



GOOD NEWS LETTER

Dear Friends,

Do you love the tension of the holidays!?! (Thanksgiving Stress = as I write!).

The tension exposes the way of the world and way of God. Augustine called this the City of Man v. the City of God.

The world of Christmas decorations, Q99 Christmas songs, and giant Santas meet the bleak, darkness, quiet, and expectancy of Advent.

Honestly, I love both, and believe that the darkness of Advent opens the door to a fuller "Joy to the World."

The phenetic pace of the world pushes us through the joy, happiness, stress, and challenges of the Christmas Season. After all, Christmas Day and its trimmings (food, family, presents) are like having a giant term paper due to the Professor who will not ever give extensions.

The event is coming so buckle up, or maybe unbuckle and give way to the World of God that informs our daily life. The Way of God is full of silence, austere decorations, and bated expectancy for the Birth of Jesus. Our Church services become more penitential, and our liturgical posture shifts and invites the quiet.

Maybe you are like me, and you live in the in between -- one minute belting about Rudolph and the next sitting still. Maybe you crave the latter and feel suffocated by the former? If so, have you ever started your day with 10 minutes of silence? If not, try it or something similar to provide for a brief moment of pause. Do not think, do not plan, do not read...pray or, better still, just sit.

You might go to sleep (and that's okay), and as your body pauses, may it be a time of Advent for you. A time to remember that Jesus was born full of grace and truth for each of us. Receiving this grace and receiving this mercy every morning allows us to celebrate in the world with freedom and passivity. To remember that we are along for the ride.

So buckle up your grace fueled mobile and enjoy both the quiet/darkness and the roaring laughter/ light. It's all been freely given to us by our Creator, the one who came in great humility to save us. Happy Advent.

Peace,
Willis

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

Page 2 - Altar flower dedications for 2020; No choir rehearsal; *We Care*; Vestry replacement for Ron; Special Musical Guest 12/8; Homework Helps gifts; Christmas Party.

Page 3 - Boys Home pics; Sundays in December; poinsettia dedication forms; Decorating the church.

Page 4 - Vestry Musings by Ron Manley; Special prayer on Jan. 5; Lessons & Carols at Eagle Rock; Save the date; Dorcas Needlework Guild.

Page 5 - December '19 and January '20 rosters; No GNL in January; Annual Meeting reminder.

Page 6 - December calendar

Page 7 - Twelfth Night Appeal Letter.

Page 8 - December birthdays

January 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Altar Flowers

Altar Flower dedications are available for the year 2020 now on our website. Please signup to dedicate altar flowers to loved ones or special occasions.



The Vestry is pleased to appoint **Charlie Echols** to fill the spot that will be vacated when Ron Manley relocates to Tennessee. Charlie is a life long Episcopalian and has served in various leadership roles in the Church — especially in the field of International missions. He currently heads our Honduras Mission and will be a welcome addition to our Vestry.

Choir will not meet Sunday, December 8. Rehearsal resumes at 9:45 December 15.

Thanks,
Gret

We Care Ministry

We ALL care: about our families, our neighbors, our towns and counties and state and country...and more. *We Care* is a prayer and service ministry of St. Mark's Episcopal Church; therefore, each of us reading this, whether member or friend of St. Mark's, IS a member of the We Care team in its many faces and facets. If you would like to learn more about this ministry or to be added to our email list, please

Thanks for Caring



contact Carole Geiger at geiger.caroleb@gmail.com. We communicate by bcc email correspondence, with prayer requests and opportunities to provide for small services to our church family and others in our community, but only as each of us feels Called to do so: prayer, sending cards and notes, making calls, visiting, offering an occasional lift for a doctor's appointment or to meet another need. The one thing we ALL do is pray; all other tasks emerge from each of us listening to God's Voice.

Special Musical Guest!

At our 10:30am service on December 8, we will have Claire Hitchens back with us. Claire is a singer songwriter who played in Eagle Rock a few years ago -- she has a series of Advent hymns and she will be leading music that day.



Christmas gifts for our Homework Helps families!

We will have an opportunity to provide food and gifts for our Homework Helps families. All items are due on December 15th.

CHRISTMAS PARTY!

