



ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH TIDINGS

Winter 2016 - 2017

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

The Rector and staff, the Wardens and Vestry of St. Mary's Church wish you joy as you celebrate Christ's birth and every good blessing in the year of our Lord to come.

Dear Members and Friends of St. Mary's,

Christmas is God's wonderful good gift to us as he gives his son into our world to make it his world again. I've been wondering how we can "give Christmas" to those around us, not just in December but throughout the year. Many people are conscious of the way Christmas has become commercialized, or has been sanitized to "Happy Holidays". We are the ones who are privileged to know and love what this festival is all about.

Knowing that the Light has shone in our human darkness and made it bright; knowing that God the Son has become Jesus our friend and brother; knowing what it means to "have life and have it abundantly", how can we share this with the world around us?

On Epiphany, the culmination of Christmas, God shows what he has done. In the persons of the Wise Men the world, with its knowledge and power - and with its needs and longings - kneels and worships the incarnate Son of God. How can we help "show what God has done?"

Would you consider three ways in 2017?

First, let's show the reality of God and the Gospel through the quality of our lives. Could we make sure that our worship, our conduct, our attitudes and our generosity honor Christ and show him to the world?

Then could we show the world and those we care about to God? I mean, could we pray very specifically and intentionally that God will show himself to and bless and direct our nation and our city, our families and specific individuals we care about?

Lastly, could we invite others to join us at worship, at prayer, in Christian study and activity? Simon Peter met Jesus because his brother said "Come and see." Barnabas took the recently converted Paul by the hand and introduced him to the Church in Jerusalem. Could we do something like this for a couple of people we care about this year? Then for them Christmas in 2017 will be full of the glory and the wonder and the love of God.

May God bless you richly as you celebrate this Christmas and New Year.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Rowe

A few words from the Senior Warden

Joy and Wonder. We're going to experience these emotions a lot as we approach and celebrate Christmas once again in the next few weeks.

Yet I believe that we experience them all year long. Every time I walk into the church for worship I feel them myself, and I sense them in you, my fellow parishioners - the quiet joy, the silent awe. And these

are blessings which come from our being Christians - direct results of Jesus' birth and our faith. We really do have a blessed and beloved parish.

I wish you all a Joyful, Wonderful and Blessed Christmas!

Bob Foltz, Senior Warden

CANDLEMAS

The Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

On Sunday, January 29, 2017 St. Mary's Church invites all her members and friends to her winter Feast of Title.

This is the day to give thanks to God for his wonderful blessings to St. Mary's and to pray for his guidance on our life into his future.

This is the day to honor our Lady, who said YES to God and brought our Savior Jesus Christ into the world.

This is the day for us to say a wholehearted YES to God so that we can bring Christ more and more deeply into our lives and share him with others.

The principal celebration will be at the Parish Eucharist at 10:00 am with procession, incense and special music. It will include the essential parts of the Parish's Annual Meeting and will be followed by a festive reception.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of St. Mary's Episcopal Church will take place on Sunday, January 29, 2017 as part of the 10:00 am Eucharist celebrating Candlemas. The tradition of having the Annual Meeting during the Candlemas Eucharist began last year as part of our celebration of parish life and to add a spiritual dimension to the Annual Meeting.

At this meeting, the Nominating Committee appointed by the Vestry will nominate four parish members for election to three year terms as members of the Vestry. The four parishioners are: Dann Battina, Jim Howard,

Jesse Roberts and Les Rooker. All of them have agreed to serve if elected.

In addition, a new set of By-laws for St. Mary's will be presented for approval. Parish members will have the opportunity to review these proposed By-laws in advance, as will be explained in a future weekly news email letter.

Please contact Bob Foltz, Senior Warden, as noted below if you have any questions.

robert.foltz@ahss.org
(239) 498-2392

St. Mary's Special Anniversary Year Plan to Celebrate!

From a mission church of 34 people in 1977, to a thriving faith community of nearly 500 full- and part-year parishioners...St Mary's Episcopal Church of Bonita Springs is getting ready to celebrate its **40th Anniversary** in 2017.

