St. Mary's Discernment Team completed its work in late September, when the materials it developed were approved by Bishop Laura Ahrens. Now the Recruitment Team takes the helm, moving St. Mary’s ever closer to calling its next rector.

The Recruitment Team comprises Beth Bickley (chair), Nate Carlson, Odis Coleman, Anna Robillard, Megan Sargent and Rick Watson. The group gathered for its first meeting on Sept. 22. Members’ first tasks are to become familiar with the Discernment materials, craft interview questions and practice effective interviewing skills.

In early October, the team will conduct a mock interview, with a priest unknown to team members playing the role of an applicant. Feedback from the priest and from St. Mary’s transition consultant, the Rev. Virginia Army, will be used to hone questions and interview skills.

During October and part of November, materials the Discernment Committee created will be available on a secure website accessible only by Episcopal priests. Prospective candidates will submit their applications through this website. Canon Lee Ann Tolzmann, ECCT’s Canon for Mission Leadership, will screen the applications and, in early December, present approximately 20 applications to the Recruitment Team for consideration.

During December, the team will select eight to 10 applicants for video interviews. Four or five will be invited to come to St. Mary’s in January to be interviewed in person by the Recruitment Committee and to visit the church and the area. Based on those interviews and prayerful discussion, the committee will submit two or three finalists for consideration by the vestry. This will mark the end of the committee’s work.

It is critical that committee members hold the identities of all applicants in strictest confidence. They are not allowed to reveal applicants’ names, even to families and close friends. So members ask that parishioners not seek specific information about candidates, but pray for them as they carry out their responsibilities.

Prayer for the Recruitment Team and Candidates

All-knowing God, lead the Recruitment Team’s search, to do your will. Send your Spirit as their guide. Unite them with a common mind to select your chosen spiritual leader for St. Mary’s Parish. Guide the Recruitment Team to develop interview questions reflecting the work of the parish and the Discernment Team. Support them in the interview process as they listen, observe and communicate effectively with the candidates. Direct the Recruitment Team and candidates in their decision process; to fulfill their needs and those of our faith community. We ask this in your name, dear God. Amen.

Inside This Issue:

- Farewell to Deb Gemma
- McElraevy Concert
- Interim rector’s message
- Celtic Vespers
- Mental illness awareness
- Pumpkin carving
- Christmas in New England Fair
- Stewardship kick-off
- School Supplies Drive
We Say a Heartfelt Farewell to Deborah Gemma

Minister of Music Deborah Gemma has been an invaluable part of St. Mary’s for more than 18 years, leading choirs, selecting music, planning special events and enriching our liturgies with inspiring music. She has participated wholeheartedly in parish initiatives and been a steady presence through times of change. Now Deb is moving into the next phase of her professional life. She has accepted the position as director of music at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Falmouth, Massachusetts, and will complete her tenure at St. Mary’s on Sunday, Nov. 6.

In a letter to the parish, Deb explained that her decision is unrelated to St. Mary’s search for a new rector and that she leaves St. Mary’s, a church she has loved for so long, with “mixed emotions.” However, the new position offers increased hours and benefits that will allow her to devote herself more fully to church music and liturgy—which is her passion—and be closer to her parents and other family members in Massachusetts.

Speaking of Deb, St. Mary’s Interim Rector Lynne A. Grifo said: “Her ability to work patiently and creatively with adults and youth, the breadth of the musical repertoire she shares at church, her willingness to spur and help plan special musical events and liturgies, and her pastoral service as organist at the milestones of life—especially funerals—for all of this and much more she will be sorely missed.”

Senior Warden Andrea Burr noted that it’s “hard to capture in words all of Deb’s gifts to the parish.” She especially praised Deb’s work with children, saying, “She has been a wonderful, joyful teacher, promoting opportunities for the children in music and Christian formation.”

Once Deb departs, we will have guest organists and choir directors until a new rector joins us and the search for a permanent minister of music can begin.

McElraevy Concert Features Noted Pianist

Pianist Allan Conway will be the featured musician at a concert on Saturday, Nov. 5, at 7 p.m. at St. Mary’s. The concert, which is free and open to the public, is part of St. Mary’s Richard J. McElraevy Memorial Concert Series. A reception will follow.

