**Announcements**

**Ushering in the New Year.** Yes, it’s Advent, and we’ll get to that below…but all year round (366 days in 2016!), people come to St. Mary’s for services, classes, fellowship, meals, meetings, and more. Whether it’s the first or the 10,000th time through our doors, we want to make sure that everyone feels welcome here, starting with Sunday morning services. That is why our ushers are so important! Whether you’re already an usher, think you might want to become an usher, or are simply curious about what being an usher means, please plan to be in New St. Mary’s **next Sunday, December 13 at 10:10 a.m.** Ushering – whether individually, as a couple, or as a family, is a wonderful way to greet people, meet them and, most of all, make them feel at home at St. Mary’s. If you have any questions, please contact Betsy Rawles at betsy.rawles@gmail.com or Weezie Blanchard at wblanchard@stmarysgoochland.org.

**It’s beginning to look a lot like Advent.** Advent is a special time of our liturgical year that invites us into contemplation as we consider the light Christ brings to our world. We hope that St. Mary’s can enrich your observance of Advent this year. Consider joining us for one or many of our special Advent offerings.

* **Evening Prayer** in Little St. Mary’s on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m.
* **Mary, Mother of Jesus Class** with Emily Rowell Brown, Wednesdays at 5 p.m. and Thursdays at 10 a.m.
* **Adult Forums featuring the Jesus birth narratives** with John Miller and Weezie Blanchard, Sundays at 10 a.m.
* **Advent Tour and Lunch at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts** with Weezie Blanchard, Tuesday, December 15 at 10 a.m.
* **Children’s Christmas Caroling**, Wednesday, December 16 at 4:30 p.m.
* **Parish Supper with Children’s Carols**, Wednesday, December 16 from 5:30-7 p.m.
* **Lessons and Carols**, Sunday, December 20 at 11 a.m.

**Be sure to take a December calendar, which details all of this season’s events, available in the narthexes of Little St. Mary’s and New St. Mary’s.**

**A season to reflect (digitally).** Consider joining us in spirit as well as in body by participating in one of our **online offerings**. Bring Advent into your own home on your very computer screen!

* St. Mary’s will offer **weekly Advent reflections from our clergy** throughout the season. Contact Emily Rowell Brown at ebrown@stmarysgoochland.org if you would like to receive these special messages in your **email inbox**.
* The Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE) creates **a digital Advent calendar** each year featuring images from around the world inspired by Advent themes. Learn more about and participate in the project by visiting [**http://aco.org/adventword**](http://aco.org/adventword). Post your own contributions to the St. Mary’s Facebook page during Advent to inspire others in their observance of the season.

**A season to give.** Outreach within St. Mary's, the surrounding community, and beyond is a testament to the vibrant life of our parish. Learn more about St. Mary's and some of our outreach partners by joining in one or more of the following opportunities:

* Give **presents**: To brighten the Christmas of children served by the Goochland Mother and Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services, take an ornament from our Giving Tree and return presents listed on it by Sunday, December 13.
* Give **blood**: St. Mary's parishioners (age 16 and up) have the opportunity to donate blood at St. Mary's from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, December 13. St. Mary's youth volunteers may help with sign in and other support by calling contacting Matt Rawls at **mrawls@stmarysgoochland.org.**
* Give **quarters**: We will provide clean laundry for our homeless guests from CARITAS while they are at St. Mary's from January 30-February 6. Please donate quarters for the laundry in the "Quarters for CARITAS" jar in the Café between the kitchen and the New Parish Hall.

**A season to mourn.** The holidays can be an especially difficult time of year for those of us who have lost children or are otherwise grieving.

* Join St. Mary’s and other sponsoring congregations for the **Holiday Memorial Service** tomorrow evening, **Monday, December 7** at **7 p.m.** at the **Church of the Holy Comforter,** 4819 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23230 for a special interfaith service. A simple reception will follow the service. Child care for age 5 and under will be available.
* **St. James’s Episcopal Church**, 1205 W. Franklin Street, Richmond, VA 23220 will offer an **Advent Grief and Loss Group** on **December 2, 9,** and **16** from **7-8:30 p.m.** Please register online at <http://doers.org> or by calling Gina at 355-1779, ext. 315.

**A season to green.** The St. Mary’s Altar Guild needs your greenery, your clippers, and your helping hands to help **decorate the church for Christmas**. Decorating will begin at **9 a.m.** on **Friday, December 18** in New St. Mary’s. Call Sue Thompson (389-3631), Betty Rinehardt (282-8374), or Joanie Robins (741-6393) with questions.

**A season to remember. Order poinsettias** nowto remember and honor your loved ones at Christmastime. St. Mary’s will accept **donations for flower memorials** to be placed around the church during the Christmas services. Please send your donation for $25.00 for each memorial to St. Mary’s Church, 12291 River Road, Richmond, VA  23238. Checks may be made payable to St. Mary’s Altar Guild.

**Last call!** The **Nominating Committee of the Vestry** of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church is receiving nominations for the 2019 class of the Vestry through **TODAY.** The 12-member Vestry consists of three rotating classes of four St. Mary's members in good standing; each class is elected at the Annual Meeting to serve for a three-year term. The next **Annual Meeting** of St. Mary’s will be held **Sunday, January 31, 2016**.

* According to Canon 12, Section 13 of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of

 Virginia, *“Each Vestry member shall support the programs of the Church through a commitment to service and a biblically-based standard of proportional giving. Each Vestry member shall also continually encourage the members of the  congregation to support the programs of the Church and to give generously towards the support of the programs; and each Vestry member shall extend personally a hearty welcome to newly baptized, confirmed, received, or transferred members of the congregation.”*

* The **Nominating Committee** is chaired by outgoing Vestry member and Senior Warden **Rich Lundvall**. Other members are outgoing Vestry members **Bill Gooch, Michelle Lewis,** and **Ben Weimer,** and at-large members **Eddie Goode, Susie Patton, Gray Stettinius,** and **Sue Thompson.**
* Please submit nominations to Lori Smiley at **lsmiley@stmarysgoochland.org****.**

 **Wait. Do you have your calendars**? Be sure to take home our **St. Mary’s December calendar**, which lists all of our December offerings, and **a creative take** on the daily Advent calendar, **Slow down. Quiet. It’s Advent!**

***Many of you have made annual giving pledges to support the ministries of St. Mary’s in 2016. Thank you. If you have not turned in your annual giving pledge card for 2016, we need you. St. Mary’s depends on the generous support of all of us.***