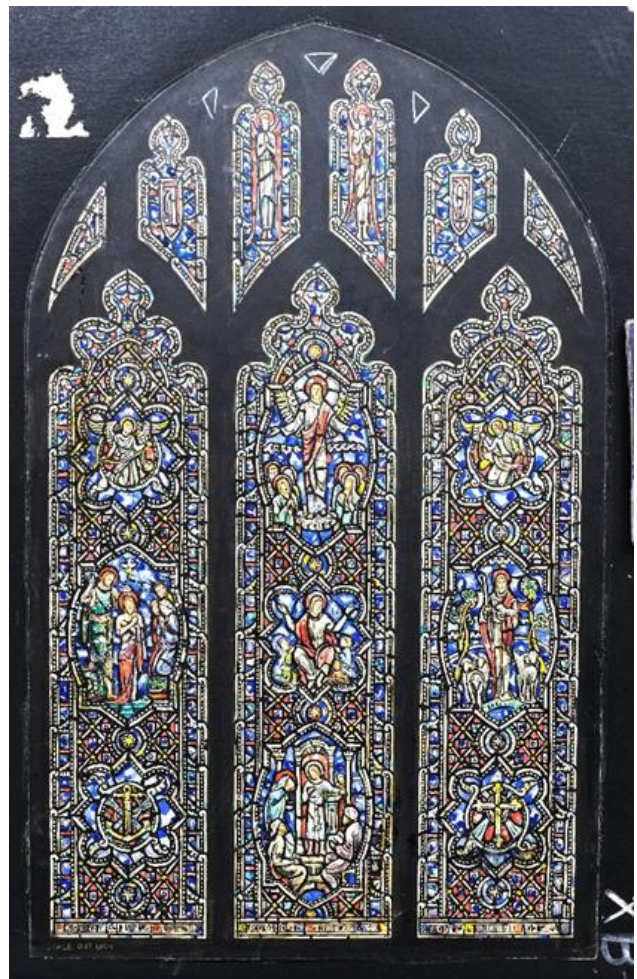
## ADDENDUM to November's article on the Rixey Window

I had contacted the Willet Glass Company for additional information about the Window, but only heard from them after I'd submitted last month's article. Their representative talked to me for nearly an hour as and also sent me copies of the correspondence between Dr. Blackwell and Henry Lee Willett. Three things I will share.

First, while William Willett (who founded the company) was a very talented artist, especially with portraiture, his son Henry's gifts were in his knowledge and affinity for architecture and complimentary adornment. I was told that when he took a commission, especially with a church, he would visit the space and sit, sometimes for hours, to understand how the light changed during the day and how it would impact the positioning of the window. The window's structure also needed to align with the design of the building, inside and out. He was very "hands-on".

Second, the church was offered a couple of designs. The one below on the left was not accepted.

Finally, the sketch on the right is prior to the final for the current window, with several changes made: the medallion of Christ and the Doctors was to be replaced by the Nativity; the Baptism medallion was to be replaced by Christ and the Doctors; and the Good Shepherd image was to be replaced by the Baptism. The anchor and cross cartouches were to be reversed so the anchor was above the Admiral's name; and the tracery was redesigned for the angels holding shields each with a symbol of an evangelist. The Memorial Committee and Dr. Blackwell were actively involved in the final outcome.



# *BEING CHURCH DURING WARTIME*

by the Revs. Meg Ingalls & Janettarose L. Greene

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On Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, St. Mary's hosted the Very Rev. Canon Richard Sewell, Dean of St. George's College, Jerusalem, and an Anglican priest with decades of experience in parish ministry, theological education, and leadership within the worldwide Anglican Communion. Since taking up his post in Jerusalem, he has overseen the College's mission of hospitality, pilgrimage, and spiritual formation, welcoming clergy and laypeople from around the globe to encounter the Holy Land with depth, integrity, and compassion.

