

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

N · E · W · S · L · E · T · T · E · R

*The Season after Pentecost
October 2012*

“Our Story” Released at The Feast, Is Newest Addition to Website Videos



Western Windows of Little St. Mary's

The Feast of Mary Allen, September 21, featured festive fellowship, delicious food and drink, and video presentations about the heritage of St. Mary's Church. A slide show of photos offered scenes from the parish past, and enhanced the feeling of gratitude for our community and those who have contributed to our legacy of grace.

“Our Story” was introduced to the gathering as a mini-documentary about Mary Allen of Tuckahoe and her short life's impact on the families that collaborated to build and launch the mission of Little St. Mary's in 1878. Produced and edited by parishioner

Woody Coates, a member of the communications committee, “Our Story” includes interviews with our late Rector Emeritus, the Rev. W. Holt Souder and with our Rector the Rev. Dr. John E. Miller. It also contains footage of the construction and consecration of New St. Mary's in 1992.

To view “Our Story” and other St. Mary's videos, go to our website, www.stmarysgoochland.org, and click on the “videos” link. You will see and hear significant stories compiled for our enjoyment and inspiration.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

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Episcopal Leadership

The Archbishop of Canterbury
The Most Rev. and Rt. Honorable Rowan Williams
The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church
The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
The Bishop of Virginia
The Right Rev. Shannon Sherwood Johnston
The Bishop Suffragan
The Right Rev. Susan E. Goff
Assistant Bishop
The Right Rev. Edwin F. Gulick, Jr.

The Parish Staff

Rector	The Rev. Dr. John E. Miller
Associate Rector	The Rev. Eleanor L. Wellford
Priest Associate	The Rev. David H. Knight
Minister to Youth	Sara M. Grattan
Minister to Children	Anna T. Johnson
Nursery Director	Meg Zehmer
Organist & Choirmaster	W. Dwight Graham
Parish Administrator	Gina M. Alexander
Parish Secretary	Lori R. Smiley
Parish Sexton	Paul E. Pace
Assistant Sexton	Gersain Agudelo

The Parish Vestry

Senior Warden	W. Edward Goode, Jr.
Junior Warden	Molly Mitchell Snow
Treasurer	Howard E. Cobb
Register	Margaret M. Mickel

Class of 2014

Jeffrey A. Allende
Ruth A. Hill
Molly Mitchell Snow
Christopher C. Spencer

Class of 2013

Margaret M. Mickel
Allen B. Rider, III
W. Edward Goode, Jr.
Catherine C. Keiger

Class of 2015

Dede Andrews
Constance R. Bowden
Peggy Talman
C. Kemper Wharton

From the Parish Register:

Tranfers In:

18 September 2012 Nancy Shackelford Jones from
Brick Presbyterian Church, New York, NY

Baptisms:

02 September 2012 Caroline Elysabeth Tunner

Weddings:

15 September 2012 Crystal E. Pace and
William S. Sivals, III

Exploring Prayer

*"Be still and aware of the presence
of God within and all around"*

-Phillip Newell

*Come and experience the Silence
A quiet morning-
alternating contemplative meditations
with images and metaphors
from poetry, writings. and nature.
Led by Ellen Williams Kympton*

November 3, 2012
Old Parish Hall

10:00am-1:00pm
mid-morning refreshments provided.
No previous experience required
sign up Streetsyd@gmail.com
suggested contribution \$10.00

BE STILL continues to meet
Wednesdays 6:00-6:30pm
Little St. Mary's

Draw Near

A Sermon for the 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 20 - Year B - 23 September 2012

John Edward Miller
Rector

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

- James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

The Collect

Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Martin Luther had a great appetite for Scripture, but he couldn't stomach the Letter of James. So, on his own authority, the famous Protestant Reformer expelled it from his New Testament canon, calling it an "epistle of straw." The reason for Luther's antipathy toward James was that the letter seems to support works rather than faith in God's grace as the basis of salvation.

Luther's whole approach to reform was focused on Paul's teaching that we are saved by grace through faith. For Martin Luther, that is the lens through which a Christian looks at life. This

is what it allows us to see: we have no capacity in ourselves to save ourselves, and there is nothing that we can do to earn God's favor. So, the emphasis on "doing" in the Letter of James struck Luther as subversive. He stressed that no amount of works can qualify us for eternal life. It is God's love alone, a love that is free and unconditional, that does the gracious work of saving us. Any other emphasis is counterproductive and dangerously wrong. Luther loathed the Letter of James, which boldly states "faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."¹ Therefore he used his sharp scissors to excise the Letter of James from the Bible, gladly tossing its pages to the wind.

And that is too bad, because the epistle contains too much good to be deleted. Obviously, I'm not the only one who thinks Luther's attitude was over the edge, because the letter remains in the New Testament. And it still speaks to us, offering important guidance as faith forms and executes plans of action. Our brothers and sisters at St. James Baptist Church on Blair Road, and at St. James's on Franklin Street, are inspired regularly by their patron saint. In fact, our Episcopal siblings have the text, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only,"² inscribed on its sacred architecture, and have www.doers.org as their website address. These are statements affirming what the letter has to offer all of us. They are evidence of an active, engaged congregation, whose works are based on a sense of gratitude instead of a self-serving hunger for merit.

