

# The Archangel

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

December 2011

We live in several years simultaneously, whether we have young children or not we all live by the school year, the secular year, wherever did 2011 go? The shopping year with its various frenzied seasons, has its claims upon us. The sports seasons year and for others the year is ruled by hunting seasons, and there is the neglected church. In a sense we live in all of them and keeping our feet planted in each relevant year reality is no easy thing. All too often we recall the church year only when we glance at Sunday's bulletin or notice the altar hangings have changed color.

Of all these various years, the Christian Church year presents the greatest challenge. It reminds us that our primary citizenship is in another sovereignty and our highest allegiance ought to be to another ruler, rather than the temporal rulers of this world. The early Christians were persecuted and killed because they claimed "Jesus is Lord." Perhaps today we are regarded as rather out-of-touch or weird when we whisper or speak this same claim. Regardless of whatever others may think of us, we are reminded our faith in Christ is no private, personal thing, but that we first are God's beloved children and are charged by word, action, faith and joy, to reveal God's active love to others who know only this frenzied world.

The season of Advent begins another church year. Its purpose is not to be a shopping year's count-down, but to set our focus on the miracle of Christ's birth; that God invaded this world, this planet in the form of a helpless child. God, vulnerable to this confused frenzied world, as one with our human flesh, bones, emotions and limitations and even in this common presence he initiates recreation of the human race as God with us. He suffered, died and was raised again giving us and offering to the world the hope of the resurrected life in God's glorious eternal kingdom.

Rather than quietly bemoaning the run-a-way seasons and multiple years which try to ignore the Christian church year, we can meet the challenge it presents by keeping Advent in holy preparation. We can celebrate with joy the revelation of God among us, we can continue in this joy observing the twelve days of Christmas with renewed gratitude and compassion for the poor, lonely and neglected. Above all we can humble ourselves before the baby who is our sovereign Lord and offer him our lives, obedience and eternal hope.

(inspired by "Advent, Subverting the Secular World" *The Anglican Digest*, Winter 2011)



Advent Blessings,

*Tige*

The Rev. Tige Newell, Rector

## **New Chapter: Your Church in God's Unfolding Story** **A Start Up! Start Over! conference for small churches**

December 1-3 Fr. Tige will be commuting to the Williamsburg Woodlands in Colonial Williamsburg for a congregational vitality conference featuring The Rev. Tex Sample - prolific writer, story-teller and author of nine books on the intersection of faith and culture. Our diocese is partnering with the Episcopal Church Center Office of Congregational Vitality to host this national event especially for congregations with an average Sunday attendance under 75 people. This conference is highly subsidized by the Episcopal Church Center, and provides an excellent opportunity to help equip us to move to the next chapter in our church's life and discover ways to increase vitality in our congregation.

## Away Days Offered at Bryan's Oasis

As the winter weather chills and the holidays complete, a warm wood stove sounds especially cozy and inviting. Hank and I offer a day or two away at our mountain cabin for those of you who seek the silence and solitude, beauty and rest of a personal retreat. One or both of us will be there to host, cook and stoke the fire as a gift to you, members of our church family. Please let us know when and what, and we will plan it together.

Blessings on your Holiday Season,  
Peggy and Hank

## Report of the 2011 St. Michael's Women's Retreat God's Beloved Daughters Shalom House Retreat Center Oct. 28-30, 2011

Sarah, Elizabeth, Margaret, Mary, Carolyn, Susan, Lidia, Bathsheba, Rahab, Ruth, Mara, Laurie, Milly, Paula, Irene, and many more came to our St. Michael's retreat held at Shalom House Retreat Center over the last weekend of October. These are God's beloved daughters, some from the Old Testament, some from the New, some present day women, some from our own congregation, some from others but all gathered together to testify to God's tender love and purpose for His women.

