

Advent and Christmas Worship and Activities

Advent, the first season of the Church year, began on Sunday, Nov. 27, and will continue through Dec. 24.

Advent is a time of preparation as we anticipate Jesus's birth, which we mark on Christmas Day. The Christmas season then extends until Jan. 5.

At St. Mary's, Advent is also a time when we reach out to our neighbors to show Christ's love through Seasonal Sharing.

Advent and Christmas Worship at St. Mary's

Sunday, Dec. 4 — Holy Eucharist, healing service, 9 am

Sunday, Dec. 11 — Holy Eucharist, 9 am. The service will feature an Advent Musical Celebration offered by vocalist Michelle Prindle, cellist Dan Prindle, violinist Rhys Prindle and pianist Kelly Sharp.

Sunday, Dec. 18 — Morning Prayer, 9 am

Saturday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve — Holy Eucharist, 4 pm

Sunday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day — No service

Sunday, Jan. 1 — Morning Prayer, 9 am

Christmas Worship at St. John's, Vernon

St. Mary's members are invited and welcome.

Saturday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve — Holy Eucharist, 10 pm

Sunday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day — Holy Eucharist, 9 am

Advent Series at St. John's, Vernon

St. Mary's members are welcome! The first session was held on Nov. 30, but two remain: Wednesday, Dec. 7, and Wednesday, Dec. 14. They are held from 6 to 8 pm in St. John's Lower Parish Hall. Each includes a soup supper, a lesson, discussion and brief Eucharist. Discussion is grounded in a series of short video meditations led by members of the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

If you would like to attend, either in person or by Zoom, please call St. John's office at 860.872.0517.

Pianist Kelly Sharp, vocalist Michelle Prindle, cellist Dan Prindle and violinist Rhys Prindle will present an Advent Musical Celebration at St. Mary's 9 am service on Sunday, Dec. 11.

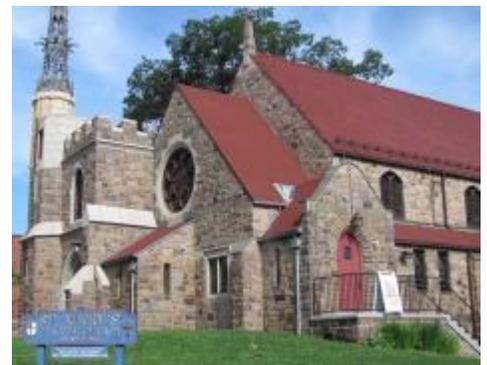


Newsletter of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Manchester, CT

Happenings

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Moving Forward As a Faith Community

Vestry officers and clergy from St. Mary's and St. John's met to discuss next steps in the ECCT merger process, including forming review teams of parishioners.



**By Joy Dorin
Senior Warden**

St. Mary's and St. John's Vestry officers and clergy met on Thursday, Nov. 10, to continue moving the merger process forward. We discussed the positive results of the October all-parish meeting

with Bishop Laura and the fact that it was energizing and hopeful to find so many similarities between the two parishes.

We discussed next steps in the ECCT merger process, including forming four review teams with a few members from each parish to conduct reviews of both parishes in the areas of Mission, Property, Financial and Canonical.

As we understand the process, each team will be guided by an ECCT member as we move through this process. Reports will be written by the ECCT member from each team and presented to the ECCT Standing Committee. These reports will provide the diocese and our parish members with a profile of each parish and the possibilities that can be realized when forming a new faith community through a merger. At this point, we are waiting

for information from ECCT on how to proceed with the reviews.

We are hoping to have this work completed by June 30, 2023, including the required votes from both our parishes. This timeline will position us for ratification of the merger with St. John's at the ECCT Annual Convention in the fall.

There will be another joint meeting of officers and clergy in January and monthly meetings thereafter to update our progress. The full vestries from St. Mary's and St. John's will meet again in February. In the meantime, we will continue to keep you abreast of what is happening.

We also want to mention that we've been invited to St. John's Advent series and Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services (see p. 1).

Looking Ahead *and* Looking Back

By Karen Fedorchak, Deacon

Have you heard? Manchester is celebrating its Bicentennial in 2023. St. Mary's has a long history in Manchester, having been founded here in 1844. There were a number of "starts and stops" along the way in the early days. But our life on the corner of Park and Church Streets began in 1882 with the construction of our original church and has continued to this day.

Although St. Mary's is exploring a transition from living our life as a faith community in Manchester to a possible new life in Vernon by merging with St. John's in late 2023, we have still been an integral part of Manchester for a remarkable 178 years!

A couple of us have come up with a sug-

gestion to tie St. Mary's history with the Bicentennial by creating a booklet. To do this, we will need to form a committee to organize the project. We will also need help from everyone to provide photos, historical data, personal stories and some highlights of our life together as a faith community through the years together.

I'm requesting help with this project. The more, the merrier! If you'd like to help, contact me at dn.k.fedorchak@gmail.com or call me at 860.649.5659.

Construction of St. Mary's original church began in 1882.