We will officially kick-off our special year on Candlemas, Sunday, January 29th after the 10 am Eucharist. A variety of programs and activities will be scheduled during the following months and will be designed to include congregants who are both new to St Mary's and those who have helped to develop its rich parish life over the years.

A final event...**THE FEAST OF FOUNDING**...will be held on Saturday, November 18th, at a special 5PM mass, followed by a reception in the Parish Life Center.

Please join in and help us celebrate St Mary's past, present and future!

Recovery Eucharist

St. Mary's Innovative Recovery Eucharist brings 12 Step program into a traditional Episcopal communion service

The quiet impact of the Recovery Eucharist, offered monthly on the first Tuesday, has brought a regular, and growing attendance to St Mary's.

The service, brought to our attention through the Episcopal Church and in conjunction with 12 Step programs, based on faith and commitment, is offered by St. Martin's Ministry, part of Pastoral Care Commission, for help in all addiction issues.

Mthr. Bobbi Parini is our Clergy advisor. She plans each service as appropriate to our church calendar, respecting the liturgy as appropriate to Recovery.

All are welcome to attend who have an interest in helping and supporting Recovery Programs.

LIVING GENEROUSLY

As we approach the end of this year and look toward the next, we want to thank you for your generosity and leadership in support for the many ministries of St. Mary's. This year's successes would not have been possible without each of you, and we want to bring you up to date on the plans for Stewardship 2017.

As you know, "Stewardship" encompasses the giving of Time, Talent and Treasure for the growth of God's Kingdom. For next year, one goal at St. Mary's is to fully include **all** of our members-whether they are here year-round, half-year, or primarily during the winter months. For this reason, the annual Stewardship Program for 2017 will take place in February of 2017. That is why you have not received a Pledge Card yet, as you usually do in November.

So, Please!

Whatever your current giving habits, **please** continue or increase them without interruption! It is crucial to maintain the financial stability of the parish during our transition to a winter Pledge Drive. The traditional weekly giving envelopes will be available in December as usual for use beginning Jan 1.



The new Stewardship Schedule:

Feb. 4-5:

Ministry Fair in the Parish Life Center, show-casing parish activities and providing the opportunity to ask questions and to join a ministry. The Ministry Fair celebrates the Stewardship of Time & Talent.

Feb. 11-12:

Stewardship Weekend with Guest Preacher Rev. Catie Greene, distribution of Pledge Cards and complimentary luncheon for everyone after the 10 a.m. service. The Pledge process celebrates the Stewardship of Treasure. We are asked to prayerfully consider where St. Mary's is among our priorities and to indicate accordingly what our support is likely to be for 2017.

Feb. 13-25:

Return Pledge Cards to St. Mary's. Cards will be blessed at the 10 a.m. service on Feb. 25.

It's that simple; a different and more-inclusive schedule, but the same principle of committing our Time, Talent and Treasure to the church where our heart is.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Joanna Wragg, 2017 Stewardship Chair, at 239-405-8702 or wragg.joanna@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S MUSIC

By Worship Commission and Vestry approval, a new opportunity for giving to support special musical offerings at St. Mary's Episcopal Church is being instituted. Friends of St. Mary's Music is intended to support the immediate financial needs of special musical offerings season by season.

In contrast, the "Brian Aranowski Music Endowment Fund" which currently exists, is intended to support the long-term sustenance and provide a solid financial base for future major projects involving Music Ministry.

Please consider helping start this fund, which will allow for high-caliber programming for musical events offered two to three times per season. This contribution could be given in honor or in memory of someone or simply as a gift to bring music to both the parish and community that would not be possible otherwise.

Checks should be made payable to St. Mary's Episcopal Church with "Friends of St. Mary's Music" in the subject line.

SPECIAL UPCOMING MUSICAL OFFERINGS FOR THE 2016-2017 WINTER/SPRING SEASON

Saturday, December 24th, 9:30 pm

Anthems & Carols for Christmas Eve

This thirty-minute musical offering precedes the 10:00 PM Solemn Mass of Christmas.