The Letter of James contains a collection of epigrams – proverbs – designed to guide the people of his target audience on the path of life. The content of the letter has also been described as hortatory, meaning that it urges the reader to pay attention and to turn faith into deeds of action. One commentator notes that, "there are about sixty imperatives in the letter's one hundred and eight verses." It's clear that James wants to get the show on the road, religiously speaking. Thus he cranks up and unleashes a bevy of advice to new Christians. Sometimes he speaks in the indicative, stating important truths; otherwise, he issues imperatives, expecting his hearers to sit up and take notice. Either way, though, he is offering the people proverbs, wisdom sayings. These offer practical guidance to enable people to lead a decent, successful Christian life. They summarize the experience of a wise observer of what works toward that end, and what doesn't.

If you're wondering about the origin of proverbs, it might help to know that they are not always religious. Most in fact are secular sayings, such as these familiar English proverbs: A watched pot never boils; A stitch in time saves nine; Too many cooks spoil the

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stew; If the shoe fits, wear it; Practice makes perfect; People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones; Absence makes the heart grow fonder; The fruit does not fall far from the tree; and, If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas.

Yet from the biblical book of Proverbs come many memorable verses, including: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction;" and "Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent."³

One of my very favorites is attributed to Virginia's 9th Bishop, The Right Reverend Frederick Deane Goodwin,⁴ who advised new clergy: "Don't try to exercise any influence until you have some." That was good advice from a wise man. Too bad way too many zealots haven't heeded his sage counsel.

All of these sayings express a time-tested truth. They are pearls of wisdom aimed at addressing life issues – some mundane, others spiritual, and still others problematic.

In today's selection from the letter, James confronts a serious problem with godly wisdom. His target is behavior that's, shall we say, inappropriate. You might even call it atrocious, because all manner of malicious deeds were being committed among the people to whom he was writing. The community was in chaos. We know this because James cites envy and ambition, boasting and lying, partiality and hypocrisy as the causes of conflict. Rampant disorder was giving rise to covetousness, disputes, conflicts, and murder. These problems were bad, but what was worse is that they were happening within the church.

And we think that the Episcopal Church has had its problems! James's people, who called themselves Christian, were breaking bad in ways that make our recent controversies pale in comparison. It's okay to take heart in that. Things have been much worse, and the church abides.

What did James have to say about these things? Well, quite a lot – especially proverbs like "Faith without works is dead," and "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." Those bits of inspired wisdom echo an older Latin proverb that calls for "Deeds, not words."⁵ James's version was from a faith perspective, though. He was not just a pragmatist looking for facts; he was a disciple of Jesus committed to action. He urged the people to practice what they say they believe. Anyone can claim to be a Christian. But if there is no evidence of a changed life, what difference does a Christian label make to anyone? James knew that the answer is "nothing." It would be like being given a brand new Rolls Royce, but never putting the key in the ignition, and putting it in gear. After a while the gift would become a rusting relic in the garage.

However, James won't stand for a waste of grace. He summons the people to an action plan based on Christian virtue. He calls for wisdom and understanding, gentleness, mercy, and peace. With these attitudes in place, he remains confident that, with God's help, chaos can be put in order, and devilishness be put to flight. Resolve can unplug self-centeredness; a grateful heart can overcome the temptation to gratify the whims of the restless self. James is not writing empty words, nor is he coining pious platitudes. He earnestly believes that real faith must translate into action; it can do no less and still be authentic.

Thus James sums up with a proverbial imperative. He says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you."

That may strike the untamed cynic as a conditional (if-then) proposition. It sounds like a "let's make a deal" approach to an otherwise standoffish God who is aloof, removed from our exist-

ence, and out-of-touch with our situation. "Submit yourself to God" and "draw near" might imply that one needs to have the right religious formula to approach this absentee Lord. Reducing the distance between God and humankind might require some secret incantation. If someone is looking for faith to pay off, to give him leverage and clout in this life, then that is what wisdom promises. In this self-serving view, James's urgent advice to his wayward sheep is like a business transaction – drawing near lures God in to do one's bidding.

Such a notion operates on ego rather than gratitude. It profanes God's loving purpose, and cheapens grace, but this notion is more prevalent than one might think.

In Woody Allen's *Manhattan*, he plays the part of Isaac Davis, a television writer who is so disgusted with the low standards of audience intelligence and taste expected by network producers, that he quits his high paying job to protest. Then, he begins to understand what he has done, digesting the impact of loss of income, standing, and popularity. Isaac bemoans his situation to his friend, Yale, who is more fair weather friend than faithful to him.

Isaac:

What did I do? I made a terrible mistake. For about ten seconds I was a big hero, and now it's directly to unemployment.

Yale:

If you need money, I'll take care of it.

Isaac:

That's not the point. I got enough for a year. If I live like Mahatma Gandhi, I'm fine. My accountant says I did this at a very bad time. My stocks are down. I'm cash poor or something. I got no cash flow. I'm not liquid, something's not flowing. They got a language all their own.

Yale:

We discussed this. It's difficult to live here without a big income.