Our speaker, Coralee Murray came from Budapest, Hungary and based her teachings on the movie *Magdalena* and the study guide she wrote for women in Eastern Europe. She shared God's original plan for us as women, the role of an Ezer, the result of the Fall and Sin on our intimate relationships with others and God, and the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ that reverses our shame and allows us to experience His healing grace and redemption in our lives. We watched the movie, listened to heart felt teachings, shared our stories and lives in small groups, praised God with our voices lifted in song, prayed and worshiped together at Saturday evening Eucharist, and companioned the women with the issue of blood on her journey to full healing. Some of our modern women morphed into biblical characters complete with satirical comments and bejeweled costumes. We enjoyed the good food, the wooded surroundings (even in the rain), the up graded bed linens and sweet towels, the visual worship of the decorations and posters in the dining/meeting hall, but mostly we enjoyed the Lord and each other.

Our scripture verse for the weekend was from Psalm 27:8  
"My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me."  
And my heart responds, "Lord I am coming."

We came out of our everyday lives to spend some time talking with the Lord. He was present, He graciously spoke and we were privileged to hear His words of healing, grace and love to us His beloved daughters. Thank you for your prayers. It was indeed "Holy Ground".



## Christmas for Christopher Konkel

Last year you were generous in your Christmas donations to Christopher (Lynette Dickerson's son), and he was touched by it and blessed us in return with a beautiful, hand-made rendition of the Episcopal shield. Let's open our hearts and wallets to him again this year. Checks should be made out to St. Michael's with a memo notation of his name.



November birthday party will be on December 18<sup>th</sup> after the 10:30am worship service .

**Pot Luck Lunch**  
**Sunday, December 4th**  
 Plan to stay after worship for good food and fellowship.  
Bring a hearty dish to share.  
**Ya'll come!**

**DECEMBER**

- 2 Kelly Vasiloff
- 4 Patricia Peterson
- 1 Larry Lewis
- 6 Jay Horne
- 9 Cookie Wicker
- 11 Virginia Perry
- 14 Michael K. Vasiloff  
Hayley Newell
- 15 Herb Greene
- 16 Ken Switzer
- 17 Hilda Traylor
- 18 Carol Peterson
- 21 Taylor Schabilon
- 27 Melissa Christman
- 29 Sarah Ingram

**Anniversaries**

**DECEMBER**

- 9 Michael and Kelly Vasiloff
- 18 Mike and Cindy Cole
- 21 Hank and Peggy Graeser
- 26 Joe and Mitzie Lyman

**January Archangel Deadline**  
**Monday, January 2, 2012 9:30am**

Dear St. Michaels Family,

I would like to apologize to you all for my lack of help in the gardens this season. I take this opportunity to extend a great big THANK YOU to all of you who have seen the need and risen to the occasion of tending to our gardens' needs. They look beautiful! You've done an awesome job. It's comforting to know that our family helps each other in times of need and gets the job done. What a blessing! It seems to be the "St. Michaels way" in so many instances. I'm truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful church of people. I wish you many blessings of the Christmas season upon us.

Peace, Margie



**Neighborhood Children's Christmas Fun**  
**Sunday, December 11, 2011**  
**4:00-5:00 PM**  
**for all Children, Grades 1-5**

Our Task Force has been working on this event and we need your help! This children's event will have a special guest story teller to read the Christmas Story, games by the EYC, special Christmas Crafts, and refreshments of cookies and hot chocolate.

We need volunteers to participate in baking cookies, serving refreshments, donating small prizes for games (that can go in a small stocking), and being at the event to help with the children.

Just contact Peggy Graeser, Michael Vasiloff, Milly Thompson, Phyllis Cheeley, or Patti Christmas.

Thanks!

**REMEMBER TO RETURN YOUR**  
**2012 COMMITMENT CARDS.**

## Advent, Expectation of Things to Come

Our lives are filled with all sorts of things that we are waiting for. Some are small, some quite significant, important, trivial, and some are quite life changing.

Each year at this time in our churches we are encouraged to give thought to Mary and the sacrifice that she was being asked to make, to willingly offer her body to bring forth into the world the Son of God. I cannot imagine the range of emotions in this teenage girl knowing how society, during that day, looked at women becoming pregnant before they were legally married. We spend a lot of time discussing Mary's position, telling the story over and over, building her into an icon. Mary is a central figure in the story. I'm not sure I would have volunteered to be in her place in that culture. She could have lost her life or at the very least been ostracized and humiliated.