Sunday, January 15th, 9:30 am

Choral Matins

This service of sung Morning Prayer precedes the 10:00 AM Eucharist.

Friday, January 27th, 7:00 pm

Celebratory Organ Concert

This celebratory concert honors the 15th anniversary of the installation of the instrument.

The concert is free and is open to the public. Tickets are not required.



Dwight Thomas,
Organist

Dwight Thomas received the Bachelor of Music degree from Butler University, Indianapolis, studying piano with Dorothy Munger and piano pedagogy with Steve Roberson, and

the Master of Music degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, studying organ and church music with Marilyn Keiser and Robert Rayfield. Before moving to Florida in 1999, he served at several Indianapolis ecclesiastical institutions, and served as an organ faculty member / resident organist at both Christian Theological Seminary and Butler University.

In addition to being a classically trained organist, Dwight also is an established theater organist and was named "Theater Organist of the Year" by the American Theater Organ Society in 2006. He was staff organist,

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playing the famous Wurlitzer organ at the Roaring 20's restaurant in Ellenton, Florida until its closure in 2010.

As a concert organist, he has performed recitals in both the classical and theater genres in the United States and Great Britain, including the instruments housed at York Minister and Westminster Abbey and has appeared locally with The Florida Orchestra and Sarasota Orchestra.

He has been involved in several recording projects which feature him, including The All-American Music of Irving Berlin; that audio being selected as one of the top 10 best recordings of 1990 by TIME magazine.

Dwight also joins the illustrious company of Robert Schumann, Glenn Gould and Leon Fleischer; all keyboard musicians who have been afflicted with focal dystonia of the right hand, a neurological condition for which there is no cure. While focal dystonia has ended the careers of many musicians, Dwight considers himself one of the lucky ones with symptoms that have vastly disappeared since its onset in 2003.

He currently serves as Director of Music and Organist at the Cathedral Church of Saint Peter (Episcopal), in St. Petersburg, Florida as well as Chapel Organist at Westminster Shores Retirement Community and is current Dean of the St. Petersburg Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Friday, February 17th, 7:00 pm

Echoing Air

This concert features an early music ensemble group consisting of two countertenors and instrumentalists performing on Baroque instruments. The concert is free and open to the public. Tickets are not required.



"Echoing Air" is a dynamic ensemble specializing in the repertoire of the English Baroque, with an emphasis on chamber works featuring countertenor voices with baroque ensemble.

The ensemble is comprised of talented performers who have worked with leading proponents of early music including the Bach Ensemble, Ensemble Galilei, Musica Antiqua Köln, Ensemble Voltaire, and Chanticleer, and have performed in venues such as the Boston Early Music Festival and the Proms in London.

For more information on the group and individual biographies visit their web site at www.echoingair.org.

Sunday, February 19th, at the 10:00 am Holy Eucharist

Missa Cantata, in the classic tradition, the Choir offers the Ordinary of the Mass.

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All of the information above also may be found by visiting the St. Mary's Episcopal Church website at www.stmarysbonita.org (click on "Music").

We look forward to seeing you at these events as well as your financial support for present and future musical endeavors. May God continually be praised through our work in His name!

New Members Welcomed

Fr. Michael Rowe welcomed and enrolled 18 new St. Mary's Associate Members on the weekend of November 5 and 6, 2016. Please make them feel welcomed: Bill and Billie Barnes, Elaine Douglas, Brian and Kelly Deaves - in absentia; Bob and Gloria Lee, John "Jack" and Laura Ransom, Carl and Peggy Racioppi, John Rogers, Paul Scheible, Rod and Peggy Thorn - in absentia; and Barbara Williams, Lillian Vosganian, and Sandy York.

Newcomers and frequent visitors who worship at St. Mary's and are considering a new spiritual home here, please join us for the next Newcomers Orientation Dinner scheduled for Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 6 p.m. in the Parish Life Center. This dinner offers the opportunity to experience our hospitality and to be welcomed by our clergy, the Vestry and other church members. For more information about membership and enrollment, please contact Barbara Bateman at membership@stmarysbonita.org or the Church office.