Isaac:

Yeah, plus I got two alimonies and child support. You know, I gotta cut down. I'll have to give up my apartment. I'm not gonna be able to play tennis, pick checks up at dinner, or take the Southampton house.

Plus I'll probably have to give my parents less money. It'll kill my father. He's not gonna be able to get as good a seat in the synagogue. He'll be in the back, away from God, far from the action.⁶

Away from God, far from the action. That's not just a line in comedy, that's a reference to what many people think about the purpose of faith. It's a reflection of what is commonly expected of God, who is thought to be more like the Wizard of Oz than the God revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. This god is the omniscient deity who rescues, bails out, protects, and promotes the special interests of people who have the inside track. To be chummy with this god is to have access to advantage. It is like having a debit card on an account that cannot be depleted. At least, that's what the popular conception is, until someone tries to use that card and gets denied. Then there's frustration, disappointment and anger about feeling betrayed by the fantastic god who is supposed to be there

when we need him.

But that god doesn't exist. Thank God. If that deity did exist, somewhere over the rainbow way up high, then faith would be all about jockeying for position, seeking personal privileges, and invoking magical power to secure one's own life at the expense of others. But it's not about any of those things. Having faith in the God made manifest in Jesus Christ is to trust that unconditional love is what he offers us. That love is not an entitlement; it is a gift – pure, unbounded, and freely given by the only one who can afford to give it to us. God's love is not a special favor that we have to lobby for; it is a gift that transforms us, even though we lack the right stuff to transform ourselves. And yet, James is right: we can collaborate with the process of change if we come toward one another with openness and trust.

This past summer I finally agreed to take a trip that my son John has been urging me to take for many years. Having lived and worked in Los Angeles during and after college, John is a veteran of several cross-country drives. I had often heard him describe the experience of seeing the breadth of the United States unfold through the windshield of his Volvo. He loved seeing the scenery change from Virginia to California. It gave him the opportunity to think and to dream and to remember.

I heard him. And I knew that he wanted me to join him on a father-son journey. That part mattered a lot to me. That he wanted me with him, and was willing to become not only a co-driver, but a roommate and constant companion for two weeks, was a stunning offer – one that I could not, and would not, refuse. So, on August 3, we drove our rented Subaru out of Richmond and headed west.

Along the way, John and I saw many sights, and heard Neil Young in concert at Red Rocks, and had many good meals, and listened to many tunes on our iPods, and photographed and filmed the changing landscape from coast to coast. It was a fabulous time, an irreplaceable time, and very likely, it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance for us to be together 24/7 for fourteen uninterrupted days

on the road. I call that grace. And grace affected us both.

Talking together in a car that's in motion is a rare opportunity for getting real, and staying real, for sustained periods of time. If you've tried it, then you know what I'm talking about. The driver and the navigator are facing forward, observing the road ahead. Face-to-face talking is put on hold. However, there is something about sitting side-by-side, and talking. Maybe it's akin to a confession booth, since there's a "screen" of space separating the speaker and the listener. And that's just enough distance between the conversing partners to take the intensity down a notch or two.

I'm not completely sure about the format, or the dynamics of cross-country conversation, but something great happened on that trip.

John and I grew closer than ever. Each of us took turns talking and listening. Each alternated drawing close to the other in trust and openness. And in the process, we realized that geography, and time, and circumstances separating us disappeared. We experienced an ease of talking that transcended the father-son relationship. In that intimate bond, we were able to say things that we'd needed to say, but hadn't,

for 14 years. We spoke of loss and sadness, as well as disappointment and anger. But what is more, we shared visions of joy and hope and love. Both of us are going through significant transitions, and speaking of those changes in the context of acceptance of one another, we ended our journey with a palpable sense of being transformed.

I thank God for John's understanding that we both needed that time together. And I believe that we experienced what James commended so powerfully to his readership. God was in that car. The evidence is that we drew nearer to him as we drew nearer to each other. Each of us has grown; each of us is changed. That, I believe, is what submitting ourselves to love accomplishes in this life. God is always there, seeking to heal, forgive, and redeem us. Our task is to pay attention, and to recognize the goodness of what God offers, and to enjoy his love forever. Amen.



The St. Mary's NEWSLETTER is published monthly from September through May, with one summer edition, as a ministry to the members and friends of Dover Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. The views and information expressed herein are guided by the mission statement of our parish:

We are a community of faith that worships and learns together, welcomes all people, and serves the needs of others in gratefulness for God's love and grace revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Mrs. Lori Remington Smiley, Parish Secretary
The Parish Staff
The Lay Leadership and Professional Staff of Dover Parish

The regular deadline for submission of articles for publication is the fifteenth day of each month.

The Blessings of Ritual

A Sermon for the 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Year B - Proper 17 - September 2, 2012

David H. Knight
Priest Associate

*Lord, we thy presence seek; may ours this blessing be;
give us a pure and lowly heart, a temple fit for thee.*

*-Hymn 656, 4th stanza,
words by William John Hall*

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

-James 1:17-18

Ritual is important in our lives. There are rituals we observe as a nation, rituals we observe in our own families, and ritual we observe in the church. These rituals provide us with stability as you and I recall things that have been part of our lives over generations. Today, for example, we observe Labor Day weekend, a weekend characterized by the rituals of picnics and cookouts. Its national significance goes back to 1882 and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It is appropriate on this Labor Day weekend that we pay tribute to the American worker who has been, and continues to be a source of so much of the nation's strength and freedom.

