



THE ANNUNCIATION

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 26) October 30, 2016

A Weekly Reflection by Andrew Blair

I admit it: I was ambivalent about visiting St. Mary's at first. Even though my then-fiancée-now-wife had shared the depth and joys of her experiences, I was firmly entrenched in the life of the church where I was worshipping at the time.

For a 10-plus-year span I drew spiritual comfort from my church. I wasn't about to leave behind my friendships and pastors. Though St. Mary's was only a short drive away, it may as well have been the moon.

A friend once told me that 'We plan. God laughs,' and that has certainly turned out to be prophetic in some instances. As my faith journey develops, today I reflect upon trying out St. Mary's and think about a kid who is standing at the deck of a pool, dabbing his or her foot in to test the water before making the final decision. Should I take the plunge or play it safe?

So was the case with me. I began attending St. Mary's more regularly and took part in the inquirer's class. I'd never even heard of The Book of Common Prayer before, so despite my oddball questions, the clergy, staff and parishioners at St. Mary's were able to answer my inquiries and contain their laughter—truly an act of God!

Soon, I found myself willing to jump in and engage further in the life of the congregation. Not full cannonball-style, you understand, but thanks to some gentle prodding, I was willing to attempt a waist-high endeavor into the water. Using the pool analogy, it was that 'ah' moment when you abandon the comfort of the ledge and the temperature of the water engulfs with you. Stay or go? I started helping with Vacation Bible School, as well as attending regularly on Sundays and assisting in the church office during the week.

As it turns out, the power of a God whose love knows no boundaries was altering the trajectory of my faith journey. After so masterfully counseling us in the months leading up to the big day, on June 11, Weezie married Cabell and me in Little St. Mary's.

Thanks to you all, I decided to immerse myself further and became a member in mid-September. The St. Mary's family, especially my wife, have aided me, ensuring that I won't drown in the ever-changing tidal wave of today's world.

When I was deciding whether or not to become a member, a dear friend and St. Mary's member, Fay Lohr, asked if I'd serve on the Stewardship ministry team. I was hesitant at first, but was flattered that she'd ask if I'd swim a little farther on my ever-evolving journey despite some unknowns.

At St. Mary's, I've been particularly impressed by how well we care about and for one another, while serving the Christ. My wife and I believe this is an important time in the life of the church. The Stewardship campaign is challenging us to explore the depths of our faith journey. Like you, my wife and I have engaged in those difficult but necessary dinner-table conversations about where we think God is leading us and St. Mary's.

Our discussions and prayers have been spiritually enlightening. We've decided that we're ready to venture a little deeper, trusting in the life-giving Spirit that renews, redeems, protects, sustains and keeps us.

Nursery

We have nursery available for **infants through 4-year-olds** from 8:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. The nursery is located in the Preschool and Sunday School Building. Our nursery leader, Meg Zehmer, and Melissa Alicea will be happy to help you get your child settled into the nursery.

Worship bags

We provide worship bags that contain a coloring page based on the Gospel reading of the day. It also has a wonderful parent-focused message on the back to help you talk about the day's reading with your child. Worship bags are located in wood bins near the entrances to the church.

Sermons available

Find past sermons available in hard copy in the narthex of New St. Mary's, or visit stmarysgoochland.org/sermons to hear audio and download print versions.

Connect with us

We would love to learn more about you! If you are a visitor, please pick up a **welcome packet** from one of our ushers.

Would you like to write for us? Contact Ashley Cameron at acameron@stmarysgoochland.org to learn more.

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite One, *Little St. Mary's*
10 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Education, *Sunday School, Education Building, and New Parish Hall*
10 a.m. All Youth Breakfast, *Education Building*
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite Two, *New St. Mary's*
Noon Cookies and Coffee, *Café and New Parish Hall*

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WELCOME! Whether it is your first Sunday at St. Mary's, or your 401st, we're glad that you're with us. Please feel free to introduce yourself to a greeter, usher, or a clergy member, and consider filling out an information form. We invite you to join us on future **Sundays** at 9 a.m. for Eucharist or 11 a.m. for Eucharist or Morning Prayer, on Wednesdays for **Noonday Prayer** at 12 p.m. in beautiful and quaint Little St. Mary's, for a **class** or **Bible study**, or for many of our other **fellowship** and **outreach** offerings. **Little St. Mary's** is also **open** Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and available to you for prayer and reflection. See the back page to get a sense of what we have going on around St. Mary's.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Gina Alexander, who has faithfully served as Parish Administrator of St. Mary's Episcopal Church since 1994, has announced her decision to retire on January 31, 2017. Gina's contributions to life at St. Mary's are too many to count. In addition to working closely with the clergy and staff, she has been an invaluable presence over the years on the Building, Fellowship Committee, Finance Committee, Grounds, and Stewardship Committees. "I cannot imagine how the transition from John Miller's retirement to now would have gone without Gina's energy, knowledge, and can-do spirit," said Rector Weezie Blanchard. "She has made all of us who are new feel welcome, while reassuring those who have been here longer that the essential nature of St. Mary's will not change." As Senior Warden Al Rider noted, "Our parish owes great gratitude for the commitment and service Gina has provided during her long tenure at St. Mary's. She has been rock solid as our Parish Administrator during a long period of growth. We will miss her, but wish her the absolute best in her retirement."