Confirmation and Reception

Confirmation is a sacrament, that is a means of grace, in which we reaffirm our Christian commitment to live for God in Jesus Christ and receive God's strengthening grace and to help us to that through the laying on of hands with prayer by the Bishop. (See page 860 in the Book of Common Prayer) It is a very important step to take in our Christian lives and we approach it with careful study and prayer.

Those coming from the Roman Catholic Church are typically "received" rather than confirmed because they have already been confirmed in the same sense as we mean. Sometimes people who have been away from the church and have now returned welcome the opportunity to renew their commitment and receive formal prayer for this rededication. We provide for this as well, with the same sort of preparation.

Ten of our members are preparing to take this important step on Sunday, March 19 next year. Please keep them in your prayers and support them with your presence that day. If you would like to join them in this exciting journey of faith, please contact Fr. Rowe. Preparation begins on Tuesday, January 10.

Here is the Confirmation Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer page 418. It is a wonderful prayer to review and pray for ourselves and for others.

Defend, O Lord, your servant *N.* with your heavenly grace, that (s)he may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until (s)he comes to your everlasting kingdom. Amen.

Bishops Visiting St. Mary's

We are privileged to have two bishops visiting St. Mary's this Season.

The Rt. Rev'd. Geoffrey Rowell is the retired Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe. A teacher and friend of Fr. Michael's he will be at St. Mary's on Wednesday, February 22 for a presentation at 10:30 am after which he will celebrate mass and preach. A lunch with time for questions and conversation will follow.

The Rt. Rev. Andy Doyle, Bishop of Texas and President of the Compass Rose Society will be with us on the weekend of March 18 & 19. In addition to Compass Rose presentations and celebrating, preaching and confirming, he will make a presentation on Saturday, including lunch and conversation. Details to follow.

We hope the whole parish will take part in these two events.

Visiting Clergy

The Rev. Gail Tomei was priest associate at St. Mary's 2006 to 2009 before moving to Pennsylvania and serving the Church there. She and her husband Tony are now seasonal residents of Naples and we are thrilled to welcome them back. Mother Gail will be assisting with prayer and pastoral ministry starting in the New Year. Watch for more information about how to get in touch with her.

The Rev. Ken McCaslin is visiting us again this season and will be the deacon serving at many of the 10 am Eucharists as he has done the past several years.

Deacon McCaslin is resident in the Valley Forge Deanery of the Diocese of Pennsylvania and is associated with Calvary Episcopal Chrch in Conshohocken, PA.

Harvest Time Ministries WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Harvest Time Ministries is up and running for the season. We will be meeting to pack 120 food bags on Friday morning, December 30th from 9 to 10:30 am. Many hands make for quick completion of the job! We will be meeting on Saturday morning, December 31st from 9 am to about Noon to deliver the food as well as clothing and housewares directly to the farm worker camps. Since we are one of HTM's major support groups, they are counting on us! If you can help, please contact Fred Cable (498-5530) or (fredc698@aol.com) or Brian Cleary (265-1238). It is very important that we support this project. Also, please take an info sheet from the table in the narthex - it contains all the dates, directions and the gate code. The Outreach Commission thanks you for your support!

Icon Workshop March 6 - 10, 2017

Would you like to learn the ancient art of painting icons? You can join us for a week of prayer and painting during Lent. Absolutely no artistic experience needed or required. You will be led step by step in the process by our new teacher, Teresa Harrison. Teresa teaches workshops all over the United States and comes to us highly recommended by Paige Blair. If you would like to sign up, go directly to Teresa's website, teresaharrison.com and sign up there for the St.Mary's workshop in Bonita Springs. If you would like more information please call Dianne Rowe at 239-992-0622. The workshop runs from 9 am to 4 pm for 5 days, beginning on Monday, March 6, 2017. This is a wonderful way to spend time in prayer and time getting to know fellow Christians.