And then, there are family rituals that remind us of things that go back generations. Our recent vacation on Martha's Vineyard reminded Jeannie and me of an ancient family ritual that was repeating itself with this present generation. Our 11-year-old grandson, Christian, and his parents Steve and Beth, had brought a young friend of Christian's along with them for the week they were with us. His name is Barrett. He and Christian are like brothers. Their room at Newby Hill was the large bedroom over the master bedroom where we were staying. Each night at bedtime reminded us of the summers some 30 years ago when Christian's father was that age. Stephen and his three brothers occupied that same room and Jeannie and I occupied the same room beneath them. A generation ago, each night above us, we would hear laughter and thumping as the brothers jumped from one bed to another. Each night, after a period of time, their father would grow weary of the racket upstairs as we were trying to get to sleep beneath them. Each night—and I swear it was every night—I

would go up the stairs a couple of times and I would say, "Quiet down up there and go to sleep. I love you!" with no result. A subsequent trip to the foot of the stairs would follow. This time I would bellow, "Knock it off up there and go to sleep!" Immediate silence would follow my order—a blessed silence—as I would go back to bed. As soon as I was back in bed, however, the laughter, the thumping, and the jumping would resume until finally, finally, bless their hearts, their precious little heads would fall to the pillows and they would be asleep—and as those little angels slept, that blessed silence would last throughout the rest of the night until morning—when the laughter, and the thumping, and the jumping from bed to bed would once again resume. A generation later, Christian and his friend this summer were honoring this ancient family tradition. It brought back great memories for Jeannie and me. You see, some things just don't change. What are some of the family rituals that you remember?

Rituals take many forms and have an important place in our lives. In their proper perspective, rituals can bring stability when so much around us is changing so fast.

There are the rituals we have in the church, ones that go way back in time. Our ritual for Holy Communion, for example, goes way back in time to the early church when Christians had to meet in secret for fear of being persecuted. The faithful met at locations marked with the sign of the fish, a secret symbol. Their ritual began with a gathering welcome. Then passages from scripture were read followed by reflections on the meaning of the scriptures as well as singing of psalms and hymns. Prayers followed for those in need and for the concerns of the community. Then there came the Peace. Alms or offerings were gathered. After that, they broke bread together. Sound familiar? That's pretty much what we are doing this morning. The form of worship has stood the test of time, yet as John said in his sermon last week, the development of our rituals has included fancy clothes and ecclesiastical structures that were perfected in the Medieval period. Yet as John said last week—and it bears repeating in light of today's readings as well—there is something more important than those things—something that keeps us here, worshipping and serving. Over the years many rituals have become so important that even one's salvation, it seems, would hinge on whether or not one adhered to them even while the poor, for example, starved.

Today's readings each deal with the matter of ritual. In the Book of Deuteronomy we hear the words of Moses when he said, "So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe..." In the letter from James there

comes the caution that it is not sufficient just to hear the words found in the ritual. What we do in caring for others is what matters. What we do in confronting injustice matters. Mark, in his Gospel warns us that we can hold on to human traditions in such a way that we can abandon the commandment of God. All these lessons are centered around ritual, but with strings attached. In the gospel reading this morning we find the Pharisees and some of the scribes who notice that some of Jesus' disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, they were not washing them. They ask, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" Jesus, who was not known for beating around the bush, said to them, *"Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,*

*'This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.'*
*You abandon the commandment of God
and hold to human tradition."*

Jesus puts ritual simply for the sake of ritual in its place. He asked them then to think about what was more important, the ritual of washing hands, or the feeding of those who are hungry? He is asking you and me now to think about what is more important in our lives. Is our compassion for one another more important than the motions through which we go in our rituals? What matters most to us? Doing God's will or simply holding on to traditions, precious and helpful as we think they might be?

The world has changed a whole lot since the time when Isaiah was speaking to the people of Israel and as well, since Jesus was addressing his remarks to the Pharisees and some scribes. But you and I have not changed all that much from the way people were then. It is still possible, as Jesus is saying, for us to preoccupy ourselves with the ritual, wanting things to be the way they always were and never wanting anything to change while at the same time ignoring what it may be that God is calling us to do and to be in our own day. Our ritual in the Episcopal Church is replete with beauty. Our ritual can offer to us a stability that can keep us centered while so much is changing around us. Partaking of Holy Communion at the various transitions of our lives, for example, can serve as a reminder of Christ's ongoing presence in our midst during these times and our Prayer Book makes provision for that tradition. Our Book of Common Prayer is full of prayers that address our many conditions and our deepest needs. Our ritual such as we experience is intended to strengthen our souls and empower us to go back to the tasks and duties of our lives renewed so that we can be doers of the word and not hearers only.