We are looking forward to a festive *Christmas Luncheon* at The Glebe at eleven o'clock on **WEDNESDAY, December 11th**. The Fincastle Mennonite School Choir will be singing for us!

Thank you!
Ann Layman

Christmas Party

Boys Home sings at Vespers!



SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

Series on Advent

Join Chuck Geiger for a series of studies on Advent beginning December 1.

December 1 -- Advent 1 ~ The Origins and Practices of Advent

December 8 -- Advent 2 ~ Meaning to us

December 15 -- Advent 3 ~ Meaning to our Church family

December 22 -- Advent 4 ~ Meaning to the world

December 29 -- Guest Priest (readings & Gospel)

Adult Education/Fellowship Time meets at 9:15 on Sunday mornings in the Ministry Center Library.



The **dedication forms for the Christmas poinsettias** and greens are in the narthex. Please sign up to dedicate these beautiful decorations to

loved ones. You may take home a poinsettia after the Christmas Eve service.

Thank you, The Altar Guild

Also --

The Altar Guild will be decorating the church for Christmas on Sunday, December 22 after the 10:30 service. The parish is invited to join in with decorating, so come by and enjoy this fun event!



Vestry Musings

By Ron Manley

So it has been 5 months since my bride of 42 years died of endometrial cancer, and we're entering the Thanksgiving and Advent season. As I think about these apparently conflicting elements, I fall back on what God has given me, and what we're really celebrating in Advent.

On one hand, I feel a terrible loss personally, to my own family and the St. Mark's Parish Family, and Ola's and my extended friends and family. But I thank God that he blessed me with all the time with Ola, and our children. At Thanksgiving I remember the holidays of the past but the new ones in the future. In the Advent season we celebrate the anticipation and birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the hope that it nurtures in all of us. While this will be the first Christmas without Ola, we'll celebrate His Birth, and the love of family and friends.

So while we all must deal with personal tragedies, it is important that we center ourselves in Faith, Love and trust in God's Love so that we may deal with all that life confronts us with.

*We always thank
God for all of you
and continually
mention you in
our prayers.*

1 Thessalonians 1:2, NIV

We will have a goodbye "prayer" for Ron on Sunday, January 5th at the 10:30am service. Please join us to share our love and thanksgiving for his time with us.

Appalachian Vespers

Special Christmas Lessons and Carols

on December 15th at 4pm in Eagle Rock!
Not to be missed, but our December Vespers will follow the traditional Anglican format.

Please join us as we sing together these beautiful Carols, and hear the story of God's redemption through the birth of Christ.

Randy Walker and Terry Dollar will be leading music.

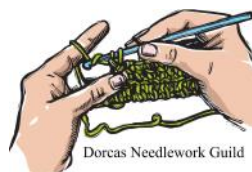
4pm. December 15th with a reception to follow.



Save the date!

January 4th at 7:00pm at
Attic Productions Theater
for the **TWELFTH NIGHT CONCERT**
Featuring
The Grascals
(see their bio included in this newsletter)

Thursdays, the Dorcas Needlework Guild meets at 1:00 until around 3:00 in the Youth center for creative therapy with needle and thread and



occasionally yarn! If you have any interest in needlework of any kind, come and be a part of this ministry! Note that the Guild will not meet Dec. 19 or 26 in the midst of the holiday busy-ness.

<u>DATE</u> DECEMBER 2019	<u>LEM</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>ACOLYTE</u> <u>CRUCIFER</u>	<u>ALTAR</u> <u>GUILD</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>YOUTH</u> <u>CHAPEL/</u> <u>NURSERY</u>	<u>COUNTERS</u>
12-1	P. Garrison Emily T.-G.	J. Gordon		T. Trammel S. Loesch	C. Echols G. Sydnor	A. Caldwell	R. Manley C. Geiger
12-8	L. Jacobi R. Cecil	A. Layman		S. Hays L. Jacobi	D. Collins K. Beasley	A. Caldwell	M. Parish J. Gordon
12-15	J. Howarth R. Hagan	P. Gordon		E. Moore P. Gordon	G. Sydnor S. Sydnor	A. Caldwell	P. Suite B. Heartwell
12-22	C. Geiger R. Manley	M. Parish		P. Garrison D. Wood	M. Parish R. Cecil	A. Caldwell	G. Sydnor P. Howarth
12-29	C. Geiger W. Michael	D. Collins		P. Gordon	J. Gordon S. Field	A. Caldwell	L. Uotinen P. Garrison

