



# St. Mary's Newsletter

December 2011

## Coffee Hour Hosts:

December	Alice and Chris Min	628-4614
January	Maureen & Clayton Yocum	349-5190
February	Ann Jones	337-8521
	Jeanne Torbert	349-5554

## Parish Annual Meeting

Our 307<sup>th</sup> parish annual meeting was held on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Parish House. The parishioners overwhelmingly approved the 2012 budget. After the meeting, the parishioners enjoyed a sumptuous luncheon, courtesy of the Vestry.

## Birthdays



December 4	Cassie Vanbuskirk
December 15	Jim Rainier
December 18	Jerry Stogner
December 19	Robert Hunsberger
December 24	Barbara Lee Darnell
December 28	Phyllis Jones
December 30	Pat Ervin

## Dates and Events to Remember

- Brown Baggers' meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.
- Group home visit on December 15<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m.
- Uniform Closet on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.
- Parish Christmas Pageant and Dinner on Saturday, December 17, 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.
- The Christmas flower offering envelopes are now available. Please turn in the envelopes on or before December 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Christmas service on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.
- Food for the Pantry for the needy, first Sunday of each month. Suggestions include canned 100% fruit juice, single cups of fruit, pudding and Jell-O, staples such as peanut butter, pasta sauce, and meat soups, tuna, spaghetti, baked beans, spam etc. Please check dates of expiration on packages – no expired foods.

## Anniversaries



December 25	Jack and Anne Hallman
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## Usher Schedule

December	Charles Hawk
January	Allen Jones
February	Harlan Dewey

## Altar Guild Schedule

December	Sharon Hawk Debbie Stogner Kim Vanbuskirk
January	Emilia Behr Cathy Driscoll
February	Ann Jones Jeanne Torbert

## Reader Schedule

December	Debbie Stogner
January	Alan Behr
February	Elaine Muhlbauer

## Parish Life Day

The Parish Life Day for the Diocese of Delaware was held on November 19<sup>th</sup> at St. Ann's Episcopal School in Middletown. It was very well attended. There were workshops as well as many displays and information on the activities the Diocese participates and supports.

The Board for the Women of the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware was held in the afternoon. As you may be aware, for years, Mary has been a "member at large for Sussex County." A new Board was elected and a re-organization of the Board was put in place. Instead of President and Vice-President, we now will have Chairman and Vice Chairman. The new Chairman elected is Nancy Hitch from St. Philip's of Laurel and the Vice Chairman elected is Mary Parsons of St.

Mary's of Bridgeville. All women who attend St. Mary's are considered "members" of the Women of the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware. If you have questions, please talk with Mary.

### *The Red Wagon*

There will be a small wagon with envelopes on the vestibule table to collect cash donations for the Food Pantry. The cash will be given to the Methodist Church to buy food. These envelopes may be put into the collection plates.

### *School Supply Collection*

A school supply collection for the teachers will take place in January and a list of needed items can be obtained from Alice.

The school nurses also need children's underpants, socks and sneakers or other types of shoes for accidents at schools. This is usually needed at the beginning of the year but may be needed at other times as well.

### *Christmas Pageant and Dinner*

The Christmas Pageant and Dinner will be at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 17 in the Parish Hall.

We will begin with the pageant at 5:00 p.m. There will be the nativity readings from St. Luke's and St. Matthew's Gospels. In addition to the scripture readings, poems will be read, followed by a Christmas carols. The children will act out the pageant.

Dinner will be served after the pageant.

The congregation is warmly invited to the pageant and dinner.

### *Father Miller's Scheduled Visits in 2012*

January 22  
February 26  
March 25  
May 27  
June 24  
July 22  
August 28  
September 26  
October 28  
November 25  
December 23

### *The Church Year: Our Sign of Grace*

One of the great resources we have is the church year. It begins on the First Sunday in Advent, New Year's Day, so to speak, and continues through the great events in our Lord's life: his birth, his baptism, death, resurrection and ascension, and then his sending the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

How did the church year develop? In the earliest days of the Church there was one feast and that was Easter. Every Sunday was regarded as a little Easter. As the Church grew and went into different lands and cultures, there was a need to teach people the faith. Often the missionaries took local days of honor and gave them a new meaning. The Roman feast of Saturnalia was transformed from a pagan festival into Christmas – an old feast with a new meaning.

Gradually, over centuries, the year developed. First there was Easter, then was added the days of Christmas and Pentecost so there were three great feast, as there are today. To these were added seasons to prepare: Advent to prepare for Christmas, Lent to prepare for Easter, the Sundays after Easter lead us to the Ascension and Pentecost. The second half of the Church Year is the Pentecost season and focuses on the faith and teachings of the Church community.

The Church's Year of Grace is a wonderful resource for through it we share in the mystery of the great events of Christ's birth, death and resurrection and are reminded again and again of the central realities of faith, hope and love.

The Church year is always under construction: new saints' days are added to the calendar and commemoration of events such as Thanksgiving Day and special days to be recalled, for example, 9/11.

In the Episcopal Church we have a gift of the Church Year which keeps before us the love and grace of God through the Eucharist, scripture readings, daily prayer and meditation. The Church's Year is indeed a Year of Grace.

### *The Season of Advent; the Season of Christmas*

Every year I am surprised when I go to the local Walmart in early October to find that Christmas decorations are up, plastic trees prominently displayed along with Halloween stuff. There is nothing inherently wrong with such a general jollification and emphasis on the secular side of Christmas. Having three months to celebrate (or at least get ready to celebrate) Christmas does, however, dilute the feast.

I suspect this is one of the reasons the Church began to celebrate Advent, the four weeks of preparation for Christmas. The themes of Advent center on Christ coming in the past at Bethlehem, his coming now in the Eucharist and his coming in the future at the end of time. But, above all we pray for Christ to manifest himself more fully in our lives.

We, therefore, light the candles on our Advent wreath, pray the collects for Advent (BCP pages 211-212), and sing the great hymns of Advent. Perhaps, then when we do our shopping we will be more aware of and thankful for God's grace, which is already within us, but which we pray may come to us again and again in fuller measure.

God Bless you.  
Fr. Hofer