



The Wider Circle

"Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free"

Volume 15 Number 1

January 2017

Letter from the Rector

January Dates:

- 8; Confirmation informational meeting
- 8, 15, 22, 29; Adult education
- 8, 22; Sunday School
- 15; Citizen activism training
- 21; Acolyte training

Upcoming Dates:

- Feb 5; Annual Meeting, ONE 9AM SERVICE
- Feb 25; Mardi Gras

Dear Friends,

Epiphany is the season of light. The earth has finally tilted back towards the sun, and ever so slightly in these dark winter months we will see just a bit more light. It will be indiscernible, at first. But the light is there, and will be more and more revealed to us.

Two of the readings we

hear during Christmas refer to this light, one from the ninth chapter of the prophet Isaiah, one from the first chapter of the gospel of John:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has

shined.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

In both historical instances when this word was spoken to the people
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Coming Soon—Mardi Gras Party February 25th!

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February 25th will be here before you know it. St. George's needs you to participate in our annual Mardi Gras Party!

There are several things you can do to help with this fantastic St. George's event. The most important thing to do is to attend the party and silent auction from 6—10 pm on Saturday night, February 25th. The next most important thing is to invite others to come –

this is a great event to ask friends, family, or neighbors to attend.

Also, consider donating items for the auction or asking others to donate. Finally, you can volunteer to help with decorating and set up, clean up, or the auction itself. Helping out is a great way to get involved and have a good time while you're at it!

The Silent Auction
Please consider making something (such as a

craft item), donating a service or making something to order (such as lessons like knitting or music; baked goods, a portrait sitting, a tour of an interesting place you are knowledgeable about) or creating a gift basket of food and/or gift items.

If you work someplace or volunteer with an organization that would be willing to donate an item for the auction,
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Letter from the Rector (cont.)

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ple of God, their situations were difficult. Their countries were in dire circumstances. The people wondered where God was, and why darkness had descended on them.

And we might feel that way too, this January, as we look around at what is going on in the world and in our own country. We might be asking ourselves, where is this light we are promised?

In Epiphany we sing as

our song of praise at 10:00 service the refrain, "The light of Christ has come into the world." This is our statement of faith: the light of Christ has come, is here; God is even now shining a light in the darkest of places.

The question might be, how is that light being revealed not just to us, but *through* us? The light that shines in the darkness – what if that light is meant to be you, to be me, to be St. George's?

What if we thought of ourselves as having been, through our baptism, transformed into metaphorical flashlights – that we are, in fact, to be beacons of God's light? We cannot give up our task as bearers of the light, ever. And that light is needed even more right now, all around us.

So let us, this Epiphany, stand with Jesus and be a light in the darkness.

Blessings,
Connie+

Sunday School Schedule in January

Yes there is Sunday School at St. George's, and it needs your kids to participate in it! The dates this month are **January 8 and 22** at 9:00 am in the classrooms downstairs.

We have wonderful teach-

ers who dedicate their time and energy to give our St. George's young people the opportunity to learn about our faith, so if you are looking for a resolution to follow in the new year, feel free to choose "get the kids to Sunday School this winter."

Put the dates on your calendar now and see you at 9:00 am on January 8th!



Acolyte Training and Appreciation Day

There will be an acolyte training January 21st at 10:30 in the sanctuary. We will brush up on our skills and learn new tricks of the trade!

Pizza will be provided for lunch so come with an appetite!

The following day, Sunday the 22, will be an Acolyte Appreciation Sunday. All acolytes are strongly encouraged to attend. Also at this service trainee Callie Berry will be promoted to full acolyte.

If anyone is interested in becoming an acolyte or you are curious how the process works you are welcome to attend the training on the 21st. If there are any questions please contact Anne Rowe.

Vestry at St. George's: Are You Called to Serve?

Being on a vestry can be many things: fun, stressful, faith affirming, time consuming, meaningful. Pick a description; it can be so many things. But what's it really like, at least from my perspective? It's actually rewarding and helpful in my spiritual journey.