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DUTY ROSTERS

<u>DATE</u> JANUARY 2020	<u>LEM</u>	<u>LECTOR</u>	<u>ACOLYTE</u> <u>CRUCIFER</u>	<u>ALTAR</u> <u>GUILD</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>YOUTH</u> <u>CHAPEL/</u> <u>NURSERY</u>	<u>COUNTERS</u>
1-5	P. Garrison R. Hagan	P. Gordon		T. Trammel S. Loesch	P. Neil J. Gordon		D. Beasley
1-12	L. Jacobi W. Michael	J. Gordon		S. Hays L. Jacobi	M. Dudding S. Waid		B. Wilsie K. Beasley
1-19	J. Howarth P. Mahony	M. Parish		E. Moore P. Gordon S. Hickson- Cullum	W. Michael S. Frechette		M. Parish C. Geiger
1-26	C. Geiger Emily T-G	D. Collins		P. Garrison D. Wood	B. Heartwell S. Field		P. Suite J. Gordon

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To attend St. Mark's Annual Meeting on January 19th immediately following the 10:30am service. George Honeycutt will be on hand to provide the music that day. We will vote on the 2020 budget and on two new vestry members.



There will be no Good News Letter In January!

Look for Gina's "Weekly Updates" and in the bulletin for info and upcoming events.

We're Taking a Break!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00am Holy Communion I 9:15am Adult Ed. / Fellowship Time 9:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Holy Communion II 10:30am Children's Chapel	2 2:30pm Homework Helps	3 8:00pm Open AA meeting	4 2:30pm Homework Helps	5 1:00pm Dorcas Needlework Guild	6 Office Closed 8:00pm Open AA meeting	7 8:30am Episcopal Men's Fellowship 9:00am Altar Guild 9:30am Food Pantry 8:00pm Open AA
8 8:00am Holy Communion I 9:15am Adult Ed. / Fellowship Time 10:30am Holy Communion II 10:30am Children's Chapel	9 9:00am Gina on vacation 2:30pm Homework Helps	10 9:00am Gina on vacation 8:00pm Open AA meeting	11 9:00am Gina on vacation 11:00am St. Mark's Christmas Party at The Glebe 2:30pm Homework Helps	12 9:00am Gina on vacation 1:00pm Dorcas Needlework Guild	13 Office Closed 8:00pm Open AA meeting	14 9:00am Altar Guild 9:30am Food Pantry 8:00pm Open AA
15 8:00am Holy Communion I 9:15am Adult Ed. / Fellowship Time 9:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Holy Communion II 10:30am Children's Chapel 4:00pm Appalachian Vespers - Lessons and Carols Service	16	17 5:00pm Vestry Meeting 8:00pm Open AA meeting	18	19	20 Office Closed 8:00pm Open AA meeting	21 9:00am Altar Guild 9:30am Food Pantry 8:00pm Open AA
22 8:00am Holy Communion I 9:15am Adult Ed. / Fellowship Time 9:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Children's Chapel 10:30am Morning Prayer II 12:00pm Decorating of the Church - all invited	23	24 Office Closed 4:00pm Christmas Eve Service of Holy Communion 8:00pm Open AA meeting	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS! Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed 8:00pm Open AA meeting	28 9:00am Altar Guild 9:30am Food Pantry 8:00pm Open AA
29 8:00am Holy Communion I 9:15am Adult Ed. / Fellowship Time 9:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:30am Holy Communion II	30	31 11:30am Holy Communion at The Glebe 8:00pm Open AA meeting				

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
P. O. Box 277
Fincastle, VA 24090-0277
540-473-2370 (Office)
www.stmarksfincastle.org

December 2, 2019

Dear Members and Friends of St. Mark's:

St. Mark's Episcopal Church comes to you again this holiday season asking for your continued generous support of the Fincastle Community's Twelfth Night Charity Concert. This community-based program has made a needed, positive, and substantial difference for many individuals and families in the Roanoke Valley, thanks to you. The name, "Twelfth Night," comes from the Feast of the Epiphany, which celebrates the twelfth day after Christmas when the Magi brought gifts to the Christ Child in Bethlehem.