How, then, does our ritual as we experience it in the music and hymns, in the word of God and in the spoken word, the prayers and sacraments inform and inspire our charity? It could be something as simple as a seed planted through something preached from the pulpit. The other day, for example, someone mentioned to me something that Eleanor had once said in a sermon when she

was speaking of charity to strangers in need. This person was telling me how what Eleanor said put a new perspective on the simple act of Christian generosity toward those on the street corner who are homeless and hungry, people we are likely to ignore. What she heard in that sermon had remained with her. With permission I share a recent experience she had. Last Saturday, she and her husband were pulling away from a restaurant in Short Pump on their way to grocery shopping at Martin's. At a red light at the corner of Pouncey Tract and Broad, she saw a man sitting at the curb holding a sign that read "Homeless Viet Nam Vet." She lowered her window. The man came over to their car. She reached out and handed him some cash. Now some might say that she was foolish, but she said to me that the look on his face as he said "Thank you so much" spoke volumes to her and to her husband. You see, so often the benefit is to the giver.

And how, then, might our ritual as we experience it in the music and hymns, the word of God, the spoken word, the prayers, and the sacraments, inform and inspire our charitable giving as it takes form, among other things, through our financial pledge of support for the mission and ministry here at St. Mary's, a ministry in which God invites us all to share? I think of what one of the great bishops of the Church, Bishop Alexander D. Stewart of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts used to say. A great preacher, pastor, and administrator, Bishop Stewart was also well versed in the anatomy of the human body. He knew, for example, and often reminded us that the most sensitive nerve in the human body is the nerve that connects the heart to the pocket book. And he was right. The benefit of giving is to the giver as well as to the ones who receive. And Moses said to the people of Israel, "Give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors is giving you."

To us that could be saying that as our ritual informs and inspires us to do the will of God when it comes to our financial stewardship, our lives can be enriched beyond all measure, for the benefit is to the giver as well.

This coming week, as you and I go out into the duties and pleasures of our lives, may the ritual that we experience in our worship help us continue to develop a meaningful connection with God and with one another, as well as to those whom we might meet for the very first time. May the ritual of our worship deepen our sense of God's presence and power among us so that you and I may be doers of the word and not merely hearers. May we find God's blessing in our doing and in our giving. As James writes in his letter,

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Amen.



Children's Ministries

Anna T. Johnson
Minister to Children

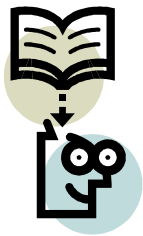
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES FORMS STILL BEING ACCEPTED

Recently we sent out a Children's Ministries Sunday school registration form. This year we are updating our records for children and would prefer that everyone fill out a brand new form this year. Not only do we collect important information about your children, but there are many volunteer opportunities listed on the form for you to consider as well. Please turn forms in at the Children's Ministries Welcome Table or have your child bring it to class when signing in.



CHILDREN'S GIVING PROGRAM

This September 1st-5th graders came home with something new...their own box of pledge envelopes. This new and exciting program provides our children with the opportunity to learn not only about the importance of giving, but also about the impact that they can make by giving to their church and community. Each Sunday the children will be allowed to come to the front of the church and drop their envelope in a basket on the way to Sunday School. What is NOT important is the amount of money in the envelope. What IS important is that special feeling they will have by participating in something that is valued by God and their church family. At the end of the year, the children will collectively decide how the money they have given will be used either to benefit a ministry of the church, or even to benefit an organization in the community. Our hope is to raise awareness of our own abundance, which in turn creates a sense of gratitude and empowers each child with the spirit of giving to others. We hope that you will talk with your children about this program and share in our excitement of it's potential to enrich our children's lives. Please contact Molly Snow at msnow@stmarysgoochland.org or Constance Bowden at cbowden@stmarysgoochland.org with questions or to become more involved with this program. Extra boxes of envelopes are located at the Children's Ministries Welcome Table.



MEMORIZATION CHALLENGE

Our Memorization Challenge program last year was so successful that we will continue it this year. Children are given opportunities quarterly to share The Lord's Prayer (K-2nd), 23rd Psalm (3rd and 4th) and the Nicene Creed (5th). We are adding The Ten Commandments to the list this year for children who have already completed their challenge. All children who accomplish their goals will receive a prize!

PLEASE HELP - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

It takes a village to raise a child! Help us meet our goal this year of 100% participation by parents in at least two areas of service, which include teaching, assisting, All Saints Day, The Giving Tree, Christmas Eve, Mardi Gras Pancake Supper, The Easter Egg Hunt, Easter Sunday, Children's Missions and Outreach, VBS and more!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES FALL SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 7 11 a.m. Sunday school (Ages 3-4 and 5-6 classes begin at 11 am, and First through Fifth graders attend church first and are dismissed after the reading of the Holy Gospel).

Sunday, October 14 9:45 a.m. Children's Committee Meeting
11 a.m. Wee Worship and Children's Chapel (schedule same as above)

Sunday, October 21 11 a.m. Sunday school (schedule same as above)

Sunday, October 28 11 a.m. Sunday school (schedule same as above)

Youth Ministries

Sara Grattan
Minister to Youth

Sunday Evening Youth Groups Meet October 21

Grades 6-8 will meet with Sara Grattan and Jeff Allende, **Grade 9** will meet with our Rector John Miller in the Grade 8 classroom, and **High School** will meet with Ashton Guza in the Education Building Loft. After youth group, we will have a short Worship service outside and then go to the Parish Hall for dinner. Parents are needed to help provide dinner and work in kitchen.



