



# The Open Door

The Newsletter of St. Mark's Episcopal Church

December 2014

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## From the Associate Rector

Thanksgiving hadn't even arrived, and I found myself depressed that Christmas seemed right on top of us. Many of us have felt this way since Halloween...What happened to Advent and the anticipation of waiting not for Santa, but for the birth of our Savior? How do we teach our children that what we do in Advent, in anticipation of Jesus' birth, is much more than anticipating all the gifts under the Christmas tree? How do we teach them that in the gift of Jesus, we discover the gift of giving?

With those questions floating around in my head, I was delighted to discover a different type of Advent Calendar that I think will help. It's the "Random Acts of Christmas Kindness Calendar, 2014," produced by [coffeecupsandcrayons.com](http://coffeecupsandcrayons.com). Each day this calendar challenges us to give – to do something for others – and thereby remember that it's in giving that we receive. Give it a try! You'll find the calendar on the reverse side of this page. Hopefully, it can help us remember what the true gift is at Christmas.

I wish you all a holy Advent and a blessed Christmas,  
*Rev. Meredith*

## Parish Notes

### Pledge Drive Still Searching

Our Everymember Canvass and Stewardship Pledge Drive officially ended Sunday November 23, but we continue to receive them. We were hoping to exceed last year's results of 86 pledges totaling about \$225,000. As of Monday, December 1 we have received 61 pledges totaling \$196,000. A few more pledges will probably come in over the next few weeks, but it seems that St. Mark's will be facing a shortfall for the coming year. By the time your read this your Finance Committee will have met to begin the process of planning for 2015. Your vestry appeals to you with humility but also with urgency, to ask that if you have not made a pledge please make one today, and if you have made one, accept our heartfelt appreciation and consider increasing it. St. Mark's needs you now like never before.

*Doug Varner, Stewardship Chair*

## Direct Debit Giving Survey Results

Over the summer, the Vestry conducted an online survey asking the congregation if they would be interested in using direct debit as an option to pay their pledge. 34 people completed the survey. Of those 34, 14 people were interested in a direct debit option. We will continue to look into this possibility in the future. If you have any questions about the survey or ideas about direct debit giving, please contact Ashley Bryda at [ashpearson@aol.com](mailto:ashpearson@aol.com).

## Vestry Nominations Now Being Received

New Vestry members will be elected on January 25 at our Annual Meeting. The Nominating committee of the Vestry is now receiving names of those who feel called to this unique ministry in the parish. Our Nominating Committee members this year are Jim Bailes, Donna Anderson, Karen Ashworth, and Doug Varner. The person nominated must be a member of the parish; attends "more often than not", is known to the treasurer, at least 16 years of age, and can subscribe to the following declaration, "I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do yield my hearty assent and approbation to the doctrines, worship and discipline of the Episcopal Church, and I promise that I will faithfully execute the office of Vestry member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, in Region 6, in the County of Fairfax according to my best knowledge and skill". The Vestry Retreat will be held at the Roslyn Conference Center in Richmond, February 6-8, 2015. The Vestry meets the second Tuesday of each month, except in August.

	<p><b>Welcome Preston!</b></p> <p>Congratulations to Ashley, Eric and Everett Bryda on the birth of their son &amp; little brother Preston James on Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup></p>	

## Worship and Fellowship Calendar

### December

- 7 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Eucharist and Healing
- 9 10 a.m. Tuesday Morning Bible Study, "Prophets of Advent"  
7:30 p.m. Vestry Meeting - Review budget and Everymember Canvass Results
- 10 10 a.m. Fairfax Eucharist  
6:30 p.m. Nurturing Families
- 13 Flower Guild Greening of the Church
- 14 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10 a.m. Pageant
- 17 10 a.m. Fairfax Eucharist  
6:30 p.m. Last Nurturing Families

- 20 Flower Guild Greening of the Church  
Youth Group Bonfire
- 21 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10 a.m. Lessons and Carols
- 24 10 a.m. Fairfax Eucharist  
5 p.m. Family Eucharist with Brass  
7 p.m. San Marcos Christmas Eve Service  
9 p.m. Festal Eucharist with Brass
- 25 11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
- 28 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. First Christmas Holy Eucharist

### January

- 25 Annual Meeting, Election of Vestry

### February

- 6-8 Roslyn Vestry Retreat



Random Acts of Christmas Kindness 2014						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> Give a compliment to a friend.	<b>2</b> Tape change to a vending machine.	<b>3</b> Make a card for a soldier.	<b>4</b> Pick up litter in your neighborhood.	<b>5</b> Bring coffee to your teacher.	<b>6</b> Send a hug made from paper to someone you love.
<b>7</b> Tell silly jokes to make someone laugh.	<b>8</b> Give someone a hug coupon.	<b>9</b> Donate a book to your library or hospital.	<b>10</b> Leave a happy note or kindness stone for someone to find.	<b>11</b> Do yard work for a neighbor.	<b>12</b> Donate outgrown toys to your favorite charity.	<b>13</b> Candy cane bomb a parking lot.
<b>14</b> Call a faraway relative to say hello.	<b>15</b> Make a thank you card for your librarian.	<b>16</b> Do a chore for someone in your family.	<b>17</b> Donate food to your local food pantry.	<b>18</b> Leave a popcorn surprise on a DVD rental machine.	<b>19</b> Smile at everyone you see today.	<b>20</b> Take supplies to the animal shelter.
<b>21</b> Pay for a stranger's coffee.	<b>22</b> Give treats to your mail carrier.	<b>23</b> Feed the birds.	<b>24</b> Take cookies to the fire station.	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

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