

Rosemary Kley if you are interested in attending. The subject of discussion will be planning for the upcoming bus trip to Richmond in February. Sponsored by Del. Scott Surovell, it is an opportunity for VIC members to discuss with legislators the issues and concerns of the faith community and to meet with people from the Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

**Be inspired! The annual MLK concert** is set for Sunday January 19, at 4:30 PM at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Old Mt. Vernon Highway. Hear some creative, beautiful music by choirs from the VIC area. Mark your calendar now.



# ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**“Opening the doors of Christ’s love:  
an inviting, embracing and serving community offering  
Good News in the midst of a confusing world.”**

## Birthdays

December 15 – Kim Lewis, December 19 – Wilhemina Scott-Boyle  
December 21 – Mary Jane Stockstill

## This Week at St. Mark’s

<b>Today</b>	8 a.m. HE, 9:10 a.m. Adult Forum, 10 a.m. HE, 10 a.m. Sunday School, 11:15 a.m. DoK mtg. (Library), 11:15 a.m. Choir rehearsal, 1 – 3 p.m. Eucharistia - San Marcos (Sanctuary, Patience Hall and Gibson Hall), 3:30 – 5:45 p.m. Amazing Grace Ghanaian Fellowship (Patience Hall), 5– 8:30 p.m. Pan de Vida (Sanctuary)
<b>Monday 12/16</b>	9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. French playgroup (Gibson Hall), 7 – 8:30 p.m. BSA Troop #4077 (Patience Hall)
<b>Tuesday 12/17</b>	9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Round the Block Fitness (Patience Hall), 7 - 9 p.m. Pan de Vida Bible study (Library)
<b>Wednesday 12/18</b>	9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Round the Block Fitness (Patience Hall), 10 a.m. HE at The Fairfax
<b>Thursday 12/19</b>	9:30 a.m. Morning Prayer (Chapel), 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Round the Block Fitness (Patience Hall), 10 a.m. Holy Folders (Lg. classroom), 7 – 9 p.m. Girl Scout Service Unit mtg. (Patience Hall)
<b>Friday 12/20</b>	9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Round the Block Fitness (Patience Hall), 7 – 9:30 p.m. Pan de Vida (Sanctuary)
<b>Saturday 12/21</b>	3 – 5 p.m. Amazing Grace Ghanaian Fellowship Bible study (Lg. classroom), 5 – 9 p.m. Youth Group Christmas party (Patience Hall), 6 – 9:30 p.m. Pan de Vida (Sanctuary), 7 – 9 p.m. San Marcos Bible study (Lg. classroom)

## Church contact information:

**Address:** 6744 S. King’s Hwy., Alexandria, VA 22306 ♦ **Phone:** 703-765-3949; fax: 703-765-3981 ♦ **E-mails:** Office: [stmarksalex@netzero.net](mailto:stmarksalex@netzero.net); Rev. John Weatherly: [jweathe951@aol.com](mailto:jweathe951@aol.com); Rev. Meredith Heffner: [revmeredith@cox.net](mailto:revmeredith@cox.net); Rev. Cherian Pulimootil: [cheriapp@hotmail.com](mailto:cheriapp@hotmail.com) ♦ **Internet:** Website: [www.stmarksalex.org](http://www.stmarksalex.org); Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/stmarksalex>. ♦ **Office Hours:** Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Clergy are usually in the office until 4 p.m. The office is closed on Fridays and national holidays.