Haunted Evenings At Ashland Berry Farm

October 28th 5:30-9pm Bring \$30 for ticket and dinner

Join your friends and bring a friend to Ashland Berry Farm for a night of fright and fun.

SUNDAY SCHOOL INFORMATION

Sunday School for Grades 6 - 12 meets during the 11 am Worship Service. Youth go with their parents to church and then are dismissed to the Youth and Education Building for Sunday School. We will meet on the following days in October:

October 7

All classes will meet except 8th grade at Shrine Mont

October 14

October 21

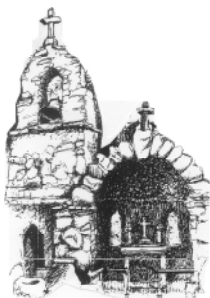
No Sunday School - Youth stay in church with parents

October 28



RHYTHMS OF GRACE

Rhythms of Grace is a Worship Service/Sunday School for children with special needs and their families. We meet the third Sunday of the month in the Education Building from 1-2 p.m. for fellowship, fun activities, and Holy Eucharist. Volunteers are needed. Our next Service is October 14. If you are interested in participating, please email Sara Grattan at sgrattan@stmarysgoochland.org.



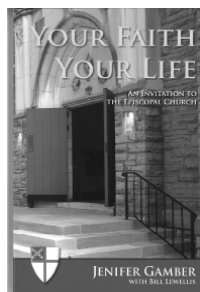
Shrine Mont Weekends

Grade 8
October 5-7, 2012

Grades 6 & 7
November 9-11

Join your friends from St. Mary's and other Parishes around Virginia for a fun filled weekend in the mountains. Enjoy great food, fellowship, and fun activities. Cost of trip is \$150 to the Diocese of Virginia and \$50 to St. Mary's Episcopal Church. We will need parents to chaperone both weekends since our Minister to Youth Sara Grattan will not be able to attend.

P A R I S H • N E W S • I N • B R I E F



INQUIRERS' CLASS EXPLORES EPISCOPAL TRADITION

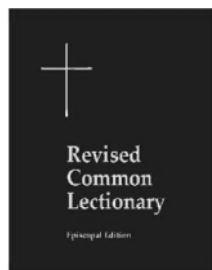
The Rev. Dr. John E. Miller, Rector of St. Mary's, is leading an Inquirers' Class for new members of the Episcopal Church. The three-session program meets in the Old Parish Hall of Little St. Mary's on Wednesdays at 7:00

p.m. from October 10 through October 24.

The purpose of the class is to provide newcomers, seekers, and current members with an introduction to the faith and spirituality of the Episcopal Church. The Inquirers will receive a copy of Jenifer Gamber's book, *Your Faith, Your Life: An Invitation to the Episcopal Church* (2009) as a resource guide. In addition, Dr. Miller will present a history of the faith tradition, as well as familiarize participants with the *Book of Common Prayer*.

On Sunday, November 11, the Diocese of Virginia's new Bishop Suffragan, The Rt. Rev. Susan E. Goff will visit St. Mary's for a 11:00 a.m. service of Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation of our communicants. Bishop Goff will also preach and celebrate the Holy Eucharist. Those members of the Inquirers' Class desiring to be received at that service will be prepared for the occasion by our Rector.

Please direct questions and requests for registration in the class to Dr. Miller at jmiller@stmarysgoochland.org, or telephone the parish office at 804.784.5678.



WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY FOCUSES ON WEEKLY LECTIONARY

The Wednesday Bible Study has begun its Fall season, meeting every Wednesday in the Library at 10:00 a.m.

Led by Rector John E. Miller, each Bible study session focuses on the Lectionary readings assigned for the succeeding Sunday. Members are encouraged to bring a Bible in a translation or version that they enjoy reading. Annotated study Bibles in the New Revised Standard Version, the New International Version, the New English Bible, and other versions are available online at Amazon.com, at Barnes and Noble, at Cokesbury Bookstores, and other retail dealers.

All members and friends are cordially invited to attend and participate. Discussions are always enriching, and every point of view is appreciated. While no prior biblical training is required of group members, an open mind and readiness to learn and share insights are always welcome!

CHURCHYARD TOURS

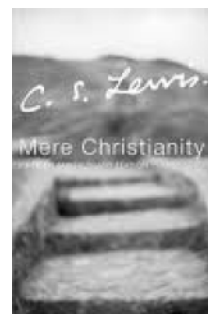
October 21 &
October 28

Back by popular demand, our churchyard tour will be led by **Rector John E. Miller** who, in his engaging way, will introduce participants to the history and lore connected to the St. Mary's story. The tour will begin by the sculpture of little Mary Allen in the Sunday School courtyard at 10:15 a.m.



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet on **Thursday, October 18 at 10:00 a.m.** in the Library of the Adult and Youth Education Building. Its purpose is to knit, weave, or crochet shawls as the ministry's participants pray for God's blessing on those in need of pastoral care. The end product is not only a lovely source of warmth, but it is also a tangible means of comfort. Each shawl represents the loving witness of prayer offered by a community knit together by the Spirit of God. We encourage all who enjoy knitting to take part in this prayerful ministry. Inquiries about the Prayer Shawl ministry should be directed to Associate Rector Eleanor Wellford, 784-5678, or e-mail her at ewellford@stmarysgoochland.org.