A 1982 graduate of the University of Hartford’s Hartt School of Music, Conway has served for more than 20 years as the principal pianist for the Department of Music at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. He is in demand as a professional accompanist and pianist. His life as a performing musician has involved many distinctive collaborations with singers, instrumentalists and choirs, including performances at Carnegie Hall, in Italy and in Perigueux, France. Conway’s extensive experience in the vocal, choral, operatic and instrumental literature continues to inform his rich and varied musical life. Conway is also accompanist for the Greater Middletown Chorale, CONCORA and GodSong. He is the minister of music at United Congregational Church of Tolland and organist and choir director at Emanuel Synagogue in West Hartford.

Invite family and friends and join us for this musical experience.
"Even cowards can endure hardship; only the brave can endure suspense."
—Mignon McLaughlin, American journalist, author of short stories

The work of William Bridges has been enlightening for me in my chosen calling as an interim minister. Bridges has been a consultant and lecturer who has focused for 40+ years on the field of transition management. The Way of Transition is one of his later books; the subtitle says it all: this way is about “embracing life’s most difficult moments.” Bridges defines transition as “the process of letting go of the way things used to be and then taking hold of the way they subsequently become.” This is easy to describe; sometimes difficult to live out. What is exciting about his work is his insistence, based on personal experience, that these in-between-times of life, although chaotic, are potentially also the most creative periods.

The journey is a central image in Bridges’ writing, and he emphasizes three rules of the road that have served him well:
1) Every journey is a round trip that ends only after the voyager returns again to the departure point, bringing back what has been learned along the way, intentionally working to transform the “here” into the “where” or “what” that he/she set out to find.
2) Not only is one’s life a journey, but within every transition there is a kind of journey. Indeed, a lifetime may be in reality a series of little transitions.
3) It is the very process of the journey itself, consciously being on the way or the path, and not the milestones of getting to the destination, that is essential for transformation.

All this is true for an organization as well as for an individual human being.

With the arrival of Fr. Paul Briggs as priest-in-charge in 2008, then his call to be rector and, after years of fruitful labor in the vineyard, his departure for new pastures, St. Mary’s has been on a journey of growth and change. In 2015 a type of journey began: the “intentional interim time” and the “discernment process.” While each of these have specific, future-focused goals and end points, they are also in themselves times of learning. Last month we learned of another transition, the call of Deb Gemma, who has had a long and valued staff role as minister of music here, to new fields of service on Cape Cod (See story, p. 2). This unanticipated change adds additional emotions and possibly some additional anxiety into the system, i.e., the web of relationships in this faith community.

“There is no fruit which is not bitter before it is ripe.”
—Publilius Syrus

“The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we would become.”
—Charles Du Bos

Can we be inspired by William Bridges’ research to see all these endings and beginnings as times when new creativity can emerge? What are you learning, about yourself and how you react to change, about St. Mary’s, about others? In Genesis Chapter 12 we read:

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you … So Abram went, as the Lord had told him ...’”

(Continued on p. 4)

Celtic Vespers Returns

On Sunday, Oct. 23, at 7 p.m., St. Mary’s will offer Celtic Vespers, a service featuring prayers and music of Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales.

Christianity flourished throughout the British Isles for many centuries, emphasizing a sense of God’s nearness.

This candlelight service, steeped in tradition, invites one to enter into a place of rest, prayer and reflection and will feature Celtic music, with Kasha Breau, Celtic harp, Robert Breau, flute, Deborah Gemma, piano/organ and St. Mary’s Choir. For more information, call St. Mary’s at 860-649-4583 or visit www.stmarysct.org.

Harpist Kasha Breau and flutist Robert Breau will be among musicians at Celtic Vespers.
Mental Illness Awareness Week

By Deacon Emeritus
Karen Fedorchak

Mental Health Awareness Week is Oct. 2 through 8. A special service, “Education, Healing and Hope,” will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 7 p.m. at Concordia Lutheran Church, 46 Pitkin St., Manchester. The service is in alliance with the Manchester Affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Everyone—those with mental illness, family members, friends and members of the public—is invited. Call me (860.649.5659) for further information.

“We know that brain disorders can profoundly disturb our feelings, thoughts and behaviors. We recognize that brain disorders/mental illnesses are like any other illnesses. We strive to communicate that that all people are beloved by God and each one has a right to be seen as a person first, not the illness. The deep and constant movement of God’s Holy Spirit seeks to bring us to the fullness of life. Our vision should be that all persons affected by mental illness/brain disorders will be fully welcomed, included, supported, and engaged in the life, work, and leadership of congregations and in society.”