Time for Christmas Seasonal Sharing

By Sarah Tierinni

The collection of nonperishable food continues for our Christmas Seasonal Sharing food baskets. We are seeking: Canned Pineapple, Apple Sauce, Cereal, Pasta & Sauce, Canned Fruit & Veggies, Soup, Rice, Tuna, Bottled Juice, and Mac & Cheese. Drop-off boxes are located in the back of the church and in the bin on the office porch. Monetary donations are also needed and appreciated to help support our families from Bennet Academy. Your money will go to purchase eggs, butter, cheese, milk, diapers, baby food, special dietary needs and extra fresh produce. Please make checks payable to St. Mary's with 'seasonal sharing' in the memo line. Sign-up sheets for donations of store-bought baked goods, holiday hams and chickens and delivery help are in the back of the church.



Important Dates to Remember

Produce Sunday: December 11th (donations of fresh produce collected)

Saturday Packing: December 17th (Neill Hall 8:30AM packing food baskets)

Delivery Sunday: December 18th (Neill Hall after the 9AM service)

Advent Toy Drive

We are continuing for the second year our Advent Toy Drive, which will benefit Manchester Police Department's Blue Angel Toy Collection. We are asking for new, unwrapped gifts for children of all ages. Please drop off donations under the Advent wreath at the front of the church between now and Dec. 18. All donations will be brought to the police department that afternoon for distribution on Christmas morning in Manchester.

Thanks for Thanksgiving Seasonal Sharing

A great big thank you to all who helped make this year's Thanksgiving seasonal sharing a success. We served 15 Bennet families, providing them with a holiday meal, week's worth of groceries, fresh fruits and veggies and perishable items. A special thank you to those who came for Packing Saturday or Delivery Sunday. Your help was vital in making the ministry a success.

Latasha Easterling-Turnquest, director of Manchester Public Schools' Family Resource Centers writes: "Please thank the members of St. Mary's. From the bottom of our hearts we thank you!!!!!!"



Delivery Sunday! Clockwise from top left: Three generations of the Dorin family—Joy, George and Andy—pitched in to help. Rod Jenson, Loretta Symons, Randy Brown, and Maya, Sarah and Norah Tierinni had contributions collected and ready to go. Harry Perry made a delivery and he and the recipient were all smiles.

Beyond Blessed: Stewardship 2023

By Beth Bickley
Stewardship Chair

St. Mary's Stewardship Campaign for 2023 is drawing to a close. We are asking that completed pledge forms be returned by Sunday, Dec. 4.

It's always amazing to me how quickly the weeks pass from Halloween to Christmas. It seems we barely have time to enjoy one holiday and the next is already upon us. I think that's why having Thanksgiving in the middle of this time is so important. Thanksgiving invites us to pause for a day and reflect on the

blessings in our lives as we gather with family and friends to share a special meal. Maybe you ran in Manchester's annual Road Race or cheered from the sidelines on Thanksgiving Day. Perhaps you dropped by St. Mary's Neill Hall to get out of the cold before, during or after the race. Whether it's our annual seasonal sharing programs or offering a warm shelter on Thanksgiving morning, St. Mary's continues to provide blessings to our neighbors. As you give thanks during this season for all the blessings in your life, I hope you will also reflect on the blessing St. Mary's has been in Manchester for years. Your pledge for 2023 will

help ensure that our parish family can continue to reach out and help others in Manchester.

If you haven't done so already, please prayerfully consider offering your thanks to God through a pledge to His work through St. Mary's. If you have misplaced your Stewardship packet or did not receive one and would like to have one, there are extra packets in the back of the church to pick up or you may call Sandy and she will mail a packet to you.

Then please return your completed form to the office by Sunday, Dec. 4. And thank you!

Worship Planning: A Vital Team Effort

By Noreen Kirk

Imagine it's a Sunday morning. You come into St. Mary's, receive a bulletin from the usher, take a seat in the pew, follow the service in the bulletin, join in the hymns and read along with scripture and prayers. It's a Sunday like all Sundays at St. Mary's.

But you may not know about the thinking, collaboration and coordination that took place to plan that lovely service and produce that helpful bulletin. It all comes together because a whole team of people participate in regular worship planning.

"A group of us meets every month to plan worship for the month ahead," says Senior Warden Joy Dorin. "The group includes Fr. Shaw Mudge, Andrea Burr, Beth and Lenny Lavalette, worship leaders Beth Bickley, Mary Covello and Betsy Ibsen, and me."

The group, often with suggestions from pianist Kelly Sharp, selects the music for

the month. They take into consideration the liturgical season and the readings specified for each Sunday. Each service includes five or six pieces of music. To get ideas, they consult an online resource called *The Episcopal Musician's Handbook*. For any particular Sunday, the handbook lists appropriate hymns from *The Hymnal 1982*, *Wonder, Love & Praise* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. Hymn choice can be tailored to St. Mary's service. Because the Nov. 6 Holy Eucharist was a healing service, for example, they chose to include "There Is a Balm in Gilead." Lay preachers may also suggest certain hymns because of the subject of their homily.

Using the Lectionary, which is also online, they identify the scripture readings for each Sunday. They may decide to use a special collect for a given Sunday. For example, on the Sunday before Election Day, the bulletin included a "Collect for Elections" taken from the *Book of Common Prayer*.