We will celebrate Gina's service to St. Mary's with a reception following the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, January 29, 2017.

ADULT EDUCATION AND MORE

Spiritual practice for men. Bob Hetherington's spiritual practice for men for **continues Tuesdays, November 1, 8, 15, and 22 at 7:30 a.m.** in the Old Parish Hall The one-hour time of **silence, reflection, sharing and prayer** focuses on the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday. This spiritual practice is an opportunity to deepen faith and is **open to men of all ages.**

"Life is not something that happens to you. You take what you have been given and you get to shape it, form it, steer it, make it into something...It's all part of being here," Rob Bell, *How to Be Here*. **Join Matt Rawls** on Wednesday, November 2 and 9 at 5:30 p.m. **to discuss Rob Bell's book, *How to be Here*.** Bell is a leading voice in contemporary conversations about modern spirituality and practice. These discussions are in preparation for **Rob Bell's visit to St. Stephen's on Monday, November 14 at 7 p.m.** For more information contact Matt Rawls at mrawls@stmarysgoochland.org.

Come be challenged by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's book, *Crazy Christians* to follow in the footsteps of Jesus **today in the Adult Forum at 10:10 a.m.** Can't make it to Adult Forum? Read *Crazy Christians* anyway and start the conversation among yourselves!

By December 15, most of us have made a proclamation about *next Christmas being different*. Less stressed. Less stuff. More of what matters. **Come join a discussion** before the crazy starts in a pop-up class with Amelia McDaniel at **10 a.m. in the Library on Sunday, November 13 and Sunday, November 20.** Set your family and you on a path toward a **lighter, brighter Advent** and Christmas towards Bethlehem.

WORSHIP

It's Daylight Savings next weekend! While we would love for you to show up to church an hour early...you may want to **set your clocks an hour back next Saturday night.** We don't want you to miss All Saints' Sunday! We will celebrate **All Saints' Day on Sunday, November 6.** Each year we include a reading of **all those who have died within the life of our parish** and those who have been included in our communal prayer. **If you have a loved one whom you would like to include** in this list for All Saints' Day, please contact Lori Smiley at lsmiley@stmarysgoochland.org.

STEWARDSHIP

We are halfway through the Annual Giving Campaign! We ask you to please give and **"Walk in Love."** Stewardship Committee members will be updating us today. Please don't forget to turn in your pledge cards by mail or by placing in the offertory **by November 13.** You can also pledge online at stmarysgoochland.org/pledge, email Gina Alexander at galexander@stmarysgoochland.org or call 784-5678. Thank you!

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Beginning Tuesday, November 8, we have a special opportunity for middle school girls! Anne Taylor Robertson and Ashley Cameron will be leading a **once-a-month-cooking class.** This will be an amazing opportunity, but **space is very limited!** We can only feasibly handle 10 students in the class, **so please sign-up quickly.** **Cost per student is \$50** (to cover food and necessary supplies). This class is only for girls, but Matt Rawls will be creating a similar activity for the boys in the upcoming months. Please contact Matt Rawls at mrawls@stmarysgoochland.org if you have questions or to sign-up.

High School Shrine Mont Weekend, Friday, November 4 - Sunday, November 6, Shrine Mont: Are you a **9th-12th grader** who wants to join other high school students for fun and fellowship? The High School Shrine Mont Weekend is an awesome retreat organized by Parish Youth Ministry (PYM), a group of high school students from around the Diocese of Virginia. Contact Matt Rawls for information and registration forms at mrawls@stmarysgoochland.org.

All Saints' Day procession: Please mark your calendars for **Sunday, November 6** when we celebrate All Saints' Day. As part of the **St. Mary's tradition the children will be a part of the service.** In the weeks before All Saints' Day, the **children have been learning about the lives of some of the saints.** This is such a special day in the life of the church, and we hope that there will be many children who will be able to participate. Please contact Amelia McDaniel at amcdaniel@stmarysgoochland.org for more information.

OUTREACH

Grab a bag to fill with Thanksgiving pantry items to help our neighbors in Goochland County this Thanksgiving. The list of items needed is stapled to the bag. Please return to the New Parish Hall by **Sunday, November 13.** All bags go to **Goochland Free Clinic and Family Services'** food pantry. **Find the bags** in the back of New St. Mary's, Little St. Mary's and the Café. **And thank you to all the Sunday School students who colored the bags!** If you have any questions or would like to send a check instead of filling a bag, contact Ashley Cameron at acameron@stmarysgoochland.org.