## December 15, 2013

### Adult Forum

- **Today**  
*Advent Series: Infancy Narratives*  
with Russell Bradley
- **December 22**  
*Advent Series: Infancy Narratives*  
with Russell Bradley

### Important Upcoming Dates

- **December 22**  
8 a.m. Baptism of Matthew Spans  
10 a.m. Christmas Pageant with animals
- **December 24**  
Christmas Eve  
5 p.m. Family Service with HE  
10 p.m. Festal Eucharist with trumpet
- **December 25**  
Christmas Day  
11 a.m. HE
- **December 29**  
10 a.m. Lessons and Carols
- **January 26**  
Annual Meeting

## From the Rector

The Third Sunday in Advent Year A 2013

In many churches today, someone will light the third candle in the Advent wreath--often a pink candle, marking the mid-point in the season’s journey. It has been suggested we would be wise to mark this third Sunday as a time of joy, turning from the words of hard judgment we have heard during Advent’s first two Sundays. Perhaps such a fresh possibility holds promise for us all.

C.S. Lewis, whose book *Surprised by Joy* chronicled his own life’s journey in faith to Christ, defined joy as the word that best captured his relationship with God. Simply put, he mused, we human beings made in God’s image, long to celebrate, to rejoice, to exalt in the wonder of being alive. Though often illusive, even maddening, this feeling, this longing, this hope that underneath it all is a joy that satisfies and lasts.

So it is we hear the voice of the prophet Isaiah during these weeks. Isaiah tells us that when joy shows up, even with an Assyria menacing the neighborhood and Sennacherib and thousands knocking at the door, God is at work to bring life from death, blossoms from decay, and the green hue of spring from the winter of our disappointments.

Read again the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah and let the sound of your own voice see if it can touch you with images of Isaiah’s meaning of joy. “The desert and the parched land will be glad” and “Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert” are extravagant promises made by the living God to his near-dead people. Isaiah suggests that if we dare, we can see in the yearly cycle of life the greater reality of God taking what is brittle and old and birthing something new.

## Welcome Newcomers and Visitors

The members, staff, and Vestry of St. Mark's Episcopal Church welcome you to our services during this Advent season. If you are looking for a church home, or want more information about St. Mark's, please introduce yourself to the Vestry Person of the Day or to the Clergy. We hope you will fill out the newcomer's card that you will find in the church pew and put it in the offering plate or give it to one of the ushers. We are glad you are here! If you would like to receive our weekly announcements and other parish news by e-mail, please contact the church office at [stmarksalex@netzero.net](mailto:stmarksalex@netzero.net).

## Notes about Worship at St. Mark's

All baptized Christians are welcome to receive the Holy Eucharist in the Episcopal Church. For those who are not familiar with how to receive communion, the following may be helpful. The ushers will let you know when it is time to go to the altar rail. At the altar rail, place one outstretched hand over the other to receive the bread. To receive the wine, either hold on to the wafer and dip the edge into the wine (edge only!), or consume the wafer first and then guide the chalice to your lips. If you are unable to kneel at the rail, please feel free to remain standing. If you cannot come to the altar rail, please tell an usher and communion will be brought to you. If you do not wish to receive communion, you may come to the altar rail for a blessing and cross your arms over your chest to indicate you do not wish to receive communion. Come down the center aisle to the altar rail and return to your seat using the side aisles.

During the school year, Sunday School is provided from 10 to 10:40 a.m. except the third Sunday of the month for Joyful Noise Family Services, when the children remain in church. On other Sundays, the children will join us at the Peace. Children below age four can use the nursery, where they will receive care from professional nursery attendants. See Rev. Meredith if you have any questions.

Join us for Morning Prayer on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. in the chapel.

## Photo Policy

Time to time, we may include pictures of our parishioners in our publications. It is our policy to never include someone's name. If you would prefer for us not to use photos of yourself or others in your family, please contact Emily in the church office.

## Prayer List

Please pray for those who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity, especially:

In the St. Mark's Parish: Jean Auldridge, Shirley Hunter, Phil Brown, Juliana, Albie, Lou, Janet, Judy, John and Pacita.

Our Extended Family: Donna Mayne, Elizabeth Jenkins, Bob and Nancy DeLay, Summer Ostanato, Margo Digan, Phyllis Nezart-Biggs, Daniel Gold, Wendy Wills, Shelby Henry, Sylvia Beauchamp, Cathy Sears, The Pritchett Family, Mary Kay Young, Ann Zubia, Sally Beavers, Carol Bogan, Sherry Embrey, Betty Hughes, Helen Sutton, Dee, Natalie, Kaitlyn, Helen, Kerry, Brendan, Amanda, Andre, and Alex.