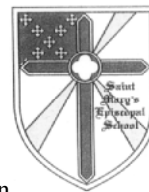


C.S. LEWIS'S MERE CHRISTIANITY STUDY GROUP

Parishioner **Laurie Rogers** will lead a study group based on C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* meeting On October 3, 10, 17, 24, and November 7, 14 on Wednesday evenings in the Eighth Grade Classroom of the Education Building. Come and see how the enduring legacy of this beloved writer continues to nurture and guide our spiritual journeys. Discussion will also include the following articles: "Finding Peace in Time of War," "Does Conversion Change Your Personality" and "How Literature Leads Us to God."

St. Mary's Episcopal School

by Susan Rawls, Director



Fall is in the air! We love autumn especially at preschool! There are so many wonderful lessons for children to learn through watching the changes that take place in the seasons. Isn't it amazing to see all of the many colors of the leaves? Watching the small animals and insects prepare for the winter months is also quite fascinating! The children



love experiencing the entire natural habitat of St. Mary's Episcopal School. Last week one of our classes spent the morning on the nature trail doing art rubbings with some of the natural things, building bridges with sticks, and enjoying many new discoveries (lots of science!). Another class separated acorns as a fine motor activity and threw a "Squirrel party" for all of the woodland critters! How fortunate we are to have a setting that lends itself to discovery, hands-on learning!

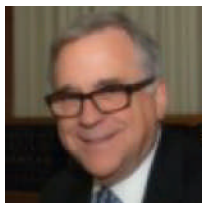
Our school is just about full this year with 78 children. Our capacity is 80. If you have young children in your family or your neighborhood who might benefit from a program that celebrates the child and provides a developmentally appropriate play based approach to encourage success in school, we hope you will consider St. Mary's. Tours are available each weekday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. each day. Please contact our office at 784-2049 for more information.

St. Mary's Seniors to Consider Election Integrity in its Season Opener

by Fred Clark

Charles E. Judd, Chairman of the Virginia State Board of Elections, will describe Virginia's efforts to ensure the transparency, integrity and legitimacy of its voting processes for the upcoming November election when the St. Mary's Seniors Group kicks off its 21st season on Wednesday, October 10, 2012. Concerns about voter identification and other practices have grown country-wide in recent times as witnessed by increased media coverage and proposals by various state legislatures and administrators to re-look at our honor system.

Mr. Judd, a marketing and communications consultant, has a broad range of experience in politics and electoral procedures. In 2011, he was appointed by Governor McDonnell to lead the state's elections. Previously, he had served as executive director of the Virginia Republican Party (2007-8) and in a similar position in Ohio (1977-9); as deputy finance director of the Republican National Committee (1979-84); and as an organizer for Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority (1984-8) in Lynchburg. Mr. Judd has lived in Virginia since 1979, and in 1988 was a candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives from the 6th District. He is married to Fine Art Photographer Wanda Judd, and they currently live in Chesterfield County.



Charles E. Judd

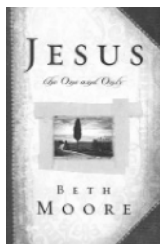
Attendees will meet at 12:00 noon in the New Parish Hall for a 15 minute 'gathering time', followed by a delicious lunch (donation \$4). Our program will commence by 1:00 and we will adjourn by 2:00. Guests are always welcome at Senior fellowship events, regardless of age or affiliation. Please contact the church office (784-5678) by noon on October 8 to reserve your place, unless you have responded to a prior reminding phone call. Many also attend the regular Wednesday Morning Prayer at 11:30 in Little St. Mary's immediately preceding the Seniors Meeting.

- Our **November 14** Meeting will feature Mr. Ross McKenzie, St. Maryian, retired Editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch Editorial Page, socio-political pundit, who will review the recent National Election and discuss its likely impact on the lives and thoughts of Seniors.

- Our **December 12** Meeting, we will honor the St. Mary's Super-Seniors and the St. Mary's Golden Pioneers, and will conclude the celebratory tone with some selected readings and carols in anticipation of the upcoming Christmas Season.