Dean Sewell is a committed advocate for justice and reconciliation, regularly engaging with the complex realities of life in Israel and Palestine. His leadership is marked by a pastoral heart, a thoughtful theological voice, and a deep commitment to standing alongside local Christian communities through seasons of profound challenge. He writes and speaks widely on faith, pilgrimage, and the Church's witness in times of conflict. He shared his insights and reflections on what has happened

since October 7, 2023.

Dean Sewell says that the events of October 7, 2023, did not emerge from a vacuum. They were part of a 75-year cycle of violence, loss, and trauma experienced by both Palestinians and Israelis. Yet the period from 2023 to 2025 has brought an intensity of suffering unlike anything in recent memory. The Hamas attacks of October 7<sup>th</sup> shocked Israel deeply, and Israel's subsequent military response brought unprecedented destruction to Gaza.

For Palestinians, Christians, and Muslims alike, this war has been a continuation of decades of displacement, blockade, and military bombardment. For Israelis, it has awakened long-buried fears shaped by generations of trauma. The result has been a catastrophic loss of life and the near-total destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, leaving a wound that will mark the conscience of the world for years to come.

In this context, many have asked how the Church should respond. Tragically, much of the global Christian community struggled to speak clearly or courageously as events unfolded. While crowds around the world called for justice and an end to the violence, many religious and political leaders hesitated, fearing the consequences of criticism. Some found their voice only months later; others never did. A few, such as Pope Francis and bishops who travelled to the region, offered meaningful solidarity, reminding the world that protecting innocent life is a sacred duty.

Yet even where the Church's prophetic voice faltered, its ministries of compassion did not. Through the extraordinary generosity of partners around the world, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem has continued



to serve those in need. Al Ahli Hospital, struck repeatedly by missiles, has cared for the wounded, the sick, and the dying with remarkable courage. The Princess Basma Centre has expanded its work with vulnerable children, embodying the healing presence of Christ amid devastation. These ministries, small yet powerful, have shown what it means to be Christ's hands in a time of war.

Local Christian leaders have also offered moral clarity. Pastor Munther Isaac has spoken boldly against the suffering inflicted on Gaza, insisting that Christ is found "under the rubble" with the oppressed. His voice has echoed the anguish of a people who have endured unimaginable loss.

Dean Sewell says, "In times like these, people often ask where we can find hope?" Christian hope is not optimism, nor is it an easy answer to pain. Our hope, says Dean Sewell, "is rooted in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the promise that God is with us even in the deepest suffering, and in the assurance of a life beyond death. This is the hope that does not disappoint."

Being the Church during war tests our faith to its limits. It forces us to reexamine what we believe, to let go of what is inadequate, and to cling to the core of our faith: that even when we are "hard-pressed on every side," we are not crushed; "persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed." In this conviction, we continue the work that has always defined the Church: binding wounds, standing with the vulnerable, and bearing witness to the life of Christ in our midst.

Finally, we want to thank Sarah Gregg and Leslie Lenny for the extraordinary work they put into planning this forum. Sarah and Leslie, your dedication, creativity, and careful attention to every detail made the event a true success. We are deeply grateful for your leadership and the generous spirit you brought to this event.

*Margaret* *Sanctus*



# THANK YOU, ST. MARY'S!

Dear St. Mary's Parishioners,

On behalf of our Thanksgiving Bag team, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for your extraordinary generosity this Thanksgiving. We set a goal for our annual shopping-bag drive and you didn't just meet it, you exceeded it with remarkable compassion and enthusiasm!

Because of your kindness, more families in our community will sit down to a plentiful holiday meal and feel the warmth of being cared for and remembered. Your commitment to serving others continues to be a shining example of what it means to share God's love in practical, meaningful ways.

Thank you for giving so abundantly. May this season bring you and your loved ones peace and joy.

With deep appreciation,

*Maria*

Maria A. DiPasquantonio  
2025 Thanksgiving Bag Chair