FUN AND FELLOWSHIP IN THE WINTER FOYERS

Sign up for your January, February and March Foyer groups now! Foyer groups are small groups of 6-8 members that meet once a month for supper and fellowship.

The winter foyers start in January. You may meet in your home, or a restaurant or pack a picnic. It is a casual and enjoyable get together. If you meet in a

restaurant, everyone pays for their own meal. If you meet in your home, everyone brings a dish to share. (All fun, not much work.). After your first supper you will chose the date and location that suits the group for the next meeting. It is a great way to become friends with people you may only see on Sundays. There is a sign up sheet in the narthex, or you may contact Susan McClean at susandorismcclean@gmail.com

Wednesday Bible Study

A study of the theology of the Gospel according to John, using *The Word of Life* by Craig Koester, is the focus of the Wednesday group. We have met for several weeks and have just started to scratch the surface of this engaging work. Currently, we are investigating the question 'How do people know God'? This fundamental question is at the heart of the Gospel account.

It is the hope of the study to move beyond knowing things about God but developing a deeper relationship

and a sense of presence with God in our daily life. The author of the Gospel tells us exactly why he wrote it: "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 22:31).

It is not too late to join us for this exciting study; please see Fr. Bob if you have any questions.

Episcopal Church Women Happenings

ECW of St. Mary's is a welcoming group of ladies devoted to supporting St. Mary's and each other through growth in all ways; spiritual, community outreach, informational, transformational and a lot of fun! The regular monthly business meeting is the 2nd Thursday of each month, providing a program of either spiritual, outreach or fellowship. Additionally, Lunch Bunch meets socially the 4th Thursday of each month at various area restaurants.

Recently, the Executive Board approved the newest committee "Reaching Out", which will be led by Jill Smith, focusing on ECW outreach opportunities.

The diocesan ECW Annual Meeting was held at DaySpring on Thursday, November 17, with six St. Mary's ladies attending. The speaker, Lisa Towle, ECW National President, challenged us to "GO!"...and embrace 'change'. Anne Vickers, Canon for Finance and Administration, gave us an informative tour of the facility.

St. Mary's Annual Fundraiser will be Friday, January 20th, 2017 to be held at Artichoke & Company. Tickets are \$95.00, with a Murder/Mystery evening



planned - "Dressed to Kill". The Cash Raffle this year will be our main focus of revenue, as there will not be a live or silent auction. Please participate, and invite your friends and family members to purchase a chance to win \$5,000, \$1,000, or \$500. Tickets are \$100. All tickets purchased by December 31st will go into the Early Bird drawing to win \$100. This is an excellent Christmas gift for your children and grandchildren.

December brings our annual Christmas Tea! With over one hundred ladies in attendance, along with a few flamingos, freshly brewed English Tea, and many delectables baked by our own... it was a spectacular event for St. Mary's ladies and guests! If you missed this year's event, mark your calendar next year for Thursday, December 7, 2017.

ECW is a wonderful group of ladies celebrating God's love and life at St. Mary's! ALL St. Mary's ladies are members, and we would love to have you join us to participate in whatever area(s) interest you. For more information contact Jane Battina at janelizabeth2@hotmail.com or Renee Osborne at renee@midwestsinglereource.com.

Lent Madness

Lent Madness is a fun engaging way for people to learn about the men and women comprising the Church's Calendar of Saints.

32 saints are placed into a tournament style elimination bracket. Each pairing remains open for a day while people vote for their favorite saint. The first round consists of basic biographical information. As the winners are reduced to 16 the information continues to be provided with quotes and quirks or legends. Again reduced to 8 and then the saintly four. Finally a silver halo or a coveted golden halo is awarded during

Holy Week.

Join the fun. Lent Madness will start the Thursday after Ash Wednesday - March 2 2017.

A large poster will be kept up to date in the PLC. Previous winners have been -

- 2016 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- 2015 - Francis of Assisi
- 2014 - Charles Wesley
- 2013 - Frances Perkins
- 2012 - Mary Magdalene
- 2011 - C. S. Lewis