All this being said, a presentation made at our Women's Retreat started me to thinking about Joseph and the sacrifice he was making. Before the angel came to tell him of God's plan for him and Mary, he most likely had some very anxious thoughts. What a disappointment to learn of Mary's pregnancy when they were not yet married but engaged. Engagement during that time was a serious and binding contract, no room for infidelity.

Have you ever been in that place of wanting to do the right thing, but not sure what the right thing might be? Joseph loved Mary. How could he give her up publicly and perhaps see her stoned? Joseph was an honorable man, a faithful man and he was a law-abiding, good Jewish man. How could he fulfill all his obligations to his faith and still keep Mary safe? At this point in his dilemma and in ours, God is the only one who can make good sense out of the problem.

God always has the answer and he delights in our bringing the problem to him. He is our Father and the great problem solver and desires our interaction in working problems out. God's angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary home, for the Holy Spirit had caused Mary to conceive. As Joseph heard the angel's explanation of God's plan, I'm sure a great weight lifted from him. Isn't that the way we feel when we finally stop and listen to God's plan and agree to go with it? So much more can be accomplished when we wait on God's timing and trust in his ways.



Our heavenly father gave us beautiful examples in Mary and Joseph of trusting, faithful servants. May we too aspire to being that trusting, faithful servant as we contemplate these things in our hearts this Advent. May we come to the manger this Christmas Eve and be blessed by the gift of new life. God bless each and everyone with a very merry Christmas

Carolyn Mason  
Altar Guild Director

## HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Christmas Eve, 8:00pm  
Christmas Day, 10:00am  
New Year's Day, 10:00am  
(No Pot Luck Lunch)

## Treasurer's Corner

The 2011 fourth quarter statements will be mailed in January 2012. Please review your statement and let the treasurer know if you have any questions before the 20<sup>th</sup> of January.

The last deposit for 2011 will be made on Friday, December 30<sup>th</sup>. All checks must be at the church by 12 noon for deposit. All late donations will be reflected in year 2012

Please remember that your 2012 commitment card needs to be returned to the church office as soon as possible.



Thanks.



*The daughters of Jeanne Henry would like to thank the St. Michael's family for their prayers and support during the last years of our mother's life. Thank you for the caring demonstrated at her death. Most of all, thank you for loving her for nearly 50 years.*

# St. Michael's Episcopal Church

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
<b>ANNUAL MEETING</b> December 11 <sup>th</sup> , 9:00am  <b>NEIGHBORHOOD CHILDREN'S FUN</b> December 11 <sup>th</sup> , 4:00pm				7:15-Choir		
<b>Pot Luck 4</b>  8:00am-Holy Euch. I 9:00am-Adult Education 10:30am-Holy Euch. II w. Sun. Sch.	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1:00-Cursillo Gr.	7:00-Vestry	7:00-Cursillo Gr.	10:30-Al-Anon	7:15-Choir	9:00-Al-Anon District
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:00am-Holy Euch. I <b>9:00am-Annual Meeting</b> 10:30am-Holy Euch. II w. Sun. Sch. 4:00pm-Kids' Fun	1:00-Cursillo Gr	7:00-Cursillo Gr.	10:30-Al-Anon	7:15-Choir	EYC 7:00-Cursillo Ultreya	Lock-In
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>Birthdays 18</b>  8:00am-Holy Euch. I 9:00am-Adult Education 10:30am-Holy Euch. II w. Sun. Sch.	1:00-Cursillo Gr	7:00-Cursillo Gr.	10:00-A.A.R.P. 10:30-Al-Anon	7:15-Choir		 <b>8:00pm Christmas Eve Celebration &amp; Holy Communion</b>
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<b>10:00am-Holy Euch. II</b> 	1:00-Cursillo Gr	7:00-Cursillo Gr.	10:30-Al-Anon	7:15-Choir		

The Church Office will be closed Dec. 26-30.

There will be **one** service on Sunday, January 1, 2012, at 10:00am. **No** pot luck lunch.