The bulletin you receive on Sunday morning or through the mail, Joy says, "is really a product of worship planning." Joy, Andrea and Lenny take turns preparing each Sunday's bulletin. They send it to one another and Fr. Shaw for review. Once it's gone through review, they send it to Gene Marinelli, Randy Brown and Ralph Sullivan for their ushering and technology roles and to Beth Lavalette, who coordinates Lay Readers and Ministers of Communion. Then it goes to Sandy Braman for printing and distribution.

The whole process of worship planning is an excellent example of parishioners coming together to fulfill a parish need in the absence of a full-time rector. So the next time you come to church or view a service online, you'll appreciate how much took place "behind the scenes" to bring it all together.

National Episcopal Church Releases 2021 Parochial Report

The Church's Parochial Report—the oldest, most continuous gathering of data by The Episcopal Church—provides insight into the state of the church. The newly published report focuses largely on the impact of the pandemic, as churches often closed and pivoted to online worship. The 2021 statistics—which include data from 2019-

2021—reflect the hardships faced by Episcopal congregations. A related study reveals a significant drop in attendance and the ongoing effect of virus variants in attempts to return to “normal.”

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/publicaffairs/episcopal-church-2021-parochial-report-data-now-available/>

To read the Episcopal News Service's press release, visit:

Financial Summary for October 2022

By Beth Bickley, Assistant Treasurer

	Previous Month	Current Month	YTD	2022	YTD % of
OPERATING STATEMENT	September	October	10 Months	Full Year	Budget
			83.3% of Year	Budget	
Pledge Income	12,539	16,219	155,645	175,130	89%
Total Operating INCOME (Non-recurring)	16,610	19,609	202,160	226,158	89%
Total EXPENSES	16,579	19,609	221,248	288,002	77%
NET SURPLUS (LOSS)	31	975	(19,087)	(61,844)	31%
(without transfer)					
Transfer for Shortfall	0	0	23,500		
ECCT 2021 Earnings	6,025		6,025		

OPERATING ACCOUNT

- **OCTOBER OPERATING INCOME** of 20,584 up from \$16,610 in September impacted mostly by:
 - o Pledges – pledge income up \$3,680 from prior month
- **OCTOBER OPERATING EXPENSES** of \$19,609 higher than last month's expenses of \$16,579, impacted mostly by the following:
 - o Buildings and Grounds - \$1,000 late snow-removal bill from Feb/Mar 2022; \$1,000 boiler repair
 - o Miscellaneous—\$362 water bill; vestry hospitality dinner; quarterly office equipment lease
- As a result: Actual YTD operating deficit (netting out non-recurring transfers) decreased to **(\$19,088)**

NON-BUDGET/SPECIAL FUNDS ACCOUNT

- Receipts of note: \$1,000 parishioner pre-paid pledge for 2023
- Disbursements of note: \$3,850 for appraisal of church, \$2,300 transfer of parishioner pre-paid pledge to Operating Fund, \$1,000 payment of GHIAA dues.



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

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*Nurtured by Christ, Serving
Our Neighbors.*

Worship Schedule

Visit us on
Facebook!

Please watch your weekly emails (or postal mailings) for information about worship.

- 9 am, Holy Eucharist or Morning Prayer in St. Mary's sanctuary.* Services livestreamed on our YouTube channel.
- 7:30 pm, Compline (via Zoom) on Mondays and Wednesdays.

*This month's services:

Sunday, Dec. 4 — Holy Eucharist, healing service, 9 am
 Sunday, Dec. 11 — Holy Eucharist, 9 am, with special music
 Sunday, Dec. 18 — Morning Prayer, 9 am
 Saturday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve — Holy Eucharist, 4 pm
 Sunday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day — No service

ECCT Missionary Visits St. Mary's

On Sunday, Nov. 20, St. Mary's welcomed Maggie Breen, who serves as the Northeast and North Central missionary for the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. She noted in her sermon that the time between that day, which was the last Sunday of Pentecost, and the following Sunday, which would be the first Sunday of Advent, was "liminal" space—a time when there's no telling what might happen.

"You, the community of St. Mary's, are facing your own liminal space. Your own time in-between. As you explore a possible merger with St. John's in Vernon, you are engaging in the work of change. You are co-creating your future with God. Co-creating – that means that all of you AND all of God show up in these conversations and meetings. It means that nothing you do, plan, attempt, take-on, engage with, or let go of happens alone or in a vacuum. Because the work of possibility, the work of the time in-between, is never done alone."



Maggie Breen, left, with St. Mary's Lay Worship Leader Betsy Ibsen after the Nov. 20 service where Maggie was guest preacher.

Prayer List Refreshed First Sunday of Advent

The first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 27, marked the beginning of a new liturgical year. It was also the day that St. Mary's prayer list began anew. If you would like to add or return a name to the new prayer list, please email Andrea Burr at ac-burr2@cox.net.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O
Israel.

The Hymnal 1982

Words: Latin, twelfth century; trans. John Mason Neale (1818-1866), 1851