We remember and give thanks for the life of Peggy Byers, mother of Susan Byers, who passed away on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

For all military and civilian personnel and those serving in harm's way: Brian Hobin, Andrew Kley, Ryan Kiggans, Tyler Miller, Austin Graine, Justin Rodriguez, Robert Payne, Eric Martindell - civilian in Afghanistan, Jeff, Carl, Kevin, and Dale. We pray for those of every generation who live with the wounds of war or who have given their lives for this nation.

*If you would like someone who is sick or in need added to the prayer list, please write their name in the blue book on the table in the Narthex, or give the name to Father John or Rev. Meredith. Names will be kept in our intercessions for four weeks, unless notified otherwise.*

## Every Member Canvass Update (as of 12/11/2013)

<u>Update</u>	<u>Amount pledged:</u>	<u>No. of pledges:</u>
<i>Operating Fund</i>	\$200,935	67
<i>Mortgage Fund</i>	\$6,600	4

Please help us meet our goal of 100 pledges!

## Announcements

**Special envelopes** for Christmas flower contributions and staff gifts are on the table at the back of the Sanctuary. Memorials or thanksgivings received for the Christmas flowers by tomorrow, December 16<sup>th</sup> will be included in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day service bulletins.

Please remember our outstanding St. Mark's staff: Tatiana Andronikova, our organist; Deyci Bustamante, nursery care; Emily Cole, Parish Administrator; The Rev. Meredith Heffner, Associate Rector; Mike Morgan, Bookkeeper; The Rev. Cherian Pulimootil, Parish Associate; Francisco Robles, Sexton; Daniel Stroud, Seminarian; and The Rev. John Weatherly, Rector. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

**Help is needed to erect the stable** today after the 10:00 service. Meet in the Narthex.

**Pageant participants (adults and children):** Come at 9:00 next Sunday so we can get you in your costumes. Volunteers welcome, too!

**If you have any outdoor Christmas lights** that you're not using, Rev. Meredith would love to borrow them for the pageant! Please drop them off this week.

**Please bring your favorite Christmas treats to share** at coffee hour after next week's pageant.

**Youth Group Christmas Party!** Youth, grades 7 and up, are invited to our youth group Christmas

party here at St. Mark's on December 21st from 5 to 9 p.m. We'll eat, bake, play games, and sing around the campfire! To RSVP, e-mail Rev. Meredith at [Revmeredith@cox.net](mailto:Revmeredith@cox.net).

**Donation envelopes from Episcopal Relief & Development** are on the table at the back of the Sanctuary if you would like to make a donation to disaster relief efforts in the Philippines.

**The UCM Food Pantry** always needs canned goods. Please put your non-perishable donations in the wicker basket at the rear of the Sanctuary.

**VIC-HOP (Venture in Community/Hypothermia Outreach Program)** VIC-HOP is operating for the ninth winter, a combined effort of Mt. Vernon area churches to supplement the County program at the Eleanor Kennedy Shelter on Richmond Highway. Every evening from December 1 through March 31, 3 volunteers stay the night at Rising Hope Methodist Church to monitor 24 souls sleeping on the floor. A church committee or individual volunteers can assist in meal prep and serving, a sleep shift, breakfast bag prep or combination thereof. Currently, there is a need for Saturdays in February and March, and Mondays in March. For more information, contact Rosemary Kley, [rekley1@earthlink.net](mailto:rekley1@earthlink.net) or 703/719-6238.

**The next VIC meeting** will be at the new mosque on Woodlawn Trail on Wednesday, January 8, at 11:30 AM, lunch following. (Wear socks as you will have to remove your shoes to enter the mosque.) Contact