— The UCC Mental Health Network

First “Family Worship” This Month

Join us on Sunday, Oct. 23, at the 10 a.m. service for St. Mary’s very first “Family Worship.”

The young people of St. Mary’s will be readers, acolytes and ushers. Prayers of the People will have been written by children in Youth Group, Church School or Godly Play. The sermon will be accessible to younger parishioners as well as adults, and our junior choir will sing!

Going forward, the fourth Sunday of each month will be “Family Worship.” Plan to be on hand for this new worship experience.

From the Interim Rector (continued from p. 3)

The French aviator, writer, author of the children’s classic The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry once said:

“As for the Future, your task is not to foresee, but to enable it. All true creation is not a pre-judgment of the Future, … but the apprehending of a new aspect of the present, which is a heap of raw materials bequeathed by the past … Therefore let the future unfurl itself at leisure, like a tree putting forth its branches one by one …”

Jesus told his disciples, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

Where are the new branches emerging from ministry within and beyond the Church? I hope that you will take time to “apprehend a new aspect of the present,” not measuring against the past, or invoking a specified vision of the future. Rather, I pray that you will enable the future God desires for you to emerge as you journey on.

— The Rev. Lynne A. Grifo
Interim Rector
Pumpkin-Carving Party

By Valerie Huestis

Come one, come all to St. Mary’s annual Halloween pumpkin carving party at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 29.

Bring a pumpkin, a carving implement and your imagination for an evening of fun and fellowship.

Need some creative ideas? There will be a variety of carving patterns available that evening.

Light refreshments will be served, and all the carved pumpkins will be lit and placed on the Anderson Hall steps for a festive end to the evening.

Join us for this fun event for both children and adults who are young at heart.

Christmas in New England Fair

By Donna Indomenico

Preparations for our annual Christmas in New England Fair are already in progress. We invite YOU to be part of this holiday event being held on Saturday, Dec. 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., in Anderson Hall. Mark your calendar, and plan to attend. It's fun—and a great place to find wonderful, reasonably priced Christmas gifts for family and friends.

In the meantime, please help make the fair a success.

* Do you have nice Christmas decorations you no longer use? Donate them to the fair!
* Think about working with a friend to create a theme basket for the fair.
* Do you knit or sew? Think about creating items for the fair.
* Bake Christmas cookies, bars, pies or other traditional “goodies” for the fair.
* Give some of your time to the fair! Help sell items, help with luncheon, be a greeter or do some other task.
* Help price items for the fair. Watch for dates and times for pricing in weekly bulletin.
* Help set up and take down tables and chairs.
* Plan to invite your family and friends to enjoy the fair and a delicious, homemade lunch.
* Be prepared to say, "YES, I can help with our Christmas in New England Fair!" It’s a time of great Christmas fellowship!
* For further information, contact Lyn Jones (860-206-9460) or me (860-644-0061).

Stewardship Campaign Kick-Off Oct. 2

St. Mary’s 2017 Stewardship Campaign kicks off at both services on Oct. 2!

Join us!

“Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.”

— William Arthur Ward
Visitors are always welcome!

Worship Schedule:

**Sundays**
7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
8:40 a.m. Adult Forum
9:45 Godly Play and Church School
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist
11:30 a.m. Rite 13/J2A

**Tuesdays**
7:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

**Wednesdays**
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Healing Prayer

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**St. Mary’s School Supplies Drive Exceeds Goal**

St. Mary’s School Supplies Drive, now in its second year, resulted in the distribution of 90 brim-filled backpacks to the Manchester Public Schools Family Resource Centers, far exceeding the original target of 65 backpacks. The backpacks were delivered to Bowers Elementary School on Aug. 29. The Manchester Board of Education published a photo (right) and story about St. Mary’s donation in its daily employee newsletter. Thanks to all those who helped so many Manchester youngsters get the school year off to a good start.

Shown, from left: Sarah Tierinni; Maya Tierinni; Sheila Brown; James Tierinni, Latasha Turnquest, director of the Family Resource Centers at Manchester Public Schools; and Randy Brown.

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**Parish Register Updates**

**Burial:**
Clayton G. Sampson, Jr. – September 2, 2016