For those new to St. George's or the Episcopal church, the vestry is basically a board of directors. Elected by the congregation to terms of two years, the official responsibilities are to oversee the finances and facilities. But it's really more than that.

We are really the congregation's representatives, and we work to advance St. George's mission and ministries as best we can, keeping in mind our

available resources. We plan, encourage, work with committees, and support our Rector.

We meet once a month, on a Tuesday evening. The meeting typically lasts about two hours, and includes spiritual components as well as a business agenda. We all get to know each other better and build community. We share what we are experiencing and seeing within the church, and seek to respond to the needs of the community.

Over the past few years, we have been working to accommodate the growth we are experiencing. We have helped to set up committees for various ministries, and each of us serves as a liaison to one of those groups.

Overall, it's an exciting time to be on the vestry at St. George's. We are growing, our resources are expanding, and our mission is increasing.

At our annual meeting in February, we will elect four members to the 2017 vestry. Two of the current vestry are running again, and we need more parishioners to fill out the vestry slate.

Would you like to be one of them? Please speak to Nominating Committee Chair Terry Doyle, Connie, or Wardens Roy Peterson or Dan Ryan if you have any questions, would like more information, or would like to be a candidate.

- Dan Ryan,
Junior Warden

At our annual meeting in February, we will elect four members to the 2017 Vestry. We need at least two more parishioners to run. Please consider putting your name forward!

Warm Clothing Drive

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this year's Warm Clothing Drive! As always, St Georgians answered the call and were wonderfully generous.

A total of 58 coats and over 100 hats, scarves, and gloves were donated to help the Prince George's County School System meet the needs of immigrant and refugee

children arriving in our area from places such as Syria and Afghanistan.

In addition, \$225 worth of Target gift cards were donated, which the school system will use to purchase other items new students might need such as boots, socks, and uniforms. Special thanks to Gloria Martin, who donated two large bags of handmade hats that were wild-

ly popular!

The formal drive over until next year but the school system will gladly accept donations at any time, so if Santa brought someone in your household a new coat or jacket, you don't need to wait until next year to donate the item it's replacing. Items may be given directly to Silvia Hoke, or to Randy or Donna Haselton.



Citizen Activism Training—January 15, 1pm

The 2017 state legislative session runs January 11 through April 10. Join us for a training that will teach you everything you need to know to understand what is happening in Annapolis—and how to be heard in the process!

It's January! And in Maryland that means it is time for our state legislative session.

Do you want to be sure your voice is heard as your state elected officials decide issues that impact you? Want to know how you can have an impact? Or do you simply want a better understanding of how your state government works?

On January 15 at 1 pm, learn from an expert. Join us as Jennifer Bevan-Dangel explains Maryland's legislative process and provides practical advice on how to be a more effective advocate on state issues that concern you.

Jennifer is a member of St. George's, and she is Executive Director of

Common Cause Maryland, a non-partisan grassroots organization committed to increasing citizen participation in government and ensuring an open and accountable government.

Jennifer joined Common Cause in January 2013. She has spearheaded several significant reforms, including establishing the first local public funding programs in the state, modernizing the state's public information laws, and advancing key voting reforms. She is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland.

The program on January 15 will provide an overview of the Maryland legislative process, highlight

some legislative initiatives that may come to a vote in 2016, and provide ideas on how to get your message across to your elected representatives.

So come with your questions for Jennifer, and feel free to invite your friends. There is no cost for the program.

St. George's hopes to be able to more provide programs on social justice advocacy in the future. Jennifer can provide a foundation to help each of us improve our effectiveness in setting expectations for responsible, moral government action. For more information contact Peggy Alexander, chair of the Outreach and Social Justice Committee, or Mary Frances Bruce.

Annual Meeting Sunday February 5th—Save the Date!

The St. George's Annual Meeting will be Sunday, February 5th immediately following our one 9:00am service that day. At the annual meeting we

report and reflect on the past year in the life of the parish, as well as elect new members to serve on the vestry in 2017.