October 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> 3:30 PM EFM	<i>3</i> 9:00 AM Fellowship Committee 10:00 AM Bible Study 11:00 AM Nooma Series 4:00 PM Building Committee 6:00 PM Be Still 7:00 PM C.S. Lewis Class	<i>4</i> 7:30 PM Adult Choir	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i> 10:00 AM A.A.
					8th Grade to Shrine Mont	
<i>7</i> 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist I 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist I 8th Grade to Shrine Mont	<i>8</i> School Closed	<i>9</i> 3:30 PM EFM	<i>10</i> 9:00 AM Outreach Committee 10:00 AM Bible Study 11:30 AM Morning Prayer 12:00 PM Seniors 6:00 PM Be Still 7:00 PM C.S. Lewis Class 7:00 PM Inquirer's Class	<i>11</i> 7:00 PM "Jesus The One & Only" Class 7:30 PM Adult Choir	<i>12</i> 5:30 PM Wedding Rehearsal	<i>13</i> 10:00 AM A.A. 5:00 PM Wedding - New St. Mary's
<i>14</i> 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist I 9:45 AM Children's Committee Meeting 10:00 AM Parish Breakfast 11:00 AM Morning Prayer I - Wee Worship and Children's Chapel 1:00 PM Rhythms of Grace	<i>15</i> 11:00 AM Calendar Meeting	<i>16</i> 3:30 PM EFM	<i>17</i> 10:00 AM Bible Study 11:00 AM Nooma Series 5:30 PM Parish Supper 6:00 PM Be Still 7:00 PM C.S. Lewis Class 7:00 PM Inquirer's Class	<i>18</i> 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry 7:30 PM Adult Choir	<i>19</i> 5:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal	<i>20</i> 10:00 AM A.A. 5:00 PM Wedding - New St. Mary's
<i>21</i> 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist I 10:15 AM Churchyard Tours 11:00 AM Holy Eucharist II 5:00 PM Youth Groups	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> 3:30 PM EFM 5:00 PM Vestry	<i>24</i> 10:00 AM Bible Study 6:00 PM Be Still 7:00 PM C.S. Lewis Class 7:00 PM Inquirer's Class	<i>25</i> 4:00 PM Finance Committee 7:00 PM "Jesus The One & Only" Class 7:30 PM Adult Choir	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i> 8:00 AM - 12 PM School Yard Sale 10:00 AM A.A.
<i>28</i> 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist I 10:15 AM Churchyard Tours 11:00 AM Holy Baptism 5:30 PM Youth to Ashland Berry Farm	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i> 3:30 PM EFM	<i>31</i> 10:00 AM Bible Study 11:00 AM Nooma Series 6:00 PM Be Still			



Beth Moore Study *Jesus The One and Only*

Begins October 11

Led by Eazy Milligan

St. Mary's Adult Ministries and Eazy Milligan are thrilled to offer a Beth Moore Women's Bible Study entitled "Jesus the One and Only." This is a ten-session course that studies the life of Jesus, primarily relying on the Gospel of Luke. At each session, they will enjoy fellowship, watch a 60-minute video presented by Beth Moore, and engage in group discussion of the previous week's home study assignments. The study will meet every OTHER Thursday at 7:00 PM in the Adult Education Building beginning October 11. They will not meet on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Week, or Valentine's Day. Depending on private and county schools spring break sched-

ules, we may skip those weeks as well, but the class should be finished by Easter, March 31.

If you are interested in joining the class, please purchase *Jesus the One and Only* Book (\$14.95) available at Lifeway or Amazon. You will also need a Bible; any Bible is fine although the NIV (New International Version) Study Bible is recommended. Finally, the cost of the \$199 DVD purchase price will be divided equally among those attending.

Please let Eazy know by email eliz64.milligan@gmail.com or by phone at 314-7686 if you are interested. The class will meet in the Education building (room to be announced).

ROB BELL'S NOOMA SERIES

Meeting on Wednesday, October 3, 17 and 31, beginning at 11:00 a.m., parishioner **Laurie Rogers** will lead a small group in a discussion of Rob Bell's Nooma series which are 10-15 minute videos exploring such topics of faith as forgiveness, compassion, mercy, justice, anger and sin. Used in churches of all denominations, they are sure to spark plenty of discussion. This class will meet in the Education Building Loft.



EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

This small group facilitated by **Associate Rector Eleanor Wellford** meets **every Tuesday afternoon** from 3:30-6:00 in Eleanor's Office. The group spends its time in theological reflection and review of specific reading assignments.



Nursery Volunteers Needed

Meg Zehmer, our new nursery director, is enjoying her ministry to the youngest members of St. Mary's, and is happily welcoming newcomers to our community. Meg provides the primary care to the children of our nursery, as well as support to the parents and adult volunteers staffing our nursery. As she builds her organization of the nursery team, Meg is calling for those adults who would like to join this important ministry. Please contact Meg by telephone 241-3918, or direct your inquiries to the Parish Office at 784-5678 or info@stmarysgoochland.org. The first experience of St. Mary's Church for young parents is through the nursery door. Our gracious care of the infants who come to us is essential to their spiritual beginnings, as well as to the vitality and hospitality of our church. Please consider helping with this special ministry.

PARISH SUPPER

Wednesday, October 17

5:30-6:45 p.m.

New Parish Hall

Menu:

Spaghetti with Meatballs
Penne Marinara
Mixed Greens Salad
Broccoli
Garlic Bread

*Please call 784-5678 for reservations,
or sign up in the Parish Hall.*

*Requested Donation: \$7.00 per Adult,
\$4.00 per child age 9 to 14, Family Maximum \$22*

If you would like to help, please contact Dede
Andrews at aalden7@gmail.com or 741-6606

PARISH BREAKFAST

Sunday, October 14

10:00 a.m.

New Parish Hall

Menu:

Scrambled Eggs
Country Sausage
Fried Apples
French Toast
Biscuits
Fresh Fruit

*Requested Donation: \$5.00 per person
Family maximum of \$20.00*

If you would like to help,
please contact Sarah & Bruin Richardson at
740-9060 or srichardson@stmarysgoochland.org

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

12291 River Road Richmond, Virginia 23238