CELEBRATION OF NEW MINISTRY

For the first time in 32 years, St. Mary's will host a **Celebration of New Ministry** on November 16 when **the Rev. Louise Browner Blanchard** is instituted and inducted as the fourth Rector of St. Mary's. **Everyone is invited** to this milestone event as we celebrate Weezie's new role and the ongoing ministry of our vibrant parish. A **child and adult friendly reception** will begin at **5:30 p.m.** in the New Parish Hall, followed by the **7 p.m. service** with the Rt. Rev. Shannon S. Johnston, Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, as celebrant. The **festivities** will conclude with cake and bubbly beverages for all ages.

This Week at St. Mary's

Sunday, October 30, 24th Sunday after Pentecost

(Proper 26), St. Mary's Episcopal School Sunday

Holy Eucharist Rite One, 9 a.m., *Little St. Mary's*

Sunday School and Adult Education, 10 a.m., *Sunday*

School and Education Buildings and New Parish Hall

All Youth Breakfast, 10 a.m., *Education Building*

Holy Eucharist Rite Two, 11 a.m., *New St. Mary's*

Cookies and Coffee, 12 p.m., *Café and New Parish Hall*

Tuesday, November 1, All Saints' Day

Men's Spiritual Practice, 7:30 a.m., *Old Parish Hall*

Fellowship Committee, 9 a.m., *Old Parish Hall*

Staff Planning Session, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., *Rector's Study*

Wednesday, October 26, All Souls' Day

Bible Study, 10 a.m., *Education Building Library*

Noonday Prayer, 12 p.m., *Little St. Mary's*

Children's Choir Practice, 5 p.m., *Choir Suite*

How to Be Here Book Study, 5:30 p.m., *Library*

Thursday, November 3

SMES Chapel, 9:30 a.m., *St. Mary's Episcopal School*

St. Mary's Choir Practice, 7:30 p.m., *Choir Suite*

Friday, November 4

Senior High PYM Weekend, *Shrine Mont*

Saturday, November 5

Senior High PYM Weekend, *Shrine Mont*

A.A., 10 a.m., *Education Building Classroom*

Sunday, November 6, All Saints' Sunday

Holy Eucharist Rite One, 9 a.m., *Little St. Mary's*

Sunday School and Adult Education, 10 a.m., *Sunday*

School and Education Buildings and New Parish Hall

Confirmation Class, 10 a.m., *Education Building*

Holy Eucharist Rite Two with Holy Baptism and

Children's Procession of Saints, 11 a.m., *New St. Mary's*

Cake and Coffee, 12 p.m., *Café and New Parish Hall*

Coming Up

Tuesday, November 8, Election Day

Middle School Girls' Cooking Class, 4:30 p.m., *Café*

Coming Soon

**Sunday, November 13, 26th Sunday after Pentecost
(Proper 28)**

Pledge Card Sunday

Parish Breakfast, 9:30 a.m., *New Parish Hall*

Wednesday, November 16

Celebration of New Ministry, 7 p.m., *New St. Mary's*

CLERGY, STAFF, AND VESTRY

Gersain Agudelo, *Assistant Sexton*

Gina Alexander, *Parish Administrator*

galexander@stmarysgoochland.org

Melissa Alicea, *Nursery Assistant*

Adam Bailey, *Children's Choir Director*

Louise Browner Blanchard, *Rector*

wblanchard@stmarysgoochland.org

Ashley Cameron, *Director of Communications and Parish Life*

acameron@stmarysgoochland.org

Tammy Click, *Accountant*

W. Dwight Graham, *Organist and Choirmaster*

Robert G. Hetherington, *Priest Associate*

Amelia McDaniel, *Director of Children's Ministries*

amcdaniel@stmarysgoochland.org

Paul Pace, *Sexton*

Matt Rawls, *Director of Youth Ministries*

mrawls@stmarysgoochland.org

Lori Smiley, *Assistant to the Clergy*

lsmiley@stmarysgoochland.org

Meg Zehmer, *Nursery Director*

Susan Rawls, *Director of St. Mary's Episcopal School*

Vestry Members:

Al Rider, *Senior Warden*

Jane duFrane, *Junior Warden*

Bill Gooch, *Treasurer*

Charmaine Trice, *Register*

Scott Barton, Steve Guza, Brantley Holmes, Fay Lohr,

Tracey Ragsdale, Betsy Rawles, Bruin Richardson,

David Rose, and Tom Slater

Spread the Love

Please keep parishioner Linda Hendricks in your thoughts and prayers as she recovers from a devastating fire at her apartment. Many of you have asked how you can help. Because she does not have space to store anything at this time, gift cards would be most helpful. Please deliver Visa, Martin's, Target, etc. gift cards to the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Lori Smiley at lsmiley@stmarysgoochland.org.