This is your opportunity to experience the democratic process as it is practiced in the Episcopal Church, so plan to attend and participate!

Adult Education

On January 8 at 9:00, and the following three Sundays, the adult education forum will look at Paul

and his letters. We will try to understand why Paul is so appealing and appalling.

Join us as we explore the mysteries of Paul and his influence on the church.



Gaywood Food Program Update

As many of you know, St George's is in the process of developing a food support program for Gaywood Elementary School, a public school serving pre-K through 5th grade, located about two miles away from the church.

St George's has a long history of supporting Gaywood. Each year we hold a "back to school" supply drive, and we've helped renovate the school library and conducted a school uniform drive.

During a meeting with school administrators in the fall, we learned that there are a number of Gaywood families in need of food assistance. The majority of Gaywood stu-

dents qualify for free or reduced price meals at school based on family income; unfortunately for some children these school meals are their most reliable meals.

Gaywood staff members are very tuned in to the children most at risk and frequently send home snacks with these children, but there is no formal program in place.

We hope to fill that gap by providing food boxes and grocery gift cards for needy families beginning in January or February, using resources from the church budget set aside for this purpose and made possible thanks to increased giving by many in

the parish during this year's pledge campaign.

The structure of the program is currently under development but is expected to involve two teams of 4-5 volunteers each. Once a month each team will be responsible for shopping, filling food boxes, and delivering them to Gaywood.

We plan to have an information session in January for anyone who would like to be involved, or simply to learn more about the program, but in the meantime feel free to speak to Sandy Rayford, Donna Haselton or Connie+ for more information or to express your interest in participating.



Stewardship Update – Good News and Many Thanks!

As our year draws to a close, your Stewardship team thanks you for your generosity and offers this update.

We opened our 2017 Campaign with a vision for continued growth as a parish, both in numbers and programs. We asked for folks to consider increasing their pledge and discussed two ways in which we could use additional funds. First, to begin funding a music

minister position, and second, to start a more formal outreach program to help needy children at Gaywood Elementary.

Right now, we have received 83 pledge cards. You may remember that our goal was 80 pledges, so we have exceeded that! We also have nine new pledges, a strong indicator of our continued growth and commitment.

Our pledge total stands at just over \$254,000. This is

\$37,500 more than we received last year, a 17% increase! Of note, our pledge total has doubled over the past seven years!

Clearly God is at work among us, and your generous support will help us to continue advancing His word in our mission and ministries.

Thank you from your Stewardship Team: of Roy Peterson, Dan Ryan, Luella Tabor, Sandy Rayford, and Connie+.

Thanks to your generous support, St. George's continues to flourish and grow as we advance His word in our mission and ministries.

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Mission Statement:

The mission of St. George's is to build a Christian community of love and support that actively seeks and includes all people.

We commit ourselves to spiritual growth through worship and education that empowers us to follow Christ's example in the world.

Mardi Gras (cont.)



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please ask them on behalf of St. George's and thank them for their generosity!

Popular items in years past have been tickets to sporting events and arts performances, films or the theatre. Gift certificates to restaurants are always a top draw as are weekend getaways at nearby hotels or resort properties.

Think of asking your hair-stylist or massage therapist if they would be willing to donate a coupon for a haircut or massage. The only way to find out if they will donate is to ask

them...don't be shy! All items you or others donate are tax deductible to the value of the item.

Any auction items can be dropped off at the church on the Friday evening before the party, or the Saturday of the event between 12 noon and 4 pm.

The Dinner and Theme

Besides the exciting things to bid on at the silent auction, there will be a wonderful dinner! There will be music! There will be costumes! (You need to wear one to make this part happen).

The theme for the 2017

Mardi Gras will be announced on Sunday January 22nd to give time to plan your costume.

There will be babysitting available for children, so there is no reason not to come!

Tickets

Advance tickets are \$28.00 and are on sale starting Sunday, January 29! They can also be purchased at the door for \$35.00. Children 10 years and under are free.

We look forward to seeing you all at this year's biggest fundraising event and a really wonderful party!