Each year the Twelfth Night Charity presents a concert of free family entertainment for the entire community. This year's performance will feature The Grascals bluegrass band. The Grascals have garnered 3 GRAMMY nominations, 2 IBMA Entertainer of the Year awards, late-night TV appearances, frequent guest appearances on The Grand Ole Opry over The Grascals 15 years together. With the release of their latest Mountain Home collection, Straighten The Curves, on August 30th, the veteran ensemble shows that they're moving full speed ahead toward new horizons.

The concert will be held on Saturday, January 4, 2020, at 7 p.m., at the Attic Productions Theater, 7490 Roanoke Road in Fincastle. Admission is free although tickets are required due to limited seating. Attendees are asked to make cash and/or packaged food donations at the concert. These gifts will go to support two charities: the Botetourt Food Pantry and the Botetourt County Social Services' Energy Assistance Program. Cash donations will be divided between the two charities. Food donations are given to the Botetourt Food Pantry. All concert workers are volunteers.

Please consider this very important Community event and send your donation to: Fincastle Twelfth Night Fund, Attn: Treasurer, P. O. Box 277, Fincastle, VA 24090-0277. If you wish to receive tickets, please include your mailing address. Also, indicate the number of Reserved or General Seating tickets you desire. Do not send cash. We cannot accept credit card donations. The Twelfth Night Fund is a 501c(3) organization. All gifts are IRS approved as a charitable deduction for tax purposes.

Program recognition and Reserved Seating tickets are given to major supporters: Underwriters (\$1,000+) up to ten tickets; Sponsors (\$500 - \$999) up to five tickets; and Contributors (\$100 - \$499) two tickets. Donors (under \$100) whose gifts are received by January 4th are also listed in the program and receive General Seating tickets.

If you would like to underwrite a particular aspect of the performance, such as "Attic Production Theater facilities are provided through the generosity of _____" or "Performer's appearance is made possible by a gift from _____", please contact me to discuss details.

Best wishes to you and all whom you hold dear for a special Holiday Season of joy and remembrance.

Ron Manley, Coordinator
Fincastle Community Twelfth Night Charity Concert Committee

C.O.F.F.E.E
*Christ
Offers
Forgiveness
For Everyone
Everywhere*



A few weeks ago I was at a doctor's appointment with my husband. We had been waiting for quite a while and my patience was wearing thin. The woman sitting next struck up a conversation and we commiserated about the wait time in doctor's offices. As we got to know each other, the topic led to what churches we attended and how our memberships were waning due to age and loss. These losses have required each of our members to pitch in a little more often to ensure that we continue to enjoy the full benefits of each Sunday. Just taking a moment with this woman calmed my emotions and she gave me a card that said:

COFFEE is Christ Offers Forgiveness For Everyone Everywhere.

That being said, I believe that our Coffee Hours are another way that we pass the sign of Peace, much like an extension of the act done in church. During our coffee hours we are able to enjoy the fellowship of other parishioners, their families and visitors. It is a time that we offer encouragement and emotional support or share a laugh and a good story with friends. As an extension of church, let's remember how important our Coffee Hours are to us and please sign up or bring a "goodie" when you are able. It is much appreciated.

With many blessings during this Holiday Season, Pam Garrison

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
(111 S. Roanoke St.)
P.O. Box 277
Fincastle, VA 24090-0277



willis@stmarksfincastle.org (The Rev. G. Willis Logan)
office@stmarksfincastle.org (Gina Painter)
540-473-2370 (Phone)
stmarksfincastle.org

December Birthdays

12-6	Delores Wood
12-8	Kim Swanson
12-9	Walter Michael
12-10	Russ Rosenberger
12-11	Mahlon Kidd
12-14	Danielle Plumb
12-20	Emily Moore
12-22	Ann Palmer
12-23	Art Heberer
12-25	Bette Mahony
12-31	Kate Parish, Danielle Alexander

